

# absolute india

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## AFTER RAGA, TWITTER NOW BLOCKS CONG & ITS LEADERS' ACCOUNTS

# CONGRESS VS TWITTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress party on Thursday claimed that after blocking their former president Rahul Gandhi's social media account, Twitter has now "locked" the party's official handle @INCIndia.

Congress social media head Rohan Gupta said the official twitter account of the Congress has been locked. "Cong official twitter account locked," tweeted, Gupta told reporter that 5,000 of their party workers and leaders' accounts have been blocked. IYC national president Srinivas B.V. tweeted: First Rahul Gandhi's account, Then Congress Workers account, Then Congress Leaders account, & Now official account of @INCIndia. Twitter is openly battling as a frontal organization of BJP. Are we still living in India or North Korea? The micro-blogging platform a day ago also blocked Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken's handle, Maken said that Twitter blocked him for supporting Rahul Gandhi. Congress sources said account of RS Surjewala, Manickam Tagore and Sushmita Dev too has been locked by twitter.

It started after the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) flagged photos shared by Gandhi with a 9-year-old rape and murder victim's parents. The Congress alleged that BJP has been trying to silence its voices but it

### MAHA CONGRESS, 500 STATE LEADERS, TOO BLOCKED

Mumbai: Besides, the All India Congress Committee, the Maharashtra and Mumbai verified Congress handles, that of Congress Legislative Party leader and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat, Mumbai Congress President Bhai Jagtap, state party social media head Abhijeet Sapkal, and around 500 other leaders at various level have been blocked on Twitter, party officials claimed here on Thursday. Slamming the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), State Congress President Nana Patole said that the Modi government is working in a dictatorial manner and all efforts are being made to suppress every voice raised against the Centre since the past seven years, trampling the freedom of express enshrined in the Constitution.

will not stop. Gandhi had met the family members of the minor who was allegedly raped in the national capital, murdered, and cremated without her parents' consent in Old Nangal crematorium.

Rahul Gandhi, who joined Twitter in April 2015 and has 19.5 million followers on the social media platform, was expected to stay connected via his other social media platforms.



### LOCKING ACCOUNT STIFLES FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: THAROOR

New Delhi: Reacting to the ongoing tussle between Congress and social media platform Twitter, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who is also the chairman of standing committee on Information Technology, said on Thursday that locking accounts stifles the freedom of expression. He said, "I understand @Twitter's position that it has no choice but block accounts that violate Indian law & Twitter policy. While the law is what it is, policy can be reviewed."

### RAHUL LEADS OPPN MARCH AGAINST GOVT, SAYS 'MURDER OF DEMOCRACY'



New Delhi: Members of Parliament and leaders of various opposition parties took out march from Parliament to Vijay Chowk on Thursday to protest against the curtailment of the monsoon session. The MPs held banners and placards calling to withdraw farm laws and "murder of democracy" were written. Leading the protest, Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi alleged, "We have to come out here to speak to the press as we in Opposition are not allowed to

speak in the Parliament. This is a murder of democracy." Rahul Gandhi alleged that the voice of 60 per cent of the country has been crushed, humiliated and yesterday in the Rajya Sabha, they (women MPs) were physically beaten. Parliament session is over, but as far as 60 per cent of the country is concerned, there has been no Parliament session. The opposition leaders demanded that farm laws should be withdrawn immediately and said they were opposing the curtailment of the monsoon session which was scheduled till Friday. The Parliament was adjourned sine die on Wednesday but the opposition alleged that when they were opposing the Insurance Bill in the House, the women MPs were manhandled by male marshals.

### OUR RULES ARE IMPARTIAL FOR ALL: TWITTER

We have taken proactive action on several hundred Tweets that posted an image that violated our Rules, and may continue to do so in line with our range of enforcement options. Certain types of private information carry higher risks than others, and our aim is always to protect individuals' privacy and safety. We strongly encourage everyone on the service to familiarise themselves with the Twitter Rules and report anything they believe is in violation.



## Your gift and cash back vouchers will now attract 18% GST



Subhash Narayan | New Delhi

Expanding the scope of taxation, the tax department will now levy GST on the supply of e-vouchers thereby bringing even exclusive marketing companies under the tax net. In a recent ruling the Authority for Advance Ruling, Karnataka brought supplies of e-vouchers made by marketing firms liable for 18 per cent GST terming these instruments as part of overall supply of goods and service having an underlying value that is taxable. The order will now make marketing companies buying and supplying e-vouchers taxable at the specified rate on the value of purchase of such vouchers. The ruling came on application filed by Premier Sales Promotion on GST applicability on supply of e-vouchers made by it on behalf of companies to their clients. Three types of vouchers were supplied - gift vouchers, cash back vouchers and e-vouchers with multiple options.

## 'RIGOROUS' WORK UNDERWAY TO ACHIEVE PRIVATISATION TARGETS: FINANCE MINISTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Exuding confidence that the targets for the proposed strategic sales would be achieved, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Thursday that the government is undertaking all the "necessary rigorous" work to complete the planned privatisation processes by the end of this financial year. Speaking at the CII annual conclave, Sitharaman said: "Our commitment to disinvestment and privatisation is firmly ingrained in policy. There is no discretion and there is a calendar." The government has set a target to complete the privatisation of Air India and BPCL, among other state-run companies and banks, in FY22. Calling upon the industry to invest more in the country, the minister further said that it is time that the Indian industry comes out and shows its risk-taking abilities and takes decisions to expand. She also said the core sectors' growth of about 8.9 per cent was largely because of public capital expenditure.



## INDIA'S ATTEMPT TO HAVE ITS EYE IN THE SKY FAILS

Venkatachari Jagannathan | Sriharikota

Indian space programme suffered a serious setback on Thursday as its GSLV-F10 rocket failed midway in its mission of putting into orbit the Geo-Imaging Satellite-1 (GISAT-1). The rocket's cryogenic engine did not fire up to complete the mission, said the Indian space agency. Along with the rocket, the 2,268 kg GISAT-1/EOS-03 communication satellite carried by the rocket, both valued over several hundred crore of rupees, revenue opportunity for 10 years, were also lost. The GISAT-1/EOS-03, with a life span of 10 years, would have been the country's first eye in the sky or earth observation satellite to be placed in geostationary orbit. Announcing the mission failure, K. Sivan, Chairman, ISRO said: "The mission cannot be fully



accomplished because of a technical anomaly observed in the cryogenic stage." Later, the ISRO in a statement said: "GSLV-F10 launch took place on August 12, 2021 at 05:43 Hrs IST as scheduled. Performance of first and second stages was normal. However, Cryogenic Upper Stage ignition did not happen due to technical anomaly. The mission couldn't be accomplished as intended." The reason(s) for non-firing of the cryogenic engine will have to be probed by ISRO, whether a faulty component was the reason. Ironically the failure comes on the birth anniversary of Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space sector.

## Helicopter in custody of Taliban not of IAF

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India on Thursday said that the combat helicopter which had fallen into the Taliban hands in Afghanistan doesn't belong to the Indian Air Force. The Ministry of External Affairs also said that intense fight between the Taliban and the Afghan Army is an internal matter of Afghanistan. Elaborating on the situation, External Affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said: "Situation on ground is evolving. That helicopter was not of Indian Air Force. All I can say is that it is Afghanistan's internal matter and I would not like to comment on that aspect." On Wednesday, one of the four Mi-24V helicopters that India gifted to the Afghanistan Air Force in 2019 was allegedly captured by the



Taliban after they took over the Kunduz airbase. The Russian-designed Mi-24V attack helicopter is designated as Mi-35 for export. Further a video also surfaced on social media, in which a Taliban operative was seen moving around the attack helicopter at Kunduz airbase. However in the video, it was found that many critical parts were of the helicopter are missing.

## B'uru: 499 children test positive for Covid in last 10 days

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

As many as 499 children have tested positive for Covid-19 during the first ten days of August in Bengaluru, creating a worrisome situation for parents. According to a health bulletin, about 88 children between the age group of 0 to 9 years and 305 children between the age of 10 to 19 years have tested positive for the coronavirus. Out of 499 cases, 263 were reported in last five days. Among these, 88 are between 0 to 9 years and 175 are between 10 and 19 years old.



and has already started initiating strict measures to contain the infections. In the coming few weeks the number might get

### 41,195 fresh cases, 490 deaths in a day

New Delhi: India on Thursday registered rise in daily Covid infections and recorded 41,195 fresh cases in the last 24 hours. For the first time in the past six days, daily cases again crossed the 40,000 mark. A total of 490 deaths were also reported in the same time span, pushing the death toll due to Covid to 4,29,669, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said.

three times more than this, sources in the health department explain.

## The Global warming is humans' impact: UN report

The 3,000-plus-page report concludes that ice melt and sea level rise are accelerating. Wild weather events - from storms to heat waves - are expected to worsen and become more frequent. Further warming is "locked in" due to the greenhouse gases that humans already have released into the atmosphere. That means that, even if emissions are drastically cut, some changes will be "irreversible" for centuries.



While many of the report's predictions paint a grim picture of human impact on the planet and the consequences going forward, the U.N. panel also found that so-called tipping points - like catastrophic ice-sheet collapses and the abrupt slowdown of ocean currents - are "low likelihood," though they can't be ruled out.

of that increase could have come from natural forces. Almost all countries have signed the 2015 Paris climate accord, which aims to limit global warming to an increase of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit above the pre-industrial average by the year 2100. The agreements says that ideally the increase would be no more than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit. But, having considered five likely scenarios, the report's 200-plus authors concluded that all see the world crossing the 2.7-degree threshold in the 2030s - sooner than in previous predictions. Three of those scenarios also see temperatures rising 3.6 degrees.

## TALIBAN ALLOW SAFE PASSAGE TO GHAZNI GUV AFTER PROVINCE FALLS

New Delhi: As the Taliban continue its assaults across Afghanistan, the fighters have toppled Ghazni province and the provincial Governor along with the head of national police was allowed to come to Kabul. The bodyguards of Governor Daoud Laghmani, were reportedly disarmed and were escorted until Kabul based on the agreement between the two sides, media reports said. The Afghan government though has not confirmed the collapse of Ghazni province, but sources have said that the fighters have entered all government facilities. If confirmed, Ghazni will be 10th province to be seized by the taliban in just seven days.

## 14 bodies retrieved, 16 still missing in Himachal landslide

Team Absolute | Shimla

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday visited the spot of the devastating landslide in Kinnaur district for an overview of the ongoing rescue operation in which 14 bodies have been retrieved, while at least 16 persons are still missing. Meanwhile, the wreckage of the state roadways bus that fell into a 500 metre deep gorge following the massive landslide was recovered this morning, rescuers said. CM said the state would provide Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to the injured. He said Rs



100,000 each would also be provided to the next of kin of the deceased bus passengers. A rescue operation involving multiple agencies was underway to retrieve the people feared trapped in the 200 metre stretch covered with rubble.

UNITED NATIONS | Agencies

The United Nations-appointed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's new report on the latest authoritative scientific information about global warming has drawn a lot of attention. It says, nearly all of the warming that's occurred since pre-industrial times was caused by the release of heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. Much of that is the result of humans burning fossil fuels - coal, oil, wood and natural gas. The authors say global temperatures





# FALSE NARRATIVE CREATED OF 'EASY LIFE' LED BY JUDGES, SAYS CJI

## RIGHT TO SHELTER DOESN'T MEAN GOVT HOUSING FOR UNLIMITED PERIOD: SC

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has held that the fundamental right to shelter cannot be construed as a right to government accommodation for retired government employees. "A section of society, more so retired government employees, who had earned pension, drawn retirement benefits, cannot be said to be in such condition, where the government should provide government accommodation for an unlimited period," it ruled. The bench said the right of shelter to the displaced person is satisfied when accommodation had been provided in transit accommodation. "The direction to allow a retired government servant to retain government accommodation for an indefinite period, to say the least, is a distribution of state largesse without any policy of the state. Such right of shelter does not and cannot extend to provide a government accommodation," it held.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Thursday said there are number of sacrifices one must make when one decides to become a judge - lesser money, a reduced role in society, and a huge amount of work, "yet a misconception exists that judges stay in big bungalows and enjoy holidays".

Delivering the farewell address at the function organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association on the retirement of Justice R.F. Nariman, he said, for a judge, it is not easy to prepare for more than 100 cases every week, listen to novel arguments, do independent research, and author judgments, while also dealing with the various administrative duties of a judge, particularly of a senior judge. "We continue to work even



during the court holidays, do research and author pending judgments. Therefore, when false narratives are created about the supposed easy life led by judges, it is difficult to swallow," the CJI said. "We cannot defend ourselves. It is the duty of the Bar to refute these false narratives and to

educate the public about the work put in by judges with the limited resources given to them," he said. Chief Justice Ramana highlighted few things, which are not known to the public at large and the first relates to the number of sacrifices one must make to become a judge.

# Factional clash kills 6 Manipur militants in Myanmar camp

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At least six members of Manipur based outlawed Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) have been killed and three injured in a factional battle in Myanmar, officials said on Thursday claiming that the number of slain extremists might be eight.

Security and intelligence officials familiar with the northeast India militant outfits said that six or eight PLA guerrillas were gunned down by their fellow cadres when the slain rebels tried to flee the Myanmar camp "out of frustration" on Tuesday.

"The intention of some of the PLA cadres to desert the hideout with arms led to the infighting in which "six to eight" cadres of the banned outfit were killed and three others injured," the officials



said on condition of anonymity. The incident reportedly occurred near the Nanyang Wakathan camp of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang-Yung Aung faction) in the Sagaing region of Myanmar. The camp is across Pangsau Pass in the Changlang district of southern Arunachal Pradesh.

In the Wakathan camp of NSCN (KYA) cadres of the PLA, the most active Manipuri meitei group, are

also accommodated on payment basis.

Family members of three killed PLA members were contacted and confirmed they belonged to Thoubal and Kakching areas in Manipur.

The killed PLA cadres included Self-styled Major Boycha, Leimba, Angamba, Tanthouba, Tomcha and Suresh. The bodies of all the killed militants have been buried in Myanmar.

# BJP LEADERS SLAM LALU PRASAD OVER CENSUS BOYCOTT CALL



Team Absolute | Patna

The issue of caste-based Census is hotting up in Bihar with BJP leaders slamming the stand of RJD chief Lalu Prasad on the issue. BJP state unit chief and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Jaiswal said that Lalu Prasad is a victim of low mentality after the latter gave a call to boycott normal Census in the coun-

try. "Lalu Prasad was in power in Bihar for 16 years. Why didn't he go for caste-based Census during his tenure? He was also a Union minister during the tenure of UPA," Jaiswal said, after Lalu Prasad gave a call for boycotting the normal census through Twitter on Wednesday. Lalu Prasad said that all backwards, extremely backwards, Dalits and minorities of the country might boycott the decennial Census if caste-based headcounts are not permitted in the upcoming 2021 Census. "The Narendra Modi-led Central government is keeping everything in mind and implementing only those policies which will be beneficial for the country and the society," Jaiswal said.

# Teen drowns off Goa beach: Cops caution against sharing images

Team Absolute | Panaji

The Goa Police on Thursday issued a public appeal urging people not to share photos of the remains of a 19-year-old girl, who was found in a semi-naked state on the popular Calangute beach earlier in the day.

The deceased, a resident of Nachinola village in North Goa, was missing since Wednesday morning and a complaint was filed by her father with the local police station.

A post-mortem has ruled out any sexual assault or murder, while identifying the cause of death as



drowning. "In an unfortunate incident reported from Calangute today, the body of a female was found on the Calangute beach. The matter is under investigation by the police," the North Goa district police said in a statement.

"It is therefore requested to all persons to refrain from transmitting images of the dead body of the female as it is not only against the law, but is also hurtful to the sentiments of the grieving family of the deceased woman," the statement said.

# Telangana man keeps grandfather's body in fridge

Hyderabad | Agencies

A man in Telangana kept the body of his grandfather in the fridge at their house as he had no money to perform his last rites, police said on Thursday. The shocking incident came to light at Parkala in Warangal district after neighbours complained to police about foul smell emanating from a house. Police officers who searched the house found the body of 93-year-old Balaiah, a retired teacher, in the fridge. When they questioned his grandson Nikhil, he revealed that Balaiah died of ill health three days ago. Nikhil, 23, told police that since he had no money to perform the last rites



of his grandfather, he kept the body in the fridge. Assistant Commissioner of Police Shivaramaiah said they registered a case of death under suspicious circumstances and took up investigation. The body was sent for an autopsy. The police were verifying the statement given by Nikhil. Balaiah, a retired teacher and a native of Kamareddy district, was living with his grandson in a rented house. They were meeting their expenses from Balaiah's pension. The police officer said they were trying to find out if Nikhil kept the body in fridge to ensure that the pension did not stop.

# After Sibal's dinner, Sonia to host meeting of opposition leaders

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi will host a meeting of like-minded parties next week, with all opposition leaders, who jointly took on to the government in the just-concluded Monsoon session, to be invited, sources said on Thursday.

Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled states as well as where the party is in power as part of an alliance, including Tamil Nadu's M.K. Stalin (DMK), Maharashtra's Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena) and Jharkhand Chief



Minister Hemant Soren (JMM) will also be invited. Shiv Sena has confirmed that they will participate in the meeting, for which a tenta-

tive date of August 20 has been given but it will depend on the availability of the leaders. West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool

Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, and other leaders of like-minded parties from the opposition will be invited, the sources said.

The meeting assumes significance as it comes after senior Congress leader and one of the party's major dissenting voice, Kapil Sibal, hosted a dinner in which 45 leaders of the 15 parties, including the Samajwadi Party and the Akali Dal, participated. It is understood that opposition unity was stressed at the occasion, but some were averse to Gandhis' leadership.

# MODI RELEASES SUPPORT FUNDS OF RS 1,625CR TO OVER 4LK SHGS

New Delhi | Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday released capitalization support funds to the tune of Rs 1,625 crore to over 4 lakh self help groups (SHGs). In addition, he also released Rs 25 crore as seed money for 7,500 SHGs members under the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme of Ministry of Food Processing Industries, and Rs 4.13 crore as funds to 75 Farmer Producer Organizations being promoted under the Mission. Modi also interacted with women SHG members, community resource persons promoted under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission through video conferencing. During the event, a compendium of success stories of women self help group members from all across the country, along with a handbook on universalization of farm livelihoods was released by the Prime Minister.



# Miscreants torch 2 luxury vehicles of BJP MLA in B'loru

Bengaluru | Agencies

Miscreants have burned down two luxury vehicles belonging to 3-time BJP MLA Satish Reddy, parked inside the compound of his residence in Bengaluru, Karnataka in the wee hours on Thursday. The incident has created tension in the city as the incident is allegedly linked to the unveiling of the Shiva statue at a lake in his constituency. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has stated from Mangaluru that, Satish Reddy is an important party leader. "I am pained by the incident. CCTV footage is being collected and I am hopeful that police would crack the case soon," he underlined. Home Minister



Araga Inanendra who visited the spot said that three teams have been formed to investigate the matter. Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant visited Satish Reddy's residence at 4 a.m. and monitored the investigation. Miscreants are suspected to have gained entry from the backdoor. They have set luxu-

ry cars on fire after pouring petrol on luxury vehicles. The police say that the place where these cars parked was not covered by CCTV cameras. Sources in the police department stated that Satish Reddy got 9 activists of a Hindu organisation released after they were taken into custody.

# SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN ADMITS DIFFERENCES IN NDA IN BIHAR



Patna: Bihar Minister Syed Shahnawaz Hussain on Thursday admitted that differences have arisen between his Bharatiya Janata Party and the Janata Dal-United in the state, but there was no threat to the government. "There are differences in the Bihar NDA. The leaders of the BJP and the JD-U have differences of opinion on several issues, though both the parties are committed for better future of Bihar. The Nitish Kumar government will complete the tenure of 5 years," he said while interacting with reporters in Muzaffarpur. "As the number of MLAs of the BJP is higher than the JD-U, we have more responsibility to run the government smoothly than the JD-U," Hussain said. While Hussain was cautious on criticising the Nitish Kumar-led JDU, PWD Minister Nitin Navin openly said that the policies of Nitish Kumar, especially on the population control law, was not good.

# UP COURT ORDER PROBE INTO FAKE DEGREE CHARGE AGAINST DY CM



Prayagraj: The Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) court has directed the police to hold a preliminary inquiry into alleged fake degrees of Uttar Pradesh deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya. The orders were issued on an application filed under Section 156 (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). On Wednesday, ACJM (Prayagraj) Namrata Singh directed the station house officer of Cantonment, Prayagraj to submit a report on certain points that include authenticity of the degree like Uttar Pradesh second year issued by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj, to the Deputy Chief Minister. Diwakar Tripathi, the applicant in the matter, in an plea filed under Section 156 (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), has sought registration of a criminal case against Maurya for his alleged use of fake educational degrees for contesting five elections at different places. Secondly, he also alleged that the deputy chief minister also obtained a petrol pump on the basis of a fake degree. The ACJM has fixed August 25 as the next date of hearing of the matter.

# 24 UP districts, 605 villages face flood fury

Team Absolute | Lucknow

Nearly 605 villages across 24 districts have been declared flood affected as major rivers continue to flow above the danger mark in Uttar Pradesh. According to official sources, the number of flood-affected villages in the state went up to 605 in 24 districts. Relief commissioner Ranveer Prasad said that the Ganga was flowing above the danger level at Badaun, Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Ghazipur and Ballia districts.

The Yamuna was flowing above the danger mark in Aurraya, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Banda and Prayagraj districts while the Betwa river was flowing high in Hamirpur, he said.

The Sharda river continued to flow above the danger mark in Lakhimpur Kheri and so did the Kuwano in Gonda and the Chambal on the Uttar Pradesh-Rajasthan border, he added. Seventy-five villages were flooded in Hamirpur district, followed by 71 in Banda, 67 each in Etawah and Jalaun, 42 in Varanasi, 38 in Kaushambhi, 37 each in Chandauli and Ghazipur, 25 in Aurraya, 24 each in Kanpur Dehat and Prayagraj, 23 in



Farrukhabad, 20 in Agra and 17 in Ballia district. Prasad said villages were also flooded in Mirzapur, Gorakhpur, Sitapur, Mau, Lakhimpur Kheri, Shahjahanpur, Bahraich, Gonda and Kanpur districts. The state government has deployed nine teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in nine districts, 11 teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) in 11 districts and 39 teams of the Provincial Armed

Constabulary (PAC) in 39 districts for relief and rescue operations, the relief commissioner said. The NDRF and SDRF teams rescued 536 people and 504 medical teams were deployed in the flood-hit areas, he added. Besides, 11,235 flood posts and 940 flood shelters were set up in the state and 1,463 boats pressed into service for relief and rescue operations, he said. A state government spokesperson said food packets and dry

ration were being distributed among the people in the flood-hit areas. "Regular patrolling is being conducted in the villages as well as on the river embankments and other sensitive spots. The district administrations have been directed to set up community kitchens. Regular supply of essential commodities like petrol, diesel, kerosene and edible items is being maintained in the flood-hit areas," he said.



# CM Felicitates Olympics Hockey Player Vivek Sagar, Makes Him Police Officer

The Chief Minister also announced that each member of the Indian women hockey team's Olympic squad will be given ₹ 31 lakh for putting up a spectacular performance at the Games.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the state government will provide a concrete house to the family of Olympic hockey player Vivek Sagar. The house will be provided to Vivek Sagar's family as per their wish be it any city or village. Chouhan presented a Samman Nidhi cheque of Rs one crore to Vivek Sagar, and also announced to give the post of DSP in Madhya Pradesh government apart from samman nidhi cheque of Rs one crore. Chouhan said that Prime Minister Modi has encouraged the sportspersons of the country. They are our inspiration. States must take interest in this direction and provide necessary facilities to the players so that they can create golden history. India's bronze medal in hockey in Tokyo Olympics is not just a medal but it is a revival of hockey. Today, we are all proud of Vivek Sagar, resident of Itarsi of Madhya Pradesh for his

outstanding performance in the Olympics. Madhya Pradesh Cabinet also welcomes and honours Vivek Sagar. Chouhan was addressing the award ceremony of medal winners and participants of Tokyo Olympics-2020 in Madhya Pradesh at Minto Hall auditorium today on International Youth Day. On this occasion, Indian hockey team member Vivek Sagar and other sports talents were also honored. Chief Minister himself presented the Olympic bronze medal to Vivek Sagar. Chouhan honoured international hockey player Shri Vivek Sagar with a shawl and Samman Nidhi. Along with this, he also announced Samman Nidhi of Rs 25 lakh to assistant coach Shivendra Singh. Chouhan said that success is easily achieved if you have the strong will, passion and dedication. If you give the players all the facilities, see how they work wonders. Vivek Sagar hails from a simple family.

His father is a teacher. Parents of children who are interested in sports should also give their children the opportunity to take part in sports along with studies. This will encourage sports talents. World class sports institutes will be developed in Madhya Pradesh. The shooting academy is amazing too. Adequate budget provision has been made for the development of sports. In future also all necessary steps will be taken. Chouhan said that Sports Minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia and the team of Sports Department deserve congratulations for their success. Players of Madhya Pradesh are practicing sports with diligence. In the coming times, we will achieve gold medals in many sports at the international level. Chouhan said that today we have given proof of our excellence in hockey before the world. India has a bright future in women's hockey too. The Indian women's hockey team is fourth in Olympics. They definitely lost the

last match but won the hearts of the whole country with their good performance. Rs 31 lakh each will be awarded to each player of Madhya Pradesh government women's hockey team. Chouhan said that today three saplings have been planted in the Smart Park of Bhopal for the revival of hockey. Vivek Sagar said that Chief Minister Chouhan has displayed his love for sports at the award ceremony. He expressed his gratitude to Chouhan for the honour he received today. Sagar told that he was told by Hockey team captain Manpreet that we have nothing to lose. I had full support of friends and family members. He had joined the Sports Academy of Madhya Pradesh in the year 2013 where he got good coaches, diet, sports material and equipment. Others have been sources of inspiration but, self-motivation is also important for any sportsperson. Discipline, hard work and respect for all leads to success.



## CM Chouhan e-dedicates new health facilities in Nasrullaganj

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the 50 bedded hospital in Sehore district of Nasrullaganj will be upgraded to 100 bed capacity hospital. Necessary health facilities will be developed in small towns and cities of the state like in big cities. Chouhan was e-dedicating the oxygen plant at Nasrullaganj Civil Hospital set up at a cost of Rs 1 crore 40 lakh and a pathology lab built at a cost of Rs 80 lakh. Chief Minister also performed the bhoomi-pujan for the 10-bed ICU and maternity wing in the Civil Hospital on the occasion. The cost of the dedicated works is Rs. 2 crore 20 lakh and the cost of works of bhoomi-pujan is Rs. 12.13 crore. In this way, the people of Nasrullaganj have received the gift of works worth 14.33 crores. Health Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary and MP Ramakant Bhargava also virtually participated in the programme.

in Nasrullaganj with a 300 litre capacity, will facilitate local patients as they will not be compelled to go to Hoshangabad and Bhopal. Earlier they would have to go out even for minor check-ups. Now with a lab, this work can also be done in Nasrullaganj itself. Chief Minister said that the people of the surrounding area would also get the benefits of the facilities developed in the Civil Hospital. Along with the delivery facility, there will also be availability of essential facilities in case of operation. Chouhan informed that Budhni has come under the 100 percent vaccination status. Similar work should be done in Nasrullaganj. This will help in eliminating the possibility of a new wave of Corona. Chouhan also requested the general public to follow the rules of prevention from Corona. Health Minister Choudhary said that the Corona control model of Madhya Pradesh has been appreciated all over the country. At the time of second wave, Chouhan proved his leadership ability by getting liquid oxygen from other parts of the country. Today, Madhya Pradesh has moved from zero plant status to 179 oxygen plants in the beginning of 2020. A campaign to start operation of the plants under various heads is being arranged. Member of Parliament from Vidisha-Raisen Parliamentary constituency Ramakant Bhargava, also addressed the programme.

## IGRMS Online Exhibition series exhibits "Votive Terracotta Horse- AIYYANAR DEITY"



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the sixty one series of its online exhibition by Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) on Thursday displayed the "Votive Terracotta Horse-AIYYANAR DEITY" situated in the Kumhar Para open air exhibition of Manav Sangrahalaya has been presented online with its basic information and photographs and videos. About this exhibition, Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that - Ayyanar is a village God worshipped by the folk people in Tamil Nadu. He is primarily worshipped as a guardian deity who protects the vil-

lages from unwanted external elements and threats. The temples of Ayyanar are usually flanked by gigantic and colourful statues of the God and his companions riding Horses and Elephants. The display of votive figures and clay idols in an Ayyanar temple reflects the social hierarchy that exists in the villages. The Gods are ranked according to the social and economical hierarchy in the village. The Gods with highest position are vegetarian, while those considered with lower rank are believed to be non-vegetarian. An Ayyanar temple is often not a building, but assemblages of one or more figures revered as the ancestral and local deities belonging to various groups

of communities. About the Ayyanar Deity, Garima Anand Dubey, Museum Associate told that - Museum attempted to honour the living legends that preserved this ancient tradition of producing terracotta offerings from Pudukkottai District of Tamil Nadu with an installation of an AIYYANAR complex in its premises. Seven artists from the village were invited by the museum to demonstrate the ritual art and to enhance and extend the span of the existing Ayyanar complex with their proficient hands. A glimpse of museum's effort towards conservation of culture and devotion of artists is here for you through a short video and photographs.

## MP Sees Eight New COVID-19 Cases; Active Infections At 131

Madhya Pradesh on Thursday recorded eight fresh cases of COVID-19 that raised its tally of infections to 7,91,998, an official from the state health department said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh on Thursday recorded eight fresh cases of COVID-19 that raised its tally of infections to 7,91,998, an official from the state health department said. The toll remained unchanged at 10,514, as no fresh casualties were reported during the day, the offi-

cial said. The count of recoveries now stands at 7,81,353, leaving the central state with 131 active cases, he said. With the addition of 76,396 swab samples examined during the day, the total number of tests conducted in Madhya Pradesh rose to 1,52,97,847, the official added. As per an official release, 3,66,86,401 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been



administered so far, of which 5,18,437 jabs were given on Thursday. Coronavirus figures in MP are as follows: Total cases 7,91,998, new cases 8, death toll 10,514, recovered 7,81,353, active cases 131, number of tests so far 1,52,97,847.

## CM plants Neem & Kadam saplings along with hockey player Vivek Sagar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Kadam saplings along with international hockey player Vivek Sagar at Smart Park on Thursday. Sports and Youth Welfare, Technical Education, Skill Development and Employment Minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia was also present. She also planted a sapling. Chouhan said that the State Government would leave no stone unturned for the development of hockey. State will extend every possible cooperation to encourage hockey players. Vivek Sagar is a resident of Chandon Pipariya village of



Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. His family lives in Itarsi, he played an important role in the victory of the Indian hockey team

with his hard work. Chouhan said that India got bronze medal in Tokyo Olympics. It is not just a medal but reawakening of hockey.

Sagar's age is only 21 years now. Surely he will win a gold medal one day too. Many congratulations and best wishes to him.

Chouhan also congratulated Sports Minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia and her team for this achievement. Chouhan said that the Sports Department has done wonderful and exemplary work for the development of other sports including hockey. The work of upliftment of sports will continue. Chouhan said that women hockey players would also be encouraged. The Indian women's hockey team has earned the fourth position in the Tokyo Olympics 2020. It is a matter of great honour. Rs 31 lakh will be given to each player of the Indian women's hockey team.

## MP breaks own record of lowest tariff for solar energy in country

- After Shajapur lowest energy at 2 rupees 14 paise per unit will be available from Neemuch Solar Park
- Dang congratulates department for historic success



Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the field of solar energy, the record of cheapest solar energy in the country in Madhya Pradesh was broken today in the bidding for Neemuch Solar Project. Breaking the record of Rs2 and paise 33 per unit received in the bidding for Shajapur Solar Plant on July 19, the bidding for Neemuch Solar Park ended today at the minimum tariff of Rs 2 and paise 14 per unit. Tata Power's TP Saurya Limited was selected on the basis of the

lowest offer of Neemuch Solar Park for 160 MW Unit-1 for Rs. 2 and paise 14 and 170MW Unit-2 for Rs. 2 and paise 14.9. On the other hand, Dubai's Aljomaith Energy and Water Company was selected for 170 MW Unit-3 at the rate of 2 rupees 15 paise per unit. New and Renewable Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Dang informed that 15 national and international level companies participated in the bidding for Neemuch plant on Wednesday. These included Avada Energy Pvt Ltd, NHDC,

Azure Power India, ACME Solar Hoarding Pvt Ltd, GAIL (India), Torrent Power, TP Saurya, Ayana Renewable Power, NTPC, Spring Akshay Urja Pvt Ltd, Beempow Energy and ABREL SPV 2 Ltd. Dang informed that this project will be set up on about one thousand hectares of land with private investment of Rs 1750 crores. The target of generating electricity by March-2023 from the project has been set. About 2500 people will get employment during project establishment and about 500 people during project operation. Dang congratulated the departmental officers and employees for this. He said that the interest of national and international investors is increasing continuously in the field of solar energy. The reason for this is cent percent timely payment to the investors, easy availability of land and facilities provided to them. Solar plants are being set up on barren land. This will also increase the utilization of unused land. In the field of solar energy, Madhya Pradesh has made a distinct identity through policy innovations.

## HC ASKS GOVT TO GIVE DETAILS OF PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM BLACK, WHITE FUNGUS, SIMILAR DISEASES IN STATE

In its order passed on August 10, the high court directed the additional chief secretary of the state health department to submit the information by September 6, amicus curiae in the case senior advocate Naman Nagrath said.

Team Absolute | Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh high court has directed the government to provide information about the number of patients in the state, who are suffering from black fungus, white fungus infections or similar diseases. In its order passed on August 10, the high court directed the additional chief secretary of the state health department to submit the information by September 6, amicus curiae in the case senior advocate Naman Nagrath said.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice VK Shukla said, "We direct additional chief secretary of the department of medical and health, government of Madhya Pradesh to place on record the current and exact position with regard to the number of patients of black and white fungus or any other kind of similar disease in the state." The high court also directed the authorities to ensure that all such patients are provided Amphotericin B and other medicines as prescribed to them by doc-

tors, not only in Jabalpur, but also in hospitals in the other cities, like Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal and elsewhere in the state, so that no patient suffers due to lack of medicines, Nagrath said. The amicus curiae submitted that last week, family members of more than 50 patients suffering from black fungus infection, who are still admitted to the Government Hospital at Jabalpur, had gheraoed the state officials, alleging that the patients were not given Amphotericin B medicine, putting their lives in danger.



# AS COVID-19 FEARS LOOM, MAHA POSTPONES SCHOOL REOPENING

*In a meeting of the Covid-19 Task Force held late on Wednesday, it was decided that while some of the schools in rural areas, where there is no threat from coronavirus will continue to function, all other schools in the state shut since March 2020 will not restart from August 17 as was planned earlier.*



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has postponed the reopening of schools - scheduled to re-start from August 17 - following a meeting of the Covid-19 Task Force held late on Wednesday, officials said here on Thursday. The meeting, chaired by Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte and attended by Task Force members, education and health department officials as well as a few district collectors, was held to decide on reopening of schools. It decided that while some of the schools in rural areas, where there is no threat from coronavirus will continue to function, all other schools in the state shut since March 2020 will not restart from August 17 as was planned earlier.

Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik pointed out that in certain other states like Punjab, where schools were allowed to reopen, there was a sharp increase in the number of juvenile Covid patients. The experts opined that since there is no vaccination available for the children who could be vulnerable to the infection, decision on reopening the schools should not be taken immediately. Now, the Task Force, Education Department officials will meet and discuss the matter with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray who would take a final call on the issue. Presently, offline classes from Std VII-XII are allowed with restrictions and Covid-19 protocols, but students in the lower classes will not be able to return to schools until further orders.

# Follow Mumbai's home vax module, HC asks civic bodies across Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Expressing satisfaction at the progress of home vaccination drive in Mumbai and other municipal areas in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the Bombay High court (HC) has asked other municipal corporations in the state to consider replicating the home vaccination module of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) within their limits. The HC was informed that the BMC had inoculated 1,317 bedridden and immobile individuals of the 4,889 registered persons without any incidence of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) till August 9. The drive was started on a pilot basis on July 30 in the K-East ward. The division bench of chief justice Dipankar Datta and justice Girish Kulkarni, while

perusing the affidavit filed by the BMC and submissions made by the petitioner advocate Dhruvi Kapadia observed, "This figure constitutes roughly 25% of total registered beneficiaries. The encouraging part is that none of the persons vaccinated had any AEFI. We record our satisfaction that the BMC has been moving in the right direction. We expect the corporation to cover more such bedridden individuals in the days to come." The petitioner advocate Kapadia who along with advocate Kunal Tiwari had filed the public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions to the Centre, state and BMC to initiate door-to-door vaccination for people aged above 75 years, the disabled and the bedridden while addressing the court on Thursday submitted that she was happy with the way the drive was going and urged

the court to direct BMC to include people above 75 and 80 years in the scheme as well. Kapadia, however, submitted that the affidavit filed by the BMC on August 10 responding to the queries of the court on the number of people provided jobs at home and the role of NGOs that had been roped in was not clear and hence the BMC should clarify. The BMC affidavit stated that the NGOs would provide support to the teams conducting home vaccination by calling beneficiaries prior to the visit of the team as well as do a follow up with the beneficiary after the job was administered. The court observed, "With respect to the nature of support received from NGOs, presently there is nothing on record precluding the corporation from taking help from NGOs to administer vaccines." Additional government



pleader Geeta Shastri for the state submitted that the suggestions furnished by Kapadia on providing a helpline and introducing biometrics for beneficiaries without proper documents had been forwarded to the state Covid task force for consideration. Shastri assured the HC that once the task force considers them, appropriate action will be taken to implement the approved suggestions for the benefit of the class of people. The court also took on record the submissions by Kapadia that

Mira-Bhayander Municipal Corporation and Thane Municipal Corporation had also started home vaccination in their jurisdiction and said, "We encourage other corporations of this state to initiate measures for home vaccination of bedridden individuals following the same pattern adopted by BMC." The court then asked the state and other authorities to inform it about further developments based on its directives and posted further hearing of the PIL on September 9.

# Complete lockdown in Maharashtra if oxygen demands touch 700 MT per day: Tope

ABOUT 20 DELTA PLUS CASES HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE STATE

Team Absolute | Pune

Even as the State government further relaxed the Covid-19 restriction and allowed private offices to operate 24x7, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that the State will go for strict lockdown if the daily requirement for medical oxygen touched 700 MT per day. Speaking to reporters in Mumbai, Tope said that Maharashtra is gearing up for the possible third wave of Covid-19. The State has the capacity to produce 1,300 MT liquid medical oxygen. Industries have promised to produce about 200-300 MT oxygen, and 450 PSA will start producing oxygen. "With a full capacity maxi-

mum 1,700-2,000 MT oxygen will be available in Maharashtra. The central government has said that we should make provision of oxygen considering that the peak level of the third wave will be 1.5 times bigger than the second wave. In this scenario, State will require 3800 MT of oxygen. The government has decided that when the requirement of oxygen touches 700 MT per day, State will go for strict lockdown in auto mode" said Tope. He said that Chief Minister has given nod to the Health Department's proposal for relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions. Accordingly, fully vaccinated people will be allowed to travel in local trains. Restaurants will be allowed to

function with 50 per cent capacity. Private companies will be allowed to function with full capacity with fully vaccinated people. All shops including shopping malls will open till 10 pm. Cinema, multiplexes, religious places will not be opened till the next orders. Meanwhile, the State education department's notification to open schools next week has been questioned by the State task force on Covid-19. With 20 more Delta Plus patients detected on Wednesday in Maharashtra during genome sequencing the total number of Delta Plus patients in the State has reached 65. The State Health Department in a press release stated that the

IGIB laboratory has found 7 cases in Mumbai, 3 in Pune, 2 each in Nanded, Gondia, Raigad, Palghar and 1 each in Chandrapur and Akola. Genetic sequencing tests in Maharashtra have shown that delta variants are found in more than 80 per cent of the samples. Of the total Delta Plus patients found in the State, 32 are men and 33 are women. The highest number of 33 Delta Plus patients are in the age group of 19-45 years, followed by 17 patients in the age group of 46-60 years. There are 7 children under 18 years of age and 8 patients above 60 years of age. Death of one Delta Plus patient has been reported from Ratnagiri district.

# BIG BATTLE IN BJP MAHARASHTRA, INCUMBENT STATE PRESIDENT CHANDRAKANT PATIL MAY GO SOON

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil has been the eyes and nose of Amit Shah in Maharashtra, but his days seem to be numbered as state president. According to the highly placed sources in BJP, Maharashtra state president Chandrakant Patil is no more in the good books of Union minister Amit Shah. As a replacement, senior BJP leaders Chandrashekhar Bawankule and Ashish Shelar, a close confidant of Amit Shah, are going round. Devendra Fadnavis is pitching Bawankule's name as president as an OBC face. "Patil's extra adventurous decisions of copying up with MNS chief Raj Thackeray has not gone down well with the Delhi leadership of the BJP in view of Uttar Pradesh state elections. Raj Thackeray is known for his anti

**Sources said that the Patil-Fadnavis duo is not able to topple and counter the Maha Vikas Aghadi led by Uddhav Thackeray, successfully.**

north Indian stand. If the BJP allies with Thackeray for the upcoming municipal polls that will have larger repercussions damaging the north Indian vote bank and sending the wrong message ahead of crucial Uttar Pradesh state polls," said sources requested anonymity. Chandrakant Patil was in Delhi and he returned back without meeting Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On the other hand, Leader of Opposition and BJP MLA Devendra Fadnavis met Amit Shah and discussed state issues as well.

Patil tried to clarify that he had no schedule to meet Amit Shah and Narendra Modi. "But had I met both the leaders, it would have been a great visit to Delhi. I was told that they were busy in the ongoing monsoon session of parliament. People should not read much in my not meeting Amit Shah and Narendra Modi in Delhi visit," Patil said. Sources said that the Patil-Fadnavis duo is not able to topple and counter the Maha Vikas Aghadi led by Uddhav Thackeray, successfully. "Delhi leadership of BJP are very much concerned about the Uttar Pradesh and Lok Sabha 2024. Maharashtra is the state that sends 48 members of parliaments that is big therefore they could not afford to lose Maharashtra for a long time. The RSS has also asked to get their act together as BJP organisation is in disarray," said source requested anonymity.

# Mumbai Court Rejects Actor's Pre-Arrest Bail Plea In Porn Case



Gehana Vasisth had filed anticipatory bail application fearing arrest in the porn case in which businessman Raj Kundra, husband of Shilpa Shetty, is one of the accused.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A sessions court in Mumbai on Thursday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of actress Gehana Vasisth in a pornography case, in which businessman Raj Kundra is one of the accused. Fearing arrest, the actress had filed the anticipatory bail application before additional sessions judge Sonali Agarwal. The court rejected the plea on Thursday. Last week, the court had denied any interim protection from arrest to the actress. The judge had then said, "The allegations

in the present FIR are of serious nature that the accused compelled other victim to do kiss scenes and sex scenes. Considering such allegations and circumstances, I do not find this is a fit case to grant interim relief." The Mumbai police have registered multiple FIRs in connection with production of adult films and circulating them through mobile applications. Kundra, the husband of Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty, and his associate Ryan Thorpe were arrested last month in connection with a case which relates to alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through apps. They are currently in judicial custody. The court had recently rejected the anticipatory bail plea of model Sherlyn Chopra, another accused in the case.

# Lack of infra leading to poor RT-PCR tests in seven worst affected Covid-19 districts

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A critical shortage of testing laboratories and infrastructure capable of administering the golden RT-PCR test for Covid-19 is now becoming the top reason for seven districts of Maharashtra continuing to report an alarming rate of Covid-19 infections. State government officials told Mirror Now the over-dependence on the less reliable rapid antigen test (RAT) is leading to failure of detection of cases and causing a much higher weekly positivity rate. The concerned districts are Pune, Satara, Sangli, Beed, Ahmednagar, Solapur & Sindhudurg. All the seven districts of maximum concern in India's second worst Covid-19 hit state show 4.20 - 6.63 per cent, nearly double the positivity rate from that of the state average of 3.05 per cent. Further data shows that at least 15 per cent shortfall in the



**State government officials told Mirror Now the over-dependence on the less reliable rapid antigen test (RAT) is leading to failure of detection of cases and causing a much higher weekly positivity rate.**

minimum prescribed RT PCR tests ratio of 70 per cent versus 30 per cent rapid antigen tests. The state had asked districts to follow 70:30 ratio which means 70 per cent RT-PCR tests and 30 per cent RAT. But recent numbers suggest that Maharashtra is doing only 55 per cent RT-PCR tests and remaining 45 per cent RAT. State health department official said, "We had instructed the dis-

tricts to conduct maximum RT-PCR tests as that will only be applicable to calculate average weekly positivity rate. But here, if districts continue to do less RT-PCR, this will lead to high positivity rate. As we do not consider RAT results at all". Curiously, while the low level of RT PCR testing prompted the state government to issue fresh orders to conduct maximum tests, district officials maintain a crippling shortage of kits, manpower and testing apparatus was the too hurdle.

District officials said that amongst the factors leading to a sub-minimum administration of RT PCR tests, the biggest hurdles are lack of RT-PCR capability labs in rural areas, lack of trained manpower for tests, analysis, shortage of RT-PCR testing kits and delay in sample tests sent to cities for analysis. When asked the state government on this that why it is pushing these districts to do more tests when districts say they don't have infrastructure for it, "We have asked the district administrations concerned to rope in more labs and increase the number of mobile swabs collection vans for rural areas," opines health department official. Maharashtra has 230 laboratories of which 99 are government and 131 private. In addition, the state has 293 antigen collection centres, loosely categorised as labs. Overall, the state claims to have 523 laboratories to test Covid-19.

# Maharashtra govt decides to loan Covid vaccines from private hospitals amid shortage

**The Maharashtra government hit out at the Centre over a vaccine shortage in the state and announced that the state will be loaning doses from the private hospitals.**



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has hit out at the Centre over a vaccine shortage in the state and said the state is forced to shut down vaccination centres. The government has now announced that they will be loaning doses from private hospitals to fill the gap. NCP spokesperson and cabinet minister Nawab Malik said the vaccination momentum in Maharashtra has been disturbed as the Centre is not providing enough vaccines to the state. Nawab Malik said, "There are a number of vaccine centres that are shut, owing to the shortage of vaccines. We are not getting as much as

we had demanded. At least 20 lakh citizens need the second dose. Once the new vaccine doses come, these people will be given the doses first, which means others cannot be given the vaccine. And that's why the centres have to be shut." Malik has said that looking at the current vaccine crisis, the state government has taken a new decision. "The private hospitals that have purchased the vaccines and aren't able to fully utilise the stock owing to the less demand, now fear that the vaccine stock purchased by them will expire. Hence, it was decided that the private hospitals

can give the vaccine stock to the state government on a loan basis," Malik added. "The state government will then use the stock for the common man. And once the state government gets the vaccine stock, it can slowly return the same to the private hospitals. This way, the people will benefit immensely," he said. The NCP leader also added that the government had demanded an immediate supply of vaccines in view of the shortage of vaccines in Maharashtra. On August 11, the BMC announced that there would be no vaccination at the government centres on August 12-13 owing to the shortage. The BMC said that the vaccine stock would be received by Thursday night and will be distributed by Friday, hence vaccination will resume on Saturday. This is not the first time that the BMC has had to shut down the vaccination programme owing to a shortage. Minister Aslam Shaikh said that the state government was helpless as it could not procure the vaccine directly without the approval of the central government.

# MAHARASHTRA LOGS 6,388 COVID-19 NEW CASES, 208 DEATHS AND 8,390 RECOVERIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra on Thursday, August 12, recorded 6,388 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the number of active cases to 62,351. Besides, 208 COVID-19 deaths were reported in the day, taking the number of total fatalities to 1,34,572. 8,390 patients were discharged in the day, taking the tally to 61,75,010. The recovery rate in the state rose to 96.86%. The case fatality rate in the state is 2.11%. Currently, 3,98,397 people are in home quarantine and 2,507 people are in institutional quarantine. The Mumbai circle--which consists of MCGM, Thane, TMC, Navi Mumbai, KDMC, Ulhasnagar MC,



Bhivandi Nijampur MC, Mira Bhayandar MC, Palghar, Vasai Virar MC, Raigad, Panvel MC--recorded 728 new cases. The Nashik circle--which consists of Nashik, Nashik MC, Malegaon MC, Ahmednagar, Ahmednagar MC, Dhule, Dhule MC, Jalgaon, Jalgaon MC, Nandurbar--reported 918 fresh COVID-19 cases. The Pune circle--which includes Pune, PMC, PCMC, Solapur, Solapur MC,

Satara--recorded 2828 new cases. The Kolhapur circle--which includes Kolhapur, Kolhapur MC, Sangli, Sangli MC, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri--reported 1472 new cases. The Aurangabad circle--which consists of Aurangabad, Aurangabad MC, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Parbhani MC--reported 73 fresh cases. The Latur circle--which consists of Latur, Latur MC, Osmanabad, Beed, Nanded, Nanded MC--recorded 327 fresh cases. The Akola circle--which includes Akola, Akola MC, Amaravati, Amaravati MC, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim-- recorded 22 fresh cases. Nagpur circle--which includes Nagpur, Nagpur MC, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Chandrapur MC, Gadchiroli--reported 20 fresh cases.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Pollution Control Boards are non-transparent

A majority of India's pollution control agencies remain closed entities when it came to sharing information with the public with a mere handful of India's pollution control boards and authorities are adequately putting out environmental and governance information into the public domain, a new rating study by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). For calculating the Transparency Index and rating of pollution control boards on public disclosure - as the study is titled - the CSE assessed the data disclosure performance of 29 state pollution control boards (PCBs) and six pollution control committees from across the country. Of these, only 17 boards and committees scored 50 per cent or above. These are from Odisha, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Goa, Karnataka, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. CSE says that Governance and functioning-related data remains paper-bound: Information on functioning, actions taken by a board against polluting industries, public hearing data on new projects etc are rarely disclosed or remain difficult to access on the websites. Only 12 states have shared their latest annual reports on their websites and only five boards have shared minutes of their board meetings on their websites: It is mandatory for SPCBs to meet at least once every three months. Board members in these meetings are supposed to discuss issues related to the functioning of the board, action plans, compliance and monitoring, and devising innovative methods to improve enforcement of laws. Putting in the public domain the crucial pollution-related information, data and details of actions taken is critical - it can help policy-makers take the discussions to the next level of pollution management. SPCBs and SPCCs, therefore, must focus urgently to become more transparent by putting out data and improving the quality of their outreach for public engagement."

CHINA STRIKES DISCORDANT NOTE AT UNSC MARITIME SESSION, DROPS COURTESY

Arul Louis

China struck a discordant note at the Security Council high-level meeting on maritime security attacking the Indo-Pacific initiative in which India is active, as well as the US and Japan, while dispensing with normal diplomatic courtesies to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who chaired the session.



Amid the heads of state and government, a deputy Prime Minister and ministers at the Council meeting on Monday, Beijing was represented by only a deputy permanent representative, Dai Bing, who was the sole speaker to fail to follow the diplomatic tradition of acknowledging Modi chairing the session or India's role in bringing attention to maritime security. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken thanked Modi for "India's leadership" on maritime security issues, "especially in championing a free and open Indo-Pacific" In an attack on India that encompassed the Quad, Dai said that some countries were "intensifying maritime conflicts" in the Asia Pacific region. He did not name India or the Quad, the group that is made up also of the US, Japan and Australia, but his target was obvious. "At present, a few countries are pursuing exclusive regional strategies in the Asia Pacific region and attempt to create an intensifying maritime conflicts, undermining the sovereignty and security interests

of relevant countries, and weaken regional peace and stability," he said. "This runs counter to the aspirations of most countries in the region to seek peace, cooperation and development," he added. India and the Quad have made clear that their grouping did not target any country and India's Permanent Representative T.S. Tirumurti made clear at a news conference last week that the maritime security meeting that India was convening as the Council president was not aimed at any nation. Although none of the speakers, especially US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, mentioned China, Dai launched a broadside against the US accusing it of becoming the "biggest threat" in the region. Turning on Japan, which wasn't even at the meeting, Dai accused it of releasing wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the ocean asserting that it endangered the health of the people in the coastal regions. Permanent Member Russia was represented at the meeting by President Vladimir Putin, who made a rare appearance at the

Council. Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta and Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chin were on the distinguished roster of speakers from the Council that included Niger's Deputy Prime Minister Hassoumi Massoudou and eight ministers. Tunisia was represented by its Permanent Representative Tarek Ladeb. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was represented by his Chief of Cabinet Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti. In addition, Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is not a member of the Security Council, was represented in his capacity as the president of the African Union by his Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula. They all praised India effusively for convening the meeting as Council president and for the first time highlighting maritime security as a pressing global issue and acknowledging Modi's leadership. In his criticism of the US, Dai said, "This country itself has become the biggest threat to

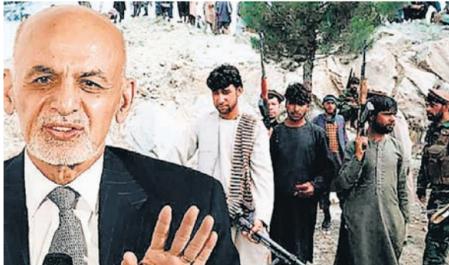
peace and stability in the South China Sea." He said, "The US has been stirring up trouble out of nothing, arbitrarily sending advanced military vessels and aircraft into the South China Sea as provocations and publicly trying to drive a wedge into regional countries, especially countries concerned." While China has been involved in disputes with countries in the region like South Korea and ASEAN members the Philippines and Malaysia, Dai tried to make it seem that Beijing was working with the ASEAN. He said, "With the joint efforts of China and ASEAN countries, the situation in the South China Sea remains generally stable." Dai took the unusual leap of linking the Fukushima reactor, which suffered a disaster precipitated by an earthquake and a tsunami in 2011. "Japan's unilateral decision to release Fukushima's wastewater into the ocean is irresponsible," he said. "China strongly urges Japan to earnestly fulfill its international obligations by revoking its wrong decision, and prudently handle the issue of Fukushima wastewater, so as to avoid harming the health of the people of coastal countries and the global marine ecology," he said. He also criticised the US for not joining the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that seeks to provide a framework for the sharing of ocean resources. "The US itself does not join UNCLOS, but consider itself a judge of the Convention, pointing fingers at other countries and interfere arbitrarily," Dai said. The US has refused sign the UNCLOS under successive administrations since it was adopted in 1982 claiming it would infringe on its sovereignty. However, Washington's ally Britain also criticised those

not joining or upholding the UNCLOS without naming anyone. Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said, "We have to be clear that a legally enshrined international treaty, bearing the signature of 168 parties, can't simply be junked on a whim. UNCLOS applies to all the oceans and all the seas. It is not an a la carte option for some states to pick and choose as they wish." Wallace spoke of the importance of Indo-Pacific region that he said was "the world's growth engine." "Like India, the UK (United Kingdom) has a vision for a free, open and secure Indo-Pacific," he said, adding, "That is why you'll find the UK more persistently engaged and increasingly proactive in the region." Without naming China, Blinken said, "In the South China Sea, we have seen dangerous encounters between vessels at sea and provocative actions to advance unlawful maritime claims. The US has made clear its concerns regarding actions that intimidate and bully other states from lawfully accessing their maritime resources." Dai took exception to Blinken mentioning the situation in the South China Sea, saying, "China firmly opposes this act." "The US itself is not qualified to make irresponsible remarks on the issue of South China Sea," he said. Blinken said, "Some may assert that resolving the dispute in the South China Sea is not the business of the US or any other country that is not a claimant to the islands and waters. But it is the business and, even more, the responsibility of every member-state to defend the rules that we've all agreed to follow and peacefully resolve maritime disputes."

international

AFGHAN GOVT OFFERS 'SHARE IN POWER' TO TALIBAN

The head of the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), Abdullah Abdullah said the Afghan government is committed to end the ongoing conflicts through negotiations.



Kabul | Agencies The Afghan government has offered the Taliban a share in power so long as the rising violence in the country comes to a halt, Al Jazeera reported on Thursday, citing a government source. The proposal was delivered through Qatar, the host of Afghan peace talks, according to the source. In another development, the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), Abdullah Abdullah, presented to the members of Troika-plus the scheme of Afghan government for winding up

the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Abdullah said the Afghan government is committed to end the ongoing conflicts through negotiations. The head of HCNR was addressing the representatives of the US, China, Pakistan and Russia in the Troika-plus meeting held in Doha on Wednesday evening. Abdullah further added that the major powers of the world along with the Afghans want an independent and united Afghanistan which is free of terrorism. He also accused the Taliban of being indifferent to the peace negotiations which has led to a stalemate in intra-Afghan talks.

We don't have magic powers to make Taliban do what we want: Imran

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has brushed aside the accusations on Pakistan being supportive of a Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, stating that the country does not have magic powers to dictate terms to the Taliban. Imran Khan said that Pakistan is not gaining anything from the situation in Afghanistan, instead it is worried because the situation there seems to be moving towards a long civil war, which, he said, will have direct impact on Pakistan as well. "Pakistan will have direct impact of a long civil war in Afghanistan because of the large Pashtun population we have in the country. The country that will be most affected after Afghanistan will be Pakistan. It has happened in the past when our Pashtun people reacted to what was happening in Afghanistan.

Because of that, we lost over 60,000 people," he said. Khan also lashed out at the Joe Biden administration, stating that the US has always seen Pakistan as useful only in the context of the mess it is leaving behind in Afghanistan after 20 years of fighting. "At the moment, the most important thing for Afghanistan is a ceasefire," Khan said. Since the time the US and other foreign forces started withdrawing from Afghanistan, the Taliban have been making strong forward movement, claiming at least eight provinces, including the bordering areas. The west alleges that Pakistan's support for the Taliban has allowed it to whether the war, a blame Khan denied. The Pakistan premier said that a political settlement in Afghanistan between the Ashraf Ghani-led government and the Taliban looks difficult as the Taliban have refused to have any talks with

Ghani. "The condition is that as long as President Ashraf Ghani is there, the Taliban are not going to talk to the Afghan government," Khan said, quoting his recent meeting with the Taliban delegation in Pakistan. Analysts said the western belief that Pakistan has achieved its goal by supporting the Taliban to take back control in Afghanistan is an incorrect approach, as in case the Taliban form government in Afghanistan, Pakistan will be among the most sensitive-ly impacted neighbours, as the voices supportive of Taliban will start surfacing from major parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which may pose a serious threat to the country. If the voices join together and form a force, which is supported by the Taliban, it may be looking towards toppling the current democratic set up of the country.

UNRWA URGES HAMAS TO RESPECT 'INVIOABILITY' OF ITS FACILITIES IN GAZA

Gaza | Agencies

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has called on the Islamic Hamas Movement to refrain from the action of violating its facilities in the Gaza Strip. In a statement, the UNRWA said it has sent letters of protest to Hamas and condemned the existence and potential use of underground structures, including tunnels, reports Xinhua news agency. "Initial risk assessments have indicated that the existence of underground structures could have led to further damage," it added. The statement referred to underground tunnels that Hamas used during the last round of tension between Israel and Hamas-led militant groups in the Gaza Strip that lasted for 11 days and ended on May 21. The agency has also protested the takeover by Hamas of one of the schools it is operating, "which undermines the inviolability and neutrality of UNRWA premises." "These actions also stand to compromise the safe return of children to their schools and scuttles UNRWA's efforts to open the schools on time," said the statement. There has been no immediate response from the Hamas movement. However, Hamas officials said they will study the situation and respond to UNRWA's demand soon.



Israeli PM, CIA chief meet with focus on Iran

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief William Burns met here to discuss Iran and strengthen intelligence cooperation between the two allies. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on Wednesday that the two discussed "boosting intelligence and security cooperation between Israel and the US", reports Xinhua news agency. On Tuesday, Barnea and Burns held a separate meeting to discuss Iran and other "regional challenges in which the two organisations intend to cooperate", according to the statement. Israel's state-owned Kan TV news reported that Burns will also meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian intelligence chief Majed Faraj in Ramallah.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on Wednesday that the two discussed "boosting intelligence and security cooperation between Israel and the US", reports Xinhua news agency.

Israel launches plan to fight crime in Arab society

Tel Aviv | Agencies

The Israeli government announced a national plan to tackle the soaring crime within the Arab society in the country. The plan aims at fighting crime in Arab towns to "restore safety to the streets of the towns and villages" of the Arab minority, Commissioner of Israel Police Kobi Shabtai said in public remarks alongside Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Wednesday. Bennett said that years of negligence of policing and infrastructures led to "out-of-control shooting in the streets and violence" in Arab communities, adding that his new government "is determined to take action and wage an unceasing, constant and persistent fight against crime and violence in the Arab society". A new police branch dedicated to foiling crime in the Arab communities has been established, Bennett said. Earlier on Wednesday, the police carried out "Operation Sword Strike" to seize illegal weapons in over 200 sites throughout Israel, he added. Arab citizens in Israel are Palestinians who did not leave their land during the 1948 war that broke out just in the wake of the announcement of the independence of the state of Israel. They comprise about 20 per cent of Israel's 9 million population. Official figures show they suffer a lack of job opportunities and less government spending on education, health, and infrastructure.



Magnitude 7.3 earthquake rattles Philippines

Manila | Agencies

An offshore earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale struck Davao Oriental province in the southern Philippines on Thursday, according to authorities. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the quake, which struck at 1.46 a.m. local time, hit at a depth of 69 km, about 67 km southeast of Governor Generoso town, reports Xinhua news agency. The agency said the quake, which is tectonic in origin, can trigger aftershocks and cause damage. The quake was also felt in South Cotabato province on Mindanao island, as well as Leyte province, the institute added. Meanwhile, the jolts of the massive tremor were also strongly felt as far away as Talaud district of North Sulawesi province in Indonesia, triggering panic among



residents. The tremors were felt at IV MMI (Modified Mercalli Intensity) in the district, Priyo Budi, an official in charge at the meteorology and geophysics agency, told Xinhua. The jolts were also felt at II to III MMI in Kepulauan Sangihe district and Bitung city of the province, the

official said. The agency did not issue a warning for a tsunami as the tremors did not potentially trigger giant waves, according to him. In Talaud district, the tremors forced many residents to rush outside their houses, said Habel Salombe, a resident in the district.



## Reese Witherspoon 'obsessed' with Drew Barrymore

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Reese Witherspoon has revealed that she was completely obsessed and was a "super fan" of actress Drew Barrymore. Witherspoon spilled the beans on 'The Drew Barrymore Show', where the '50 First Dates' actress asked her, "I thought we were 13. Then, I realised if you had done 'Man On The Moon', so you must have been 14, right?" Witherspoon replied, "I was 14 years old; I was completely obsessed with you. You had no idea that I was like your super fan. I had read your book, I had pictures of you on my wall. You were like my childhood acting idol, and you came up to me in a restaurant and you said, 'I saw you in a movie and you were so wonderful!'" The 'Legally Blonde' actress said that it changed her whole perspective. "You were one of the first people who ever supported me and showed me, it doesn't have to be competitive, that creativity is infinite and if we can collaborate as women together, we can accomplish so much more," Witherspoon said on the show, which airs on Zee Cafe in India.



## MAGGIE Q FLAUNTS DRAMATIC LEG SLIT AT SCREENING OF THE PROTÉGÉ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Maggie Q looked sensational on Wednesday night as she posed on the red carpet in an eye-catching mirrored pencil skirt with a dramatic slit that exposed her toned legs in the special screening of *The Protégé* in Los Angeles. The actress paired the unique garment with a textured bustier bodysuit featuring long-sleeves and a halter strap. To further keep her skirt the focus, the *Nikita* star slipped her feet into a pair of plain black stiletto heels. As for make-up, Maggie drew attention to her sultry peepers with a generous dusting of brown eyeshadow while amplifying her pout with some mauve lip gloss. After getting in some striking solo shots, Maggie was later joined by several of the industry figures behind *The Protégé*, including the film's director Martin Campbell.



Jason Momoa doesn't want his children to act

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Jason Momoa doesn't want his daughter Lola and son Nakoa to pursue a career in acting because he doesn't think they are "strong" enough to deal with the pressure. "Aw man, one of them wants to do it and I'm not a fan. I don't want them to. I don't know. I'll try my damndest to keep 'em out of it. I love storytelling. I love theatrical things, I like directing and filmmaking, but I just want them to, you know, really to go for other things," Momoa told Entertainment Tonight, reports femalefirst.co.uk. He added, "If they (really) want to, maybe. But I don't want them to get into acting. It's very hard on people and I don't want them to have that pressure. I'm tough, I can handle it, but I wouldn't want to put someone I love (through) that." The "Aquaman" star is even trying to branch out from acting himself.

Los Angeles | Agencies

woodreporter.com.

Pop singer Justin Bieber and rapper Megan Thee Stallion are leading the nominations for the 2021 MTV Video Music Awards with seven and six nods, respectively. The two are up for artist of the year, with many of Stallion's nominations coming for her Cardi B collaboration "WAP", Cardi B earned four nominations, all for "WAP", reports holly-

JB, Megan Thee Stallion lead VMA with top nominations

Many other artists scored five nominations apiece, including Billie Eilish, BTS, Doja Cat, Drake, Giveon, Lil Nas X and first-time contender Olivia Rodrigo. Dua Lipa and Taylor Swift are among the artists with four nods each, with Ariana Grande, Beyonce, Bruno Mars, Ed Sheeran and Foo Fighters each scoring three nominations. The Video Music Awards are set to air live from Brooklyn's Barclays Center, which served as the site of the award event in 2013.



## 'BRUISED' HALLE BERRY STEPS INTO THE RING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Halle Berry cracked two of her ribs on the first day of filming her new movie "Bruised" but that did not stop her from shooting, says her stunt coordinator.

Berry will be seen playing a disgraced MMA fighter in her upcoming directorial. The story revolves around her return to fighting to redeem herself after the son she gave up as an infant re-enters her life unexpectedly, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The role required lots of physical work for Berry and on the very first day of shooting, she ended up with two broken ribs. The actress did not let her injury pause the production and insisted on continuing with the shoot.

"(It was) kind of a crazy injury," stunt coordinator Eric Brown told Entertainment Weekly. The stunt coordinator added, "But that was just her intensity... Halle's a special case. I've worked with tons of actors, and almost none of them have that kind of work ethic."

"Bruised" is due for release on Netflix on November 24.



## John Stamos always wanted to have kids

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor John Stamos says his dreams of having a family has come true thanks to his wife Caitlin, with whom he shares their three-year-old son Billy, as he says he always wanted to have children. "I always wanted to have kids, but I didn't think I'd meet the right person. And maybe I felt like well, I have everything, I

shouldn't be greedy," Stamos told People magazine. "(Finding Caitlin helped me) straighten up my life. I wasn't deserving of it yet I think. But six years ago, I sobered up and I became a better person. And when Caitlin came around, I recognised it immediately. I said, 'I have to be good for that to make it work.'" He told People magazine, "(A family) is what I always wanted. My dreams came true 100 times over."

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Francesca Allen



## INDIA VS ENGLAND CRICKET TEST SERIES 2ND TEST, DAY 1

# RAHUL'S TON POWERS INDIA TO 276/3

London | Agencies

Opener K.L. Rahul scored his sixth Test century as India ended Day One of the second Test at Lord's strongly placed at 276/3 after being put into bat by England. Rahul, who batted with grit and determination, saw off 248 deliveries and hit 12 fours and a six as he shared century stands with fellow opener Rohit Sharma (83) and skipper Virat Kohli (42) to frustrate the English bowling that is missing some of the top bowlers. Rahul shared 126 runs for the first wicket with Sharma before the latter was bowled by James



Anderson. After Cheteshwar Pujara's dismissal for nine, Rahul added 117 runs with Kohli for the third wicket. India were 157/2 at tea and 46/0 at lunch after the first session was interrupted by rain.



### 3RD INDIAN OPENER TO HIT CENTURY AT LORD'S

London: K.L. Rahul, who till 10 days ago wasn't even sure of a place in the playing XI in the Test series against England, on Thursday became only the third Indian opener to score a Test century at Lord's. Vinoo Mankad (184 in 1952) and current Indian team coach Ravi Shastri (100 in 1990) are the only other Indian openers to have achieved the feat. The right-handed batsman reached his sixth Test century with his ninth boundary and on the 212th ball he faced. He shared century stands with Rohit Sharma (83) and skipper Virat Kohli (42).

#### Briefscores

India 276/3 in 90 overs (R Sharma 83, KL Rahul 127 batting, V Kohli 42, J Anderson 2/52) vs England.



### JADEJA YET TO PERFORM TO HIS FULL POTENTIAL: SHEHWAG

New Delhi: Former India batsman Virender Sehwag has praised all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja batting but he thinks that the all-rounder is yet to perform to his full potential with the bat. Ravindra Jadeja added 60 runs for the sixth wicket with KL Rahul in the first innings of the first Test at Trent Bridge. Jadeja scored 56 runs which was crucial for India taking a first innings lead of 95 runs over England. "Now, Jadeja is a main bowler, left-arm spinner for India, and his contribution with the bat. He has not yet realised his potential but is already magnificent," said Sehwag to Sony Sports Network. Sehwag also highlighted the importance of Jadeja in the current Indian Test batting order. "Ravindra Jadeja is an important player of this team, especially when we talk about Test match cricket because firstly, he bowls 25-30 overs and secondly, he comes and bats at No.7 or No.8. When the main batsmen get out, he scores those crucial runs. He scored 56 runs in this Test match; they were crucial runs. Probably, because of his 56 runs only India got the lead and went ahead of England."

## Chelsea beat Villarreal in penalties to win UEFA Super Cup



Belfast | Agencies

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel was quite happy as his team started the new season with silverware. Chelsea, the Champions League winners, defeated Spanish club Villarreal, who won the UEFA Europa League, in a penalty shoot-out early on Thursday to win the UEFA Super Cup. The two teams were level 1-1 after Hakim Ziyech's 27th-minute goal was cancelled out by Villarreal's Gerard Moreno in the 73rd minute, taking the match into extra time. They remained deadlock 1-1 at the end of extra-time and penalty shootout was resorted to and Chelsea emerged winner 6-5 at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park, Belfast. Substitute goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga was the hero as he affected two saves off Aissa Mandi and Raul Albiol as Chelsea started the new season as they had ended the previous one -- by winning a European title. If it was the Champions League triumph that lifted their spirits in a season marred by the Covid-19 pandemic last year, the Super Cup title augurs well as the Premier League season starts this weekend. Chelsea's victory over English rivals Manchester City in the Champions League Final had cemented Tuchel's position at the Blues, the Super Cup win further boosted his stature at the club notorious for sacking coaches by its Russian owner.

## Smriti, Harmanpreet leave The Hundred, return to India

London | Agencies

Indian cricketers Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur have pulled out from The Hundred and are set to return to India for varying reasons. Smriti, who represented Southern Brave, will fly back home to spend time with her family before embarking on the tour of Australia in September. She will be replaced by Ireland's Gaby Lewis. She will miss the last two matches for the Brave, including the final.

"I would love to be able to stay with the team until the final, but we've been away from home for a long time with more tours ahead. I'll be watching the team at Lord's and hoping they can continue our good form. It's been a fantastic competition to be involved in and I've really enjoyed it," said



Smriti in a statement. Harmanpreet, who was playing for Manchester

Originals, has a quadriceps injury. A replacement will not be sought by her team, who are at the bottom of the table.

Smriti's final innings for Southern Brave came on Wednesday when she hit 78 runs off 52 balls to lead her side to victory over Welsh Fire. For her scintillating knock, she was adjudged as the 'Player of the Match'. In total, Smriti scored 167 runs in seven innings at a strike rate of 133.60. Harmanpreet, on the other hand, amassed 104 runs from three innings at a strike rate of 109.47.

This leaves Shafali Verma playing for Birmingham Phoenix, Deepti Sharma representing London Spirit and the top run-scorer of the tournament, Jemimah Rodrigues for Northern Superchargers as the remaining Indians in The Hundred.

## FIFA Rankings: India stays at 105th spot

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Asian Cup in June and thus maintained the position in rankings it has held since April 2021.

India remained at the 105th spot in the latest FIFA Rankings updated on Thursday. The points gained in their last two qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup helping them remain in position. India did not advance in the World Cup qualifying programme following their 1-1 draw with Afghanistan in Qatar in June but made it to the third qualifying round for the 2023 Asian Cup. Igor Stimac's side finished third in Group E in the joint qualification for World Cup and



India had achieved their highest-ever ranking of 94 in February 1996 while they were at their worst position of 173 in the list for March 2015.

Belgium leads the rankings ahead of Brazil, winner of the Olympic gold medal in Tokyo last week. France (3rd), England (4th), Italy (5th), Argentina (6th), Spain (7th), Portugal (8th), Mexico (9th), and the USA (10th) comprise the top 10 in global rankings.

Japan is the highest-ranked Asian team at 24 with Iran snapping at their heels at 26.

## RTU Open classical chess: Nihal Sarin slips to joint second spot



Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's Grandmaster Nihal Sarin was held to a draw by compatriot Arjun Erigaisi in the fourth round of the Riga Technical University (RTU) Open Chess Championships in Riga, Latvia, as the strong Indian contingent continued to do well in the classical chess event.

Sarin the second highest-ranked player in the Open Grandmaster section of this chess festival which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, had started with three wins in three-game. But his progress was halted by Erigaisi, who played with white pieces.

Both Sarin and Erigaisi are sharing the second spot at 3.5 points with 13 others behind sole leader Aram Hakobyan of Armenia, who has won all his four games so far.

Among the 15 sharing the second spot are six Indian players. They include Sarin and Erigaisi, Grandmasters SL Narayanan, D Gukesh, NR Visakh, and Pragnanandhaa -- all of whom have three wins and a draw.

Abhimanyu Puranik, who won the Rapid Open event ahead in Riga last week, was sharing the 17th spot with another large group that includes compatriots Aravindh Chithambaram, Pranav Anand, Arjun Kalyan, Murali Karthikeyan, and Aditya Mittal.

## Sri Lanka Cricket earns big money from recent series against India



Colombo | Agencies

The recent white-ball series between India and Sri Lanka has resulted in big money for the Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Even after the Indian camp got hit by Covid-19 after Krunal Pandya tested

positive, the tour was completed with the two T20Is played on consecutive days.

India won the ODI series 2-1 while Sri Lanka bagged the T20I series with the same margin. Playing three ODIs and as many T20Is has led to SLC earning a revenue of USD 14.5 million (INR 107 crore), said its secretary Mohan de Silva. "According to the FTP (Future Tours Program) the tour was only for three ODIs, but our President Shammi Silva managed to persuade the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) to give us an additional three T20Is which resulted in the enhancement of the commercial value. It was made possible because of the relationship we have cultivated with the Indian Cricket Board. We got \$ 14.5 million from broadcasting and other rights like ground, etc.," de Silva was quoted as saying by the Daily FT.

De Silva also thanked the BCCI and Indian team for completing the tour despite a positive Covid-19 case and close contacts kept in isolation. Sri Lanka will now host South Africa from September 2-14 for three ODIs and three T20Is.

## Durand Cup tournament to return after a year

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Foreign Secretary of British India from 1884 to 1894, the prestigious tournament was first held in 1888 at

Durand Cup, the world's third oldest and Asia's oldest football tournament, is poised to make a comeback after a year's hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sixteen teams from across the country, including four from the Indian armed forces, will vie for the top honours in and around Kolkata over a period of four weeks from September 5 to October 3.

The 130th edition of Durand Cup is being organised with the support of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), IFA (West Bengal) and the government of West Bengal. Named after Mortimer Durand, the



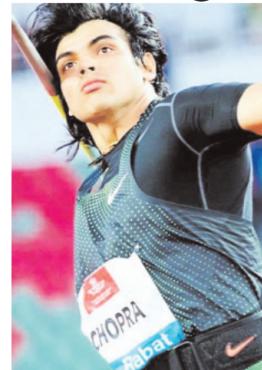
Annadale in Shimla. The tournament was a conscious way to initially maintain health and fitness amongst the British troops which was later opened to civilians. Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan and East Bengal are the most successful teams in the history of Durand Cup, winning it 16 times each.

## Olympic champion Chopra rises to second in World Rankings

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics javelin throw competition has propelled Neeraj Chopra to move up 14 places to second place in the latest World Athletics Rankings, updated every Wednesday. Chopra, who decimated all the competition in Tokyo to win gold with a throw of 87.58 metres on Saturday, is ranked second at 1395 points behind Johannes Vetter of Germany. Vetter, the top-ranked German with 1396 points, failed spectacularly in the final at Tokyo and finished ninth. Poland's Marcin Krukowski is third with 1302 points while Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic, who won the silver medal in Tokyo, is fourth with 1298 points. Julian Weber of Germany is seated in fifth place with 1291 points.

Chopra is the first Indian to win a gold medal in athletics and only the second Indian after shooter Abhinav Bindra, to win an individual gold medal at the Olympics. Before the start of the Olympics, Chopra had said that it is the performance on the day that matters more than the World Rankings. He went to prove that by winning the gold medal ahead of those occupying higher positions in the rankings. Chopra is currently on a break and will hope to make it to the Diamond League Finals when he returns to the circuit. He had taken part in four events abroad before the Olympics, with the 88.07 metres he achieved in Patiala in March this year to break his own National Record being his season best effort.



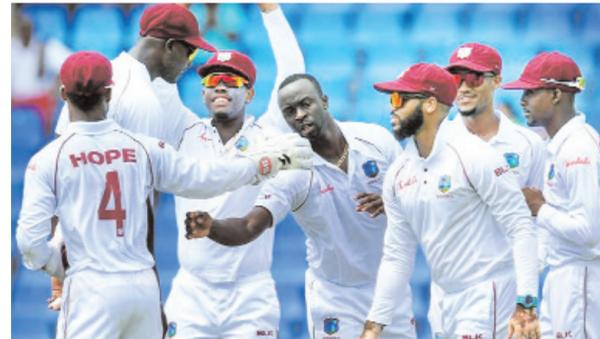
## West Indies names 13-man squad for the first Test against Pakistan

Kingston | Agencies

The selection panel of the Cricket West Indies (CWI) has picked off-spinner Roston Chase in the 13-member squad for the first Test match against Pakistan, hoping to provide more variety in the bowling line-up. Earlier, on Monday, West Indies had announced a 17-member squad for the Test series against Pakistan. From those 17 members, Shamrah Brooks, Rakheem Cornwall, Jahmar Hamilton and Chemar Holder have been named as travelling reserves.

The series marks the start of the new ICC World Test Championship (WTC) cycle for West Indies and Pakistan. Both teams finished 8th and 6th respectively in the last WTC cycle. On current form, Pakistan have won their last four Tests. West Indies, on the other hand, are yet to register a single win in their last four Tests.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, fans will not be allowed inside the stadium.



The last time Pakistan toured West Indies for Tests, they won 2-1, marking their first ever series win in the Caribbean. The series also served as perfect farewell of Misbah-ul-Haq and Younis Khan from international cricket.

Full squad: Kraigg Brathwaite (captain), Jermaine Blackwood (vice-captain), Nkrumah Bonner, Roston Chase, Joshua Da Silva, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Alzarri Joseph, Kyle Mayers, Kieran Powell, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales and Jomel Warrican.

Travelling reserves: Shamrah Brooks, Rakheem Cornwall, Jahmar Hamilton and Chemar Holder.



## AKSHAY-VAANI CUT A RUG ON MARJAAWAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Akshay Kumar and Vaani Kapoor are already in a celebratory mood, going by their latest dance video on the song 'Marjaawaan' from their upcoming film 'Bell Bottom'. Akshay shared the video on Instagram. The two hold each other gently as they groove on the number, which has been sung by Gurnazar and Asees Kaur.

The actor asked their fans to create their own steps on the tune.

"Some songs stay with you forever. Create your versions of #Marjaawaan with your partner. I'll reshare some of the best entries on my story," he wrote as the caption of the video, which currently has 936,000 views on the photo-sharing website.

'Bell Bottom', an espionage thriller is directed by Ranjit M. Tiwari. The film also stars Lara Dutta Bhupathi and Huma Qureshi. Set in the 1980s, the film was largely shot in Glasgow, Scotland, amid the Covid-19 lockdown.

# When 'Thala' meets Thalapathy Vijay

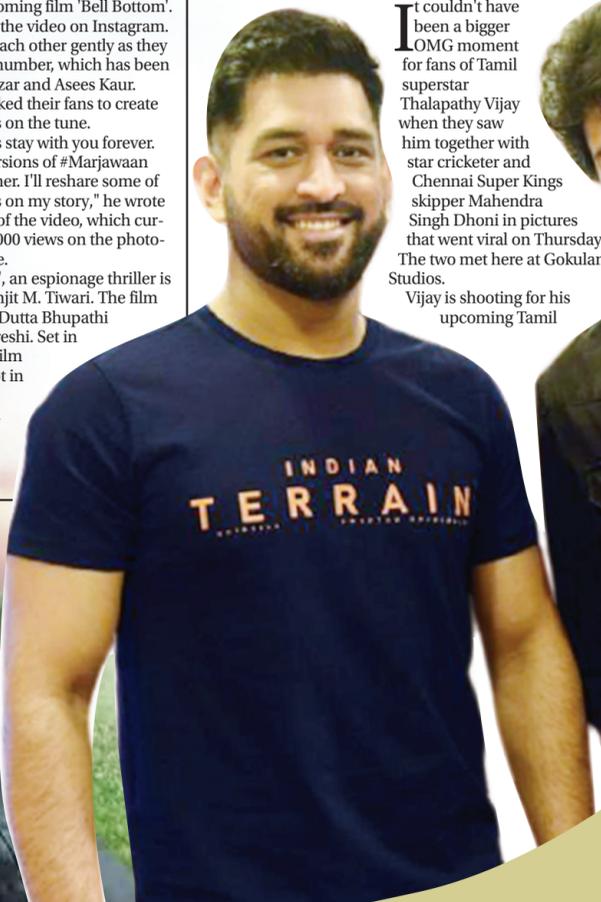
Team Absolute | Chennai

It couldn't have been a bigger OMG moment for fans of Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay when they saw him together with star cricketer and Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni in pictures that went viral on Thursday. The two met here at Gokulam Studios.

Vijay is shooting for his upcoming Tamil

action film 'Beast' at Gokulam and Dhoni for an ad commercial. The pictures of the two in one frame got their fans into a tizzy. The two celebrities had earlier collaborated when Vijay was named the brand ambassador of the Chennai Super Kings.

The team of 'Beast', produced by Sun Films and written and directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, are all set to fly to Europe for their next round of shooting. The film's lead female character is being played by Pooja Hegde.



## AMITABH BACHCHAN'S 'CHEHRE' READY TO HIT THEATERS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan's much awaited film 'Chehre' is set for a theatrical release. The makers have locked August 27 as the release date for the film. The film has been ready for release for a few months now but was on hold due to the lockdown.

However, the team has been waiting for the right time to have a theatrical release.

On the announcement of the new release date, producer Anand Pandit shared, "The team had taken great efforts and we always

thought that 'Chehre' deserved a theatrical release. We want the magnanimity of the film to be showcased in the right way and hence are excited to finally reach the audience through the cinema screens."

In 'Chehre', the audience will see Amitabh play the role of a lawyer while Emraan Hashmi playing a business tycoon.

Directed by Romy Jafry, 'Chehre' also features Rhea Chakraborty, Annu Kapoor, Krystle D'Souza, Drithiman Chakraborty, Raghubir Yadav, and Siddhant Kapoor.

## SidNaaz set to enter 'Bigg Boss OTT' on weekend

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular 'Bigg Boss 13' couple Siddharth Shukla and Shehnaaz Gill, who are fondly called as "SidNaaz" by their fans, are all set to step into the 'Bigg Boss OTT' house over the weekend. The couple will not just spend time with the contestants but will also have a brief interaction with the show's witty host and Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar.

"It will be really interesting to see this romantic jodi enter 'Bigg Boss OTT' specially with the new format and

the theme - stay connected," a source close to the couple said. The source added, "SidNaaz have made a great connection inside this house and it will be exciting to see their interaction with other contestants and Jodis in the house. This weekend will surely be amazing." 'Bigg Boss OTT' airs on Voot Select. Karan is anchoring the digital version. After the completion of the digital exclusive, the show will move to Colors with the launch of Season 15 of 'Bigg Boss' hosted by actor Salman Khan.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Series and Abundantia Entertainment have once again collaborated for promising and high-quality content in the form of their latest film 'Jalsa' that commenced filming here. Co-written and directed by the highly acclaimed Suresh Triveni ('Tumhari Sulu'), Jalsa reunites Suresh with the powerhouse actor Vidya Balan and brings on-board another actor par excellence, Shefali Shah, in the lead in Jalsa. Talking about Jalsa actress Vidya Balan said, "Jalsa is an edgy but human story and I can't wait to firstly start work on and then share it with the world." Speaking about the same Shefali Shah said, "It's a story with such a unique perspective that when Suresh first told me about it, I knew I just had to do it. I'm also excited to work with Vidya, whose work I have deeply admired." Jalsa is written by Prajwal Chandrashekar and Suresh Triveni, with dialogues by Hussain and Abbas Dalal. The film also features Rohini Hattangadi, Iqbal Khan, Vidhatri Bandi, Gurpal Singh and Surya Kasibhatla with Manav Kaul in a special appearance.



Vidya Balan, Shefali Shah kickstarts 'Jalsa'



## Badshah, Aastha Gill reunite for 'Bachpan Ka Pyaar'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The singing duo Aastha Gill and Badshah are back together with a new soundtrack 'Bachpan Ka Pyaar' featuring the child singer Sahdev Dirdo who originally sang the viral song. Aastha and Badshah together have sung successful songs like 'DJ Wale', 'Proper Patola', 'Buzz', 'Heartless', and the most recent being 'Paani Paani'. The duo is back with recreating the viral reel song 'Bachpan Ka Pyaar' in collaboration with the original song creator Sahdev Dirdo. Talking about her experience recording and working on 'Bachpan Ka Pyaar', Aastha said "The idea of making this song popped when I, Badshah, and Rico were in Kolkata for a show and we decided to make a reel on this song 'Bachpan Ka Pyaar'. After posting the video on social media, the reel went so viral and the song picked up well, that's when we three decided to make a complete track of it. I was so excited for this and we shot the song with Sahdev."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kiara Advani