For Generation Ace

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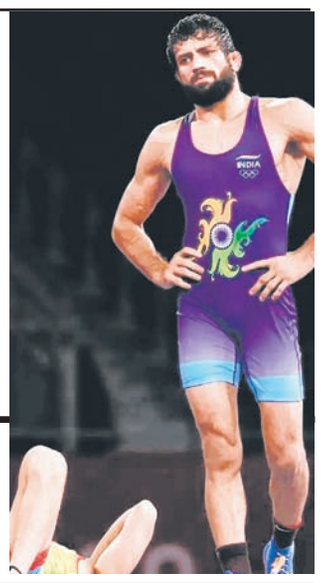


NATION >02

Bank agent seeks 'sex' from Maha woman for unpaid...

HOLLYWOOD > 06

Rita Ora sports curly tresses for sizzling snaps...

SPORTS > 07

Ravi Dhaiya defeats Kazakhstan's Sunyaev, moves to final...

HEAVY RAINS IN MADHYA PRADESH, ARMY IN ACTION

FIVE BRIDGES WASHED AWAY DUE TO DELUGE, AGRA-MUMBAI HIGHWAY 46 TRAFFIC STRANDED, RIVERS AND DAMS ARE OVERFLOW

- -MORE THAN 1,200 VILLAGES HIT BY FLOODS, NEARLY 6,000 RESCUED, CHIEF MINISTER UNDERTOOK AN AERIAL SURVEY OF THE FLOOD-HIT AREAS
- THE STATE DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE (SDRF), THE NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE (NDRF), THE INDIAN ARMY AND THE BSF TOGETHER HAVE SUCCEEDED IN EVACUATING 5,950 PEOPLE FROM 240 VILLAGES.
- RAIL SERVICES BETWEEN SHIVPURI AND GWALIOR AND TELECOM SERVICES IN MORENA DISTRICT WERE BADLY AFFECTED DUE TO THE MONSOON FURY.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The flood situation was "grim" in north Madhya Pradesh where over 1,200 villages were affected by the deluge following heavy rains and 5,950 people were shifted to safer places with the help of the Army, NDRF, BSF and state agencies, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Wednesday. He said 1,950 people were still stranded in the flood-hit areas and efforts were on to rescue them.

The rescue operations using helicopters resumed again on Wednesday, after being affected due to the bad weather on Tuesday. The Chief Minister undertook an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas on Wednesday afternoon.

"The flood situation in north Madhya Pradesh is grim...1,225 villages in Shivpuri, Sheopur, Datia, Gwalior, Guna, Bhind and Morena districts are affected," Chouhan said.

"Four columns of the Army, BSF, NDRF teams and 70 teams of the SDRF have been deployed for the rescue work. More teams of the NDRF are coming...five helicopters of the Air Force, including four in Gwalior and one in Shivpuri, have also been pressed into the rescue operations," the Chief Minister said. But, it is a matter of relief that the water level is coming down in some places, he said.Some villages in Sheopur district were completely submerged, but the people stranded there were safe. The Army was reaching those villages for the rescue operations. The Army also reached Datia, where 1,100 people were rescued from 36 villages. Some people were airlifted from a place in Datia districts where all the main roads are shut due to inundation. Nearly 3,000 people were shifted to relief camps in Gwalior, where 46 villages were affected. In Shivpuri, 800 people were rescued from 22 villages. "Two bridges in Datia district collapsed due to flooding. A crack emerged on a bridge over the National Highway no. 3, hence it has been closed as a precaution," the Chief Minister said. Chouhan also said that the infrastructure was completely damaged at several places in these districts.

"The central government is working closely with the Madhya Pradesh government to assist those affected by heavy rainfall and flooding in parts of the state. I have spoken to CM ChouhanShivraj and reviewed the situation. I pray for everyone's safety and well-being."

Prime Minister

Selfie with crocodile on the road

Shivpuri | Incessant rain in Madhya Pradesh has become a cause of trouble. The rivers and streams are in spate and crocodiles have started coming on the roads. In Shivpuri district, people caught the crocodile that came flowing with water on the road and are not missing to take selfie with him. There are a large number of crocodiles in the number Sagar Lake of the National Park adjoining Shivpuri city. In the midst of heavy rains, these crocodiles are entering the residential areas from the drains adjacent to the city, due to which people are catching the crocodiles that have reached the residential areas from the resources available with them. People are holding them and playing like toys.

The Gwalior-Chambal area of the state has received heavy rains in the last few days. Due to this, the urban settlements have been submerged, while the road connectivity to the rural areas has been completely broken and the villages are surrounded by water. Relief and rescue operations continued throughout the day and hundreds of villagers were evacuated to a safer place. The people were rescued by the SDRF team through boat and with the help of local villagers. Apart from this, there was a serious situation at some places where the help of NDRF team and helicopter was taken. People were evacuated with the help of helicopters in many villages of Bairad, Karera and Narwar. Team rescued three tribal youths trapped on the tree.

Olympics: Boxer Lovlina Borgohain bags bronze

TOKYO | Agencies

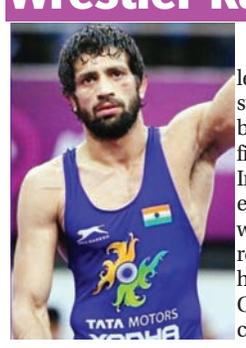
Boxer Lovlina Borgohain became the third Indian athlete at the Tokyo Olympics after weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and shuttler PV Sindhu to clinch a medal -- a bronze -- after she lost her welterweight semifinal bout to Turkey's Busenaz Surmeneli at the Ryogoku Kokugikan Arena on Wednesday.

India have now bettered their 2016 Rio Olympic Games tally by clinching a silver and two bronze in Tokyo.

The 23-year-old from Golaghat district of Assam lost her 64/69kg category last-four bout in a unanimous decision to Busenaz, who is among the best in the business and is ranked No. 1 here.

Lovlina also became the third boxer to win a medal at the Olympics for India after Vijender Singh and MC Mary Kom's bronze at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics respectively.Lovlina had already assured India of its first boxing medal from the Tokyo Olympics when she defeated former world champion and fourth seed Chen Nien-Chin of Chinese Taipei 4-1 in the quarterfinals. Earlier, she had beaten Germany's Nadine Apetz 3-2 in the pre-quarterfinals.

Wrestler Ravi Dahiya enters final



Indian grappler Ravi Kumar Dahiya assured India of at least a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics when he stormed into the men's 57kg freestyle final with a 'victory by fall' over Kazakhstan's Nurislam Sanayev in the semi-final on Wednesday.Dahiya became only the second Indian wrestler in history after Sushil Kumar -- who had entered the 2012 London Olympics final but ended up winning silver -- to make it to the title round at the quadrennial showpiece. The Indian wrestler, who is making his Olympic debut, will face Russian Olympic Committee's (ROC) Zavur Uguev -- a two-time world champion -- in the final on Thursday.

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra tops qualification with 86.65m effort

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra raised India's hopes of a track and field medal when he qualified for the final at the Tokyo Olympic Games on ednesday, sealing a top place from his group, and finishing ahead of Germany's Johannes Vetter, who is the favourite for gold at the quadrennial showpiece. At the Olympic Stadium, the 23-year-old Chopra, the junior world champion, cleared the automatic qualifying mark of 83.50 metres with his first attempt of 86.65 metres in Group A to emerge a strong contender for a medal in the final to be held on Saturday.

K'TAKA: 29 MINISTERS SWORN IN BASAVARAJ BOMMAI CABINET

Bengaluru: Karnataka's new government headed by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai took shape on Wednesday, when 29 ministers were sworn into the state Cabinet by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru. The team is a mixture of senior and fresh faces. There is a lone woman representative former minister Shashikala Jolle. The chief ministerial aspirants Basavanagouda Patil Yatnal and Aravind Bellad also missed cabinet berths. B.Y. Vijayendra, son of former Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, missed out on a cabinet berth in the Basavraj Bommai government as the party high command decided against the move.
Though it was maintained that regional balance will be maintained, but as many as 13 districts went without representation.

Consider local curbs during festivals till Durga puja: Centre To States

Team Absolute | New Delhi

States should consider restrictions in view of the coming festive season, the Centre said today pointing to the upsurge in cases in parts of the country. Pointing to the festivities starting with Muharram on August 19 to Durga Puja on October 15, the Union health ministry said the states should "actively consider local restrictions" and "curb mass gatherings".

"Indian Council of Medical Research and National Centre for Disease control have expressed concern regarding the mass gathering events during festivals turning into super spreader events," added the letter from the health ministry to Chief Ministers and administrators of all states. "I would like to reiterate that any laxity in ensuring strict adherance to the five-fold strategy of 'Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate and Ensuring Covid-Appropriate Behaviour', may result in losing the impetus that our country has gained so far in managing the pandemic," read the letter signed by Rajesh Bhushan.

The Centre has repeatedly warned that the second wave is still not over and the Delta variant of the virus is still a dominant problem.

India sees jump in Covid infections, logs 42,625 cases in a day

New Delhi: India on Wednesday took a high jump in daily Covid infections and reported 42,625 new cases across the nation in 24 hours. A total of 562 deaths were reported in the same span of time, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare data showed. With new 562 deaths, India's death toll now stands at 4,25,757.India registered over 10,000 more infections than the previous day, as a total of 30,548 fresh cases of Covid-19 were reported on Tuesday. With 5,395 new active cases, India's active Covid infection tally has climbed to 4,10,353 on Wednesday. The active cases constitute 1.29 per cent of the total caseload of India. However, India's recovery rate currently stands at 97.37 per cent.

CVC recommends disciplinary action against ex-CBI boss Alok Verma!

Anand Singh | New Delhi

Former Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Alok Kumar Verma, who was unceremoniously removed from the post may have to face disciplinary action and even lose his retirement benefits for allegedly "misusing his position" as the central agency director and violating rules during his service, sources said on Wednesday.

The Union Home Ministry (MHA) and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has asked the UPSC to take action against Verma, who was at the epicentre of a controversy in 2018, when Rakesh Asthana, the then special director of the probe agency had levelled allegations of corruption against him. The source said that the file for disciplinary action was received two to three days back.The source said that the government has also cited that Verma, a 1979 batch IPS officer 'violated government rules' during his service.

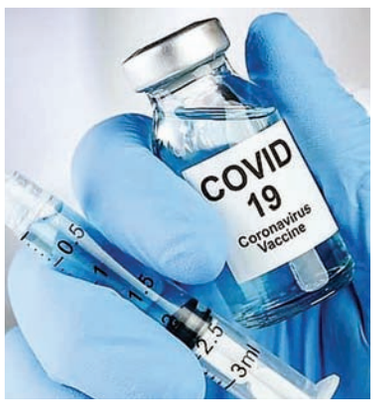
Verma, as the CBI Director indulged in bitter feud with the agency's Special Director Rakesh Asthana and traded charges of corruption against each other. Asthana has been appointed as the Delhi Police Commissioner in July. Verma's name had recently also figured in the Pegasus 'snoop list'.

Fully vaccinated people thrice at lower risk of Covid

The study led by researchers at the Imperial College London is based on swab tests taken by nearly 98,233 people themselves at home and their samples were analysed by PCR testing between June 24 and July 12. Of these, 527 tested positive and 254 of these were successfully analysed in the lab to determine their origins, 100 per cent of which were Delta variants.

- *-People who were unvaccinated had a three-fold higher prevalence than those who had received both doses of Covid vaccine, at 1.21 per cent compared to 0.4 per cent.*
- *The study showed that the highest infection prevalence was found in young people aged 13-24 years at 1.56 per cent or 1 in 65 infected, while the lowest was in people aged above 75 years at 0.17 per cent. Women had a lower risk of testing positive than men (0.55 per cent vs 0.71 per cent).*

LONDON | Agencies



Double vaccinated people were three times less likely than unvaccinated people to test positive for the Covid-19 infection, a new research has found.

In addition, analyses of PCR test results also suggest that fully vaccinated people may be less likely than unvaccinated people to pass the virus on to others. This is due to having a smaller viral load on average and therefore, likely spreading less virus.

The study carried out in partnership with Ipsos MORI is available in a pre-print report and will be submitted for peer-review.

Previous study data showed that the link between infections, hospitalisations and deaths had been weakening since February.

> There is still a risk of infection as no vaccine is 100 per cent effective, and we know that some double vaccinated people can still fell ill from the virus.
>
> Paul Elliott, School of Public Health at Imperial College London.

7 of a family including 4 kids die as house collapses due to rain

Team Absolute | Jaipur

Seven members of a family, including four children, two women and a man, were killed when a house collapsed in Keshoraipatan town in Bundi district following incessant rains on Wednesday.

Rain continues to spell disaster in Hadoti division of Rajasthan. The bodies have been pulled out from the rubble and were kept in the mortuary till the filing of the report.

Officials said that a security wall was built on the banks of Chambal a few years back by the municipality to prevent soil erosion from the mound near Naav Ghat.

Due to incessant rain, the security wall crashed and fell on the house. The incident happened at 2.30 a.m on Wednesday. The family of two brothers Mahavir and Mahendra Kewat residing near the Naav Ghat was buried under the rubble due to the sudden collapse of the house. Mahavir escaped from the clutches of death as he ran out of the house.

BANK AGENT SEEKS 'SEX' FROM MAHA WOMAN FOR UNPAID CREDIT CARD DUES!

Quaid Najmi | Aurangabad

In a shocking incident, a woman has complained that public sector State Bank Of India's (SBI) third-party recovery agents allegedly demanded "sexual favours" from her in lieu of outstanding payments in her credit card account.

The victim's husband said that the incident took place in February when the New Delhi-based recovery company, Incredible Management Services (IMS) owners and agents misbehaved with his wife.

"They started with threats, then abusive language, and then a direct SMS with a written demand for sexual favours with my wife to settle the outstanding bills," the livid husband told correspondent.

The 29-year-old woman holds a SBI credit card since past three years and all bills were cleared regularly.

However, he said an amount of around Rs 21,000 was pending on account of the financial constraints faced by the family during the pandemic lockdown when he was virtually jobless and his wife's boutique for women's accessories was shut for a prolonged period.

Aurangabad's Deputy Police Commissioner, Zone II, Deepak Gire said that a FIR was lodged by MIDC-CIDCO Police Station soon after the incident and one accused booked under Section 509 of the Indian Penal Code, and served notice.

"However, no arrests are made since the offence attracts a jail term of less than 3 years... and investigations are on," Gire told correspondent.

While the couple contended that the police did nothing for six months after the complaint was registered, the police suddenly revived the investigations in July.

"They asked me to accompany them to New Delhi to arrest the culprits - IMS CEO Dharmendra S. Kalra and his recovery agent Ranjit Kumar... I paid for their entire lodging-boarding, local travel, etc, but they did nothing," the husband said.

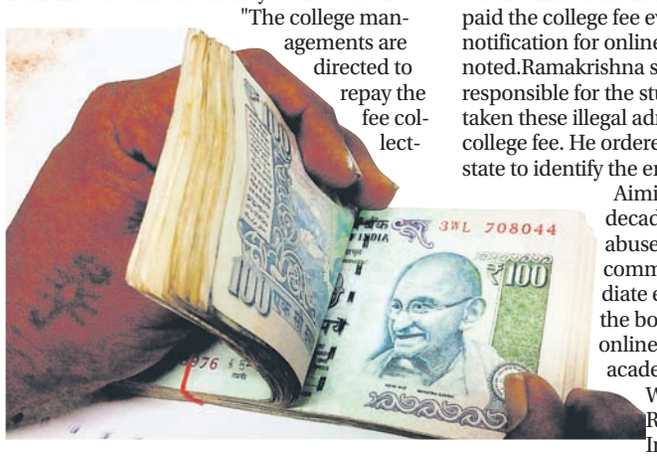
It did not end here and they virtually compelled him to take them for a darshan at the Vaishnodevi Temple in J&K before returning to Aurangabad - all at his expense.

In the meantime, the IMS agents allegedly created a fake profile on Facebook, posted photos of the couple, painted the woman as of "loose character" and "available for paid sex"."We informed the police but it took them several weeks before any result. By then, our reputation was ruined in society," she said.

Return fees collected via illegal offline admissions: AP intermediate board

Amaravati | Agencies

The Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) on Wednesday directed all the junior colleges which illegally collected fees for unapproved offline admissions for academic year 2021-22 to return the money to the students.



"The college managements are directed to repay the fee collected from the students immediately," Board Secretary V. Ramakrishna said, warning that the colleges admitting students illegally through offline mode will face action, including disaffiliation.

He said it has come to the notice of the board that certain college managements and principals are making illegal admissions and that these will not be approved.

"The board is introducing online admissions from the academic year 2021-22. It is known that some of the students have already taken admissions into some colleges and also paid the college fee even before the release of notification for online admission process," he noted.Ramakrishna said the board is not responsible for the students who have already taken these illegal admissions and paid the college fee. He ordered the RIOs across the state to identify the erring colleges.

Aiming at wiping out the decades-long widespread abuse and indiscriminate commercialisation of intermediate education in the state, the board introduced only online admissions from this academic year.On Wednesday, Ramakrishna, a senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, held a Zoom meeting with all the stakeholders of intermediate education in the 13 districts, including a few parents, to allay their fears and clarify many of their doubts about online mode of admissions.

Sea trials of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier kick off

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sea trials of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, which will be reincarnated as INS Vikrant once it is commissioned, finally kicked off on Wednesday.

The Indian Navy said that it was "proud and historic day for India" as the reincarnated Vikrant sails for her maiden sea trials, in the 50th year of her illustrious predecessor's key role in victory in the 1971 war.

It also stated the indigenous construction of the aircraft carrier is a shining example in the nation's quest for 'AtmaNirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India Initiative'.

With building of the indigenous aircraft carrier, India joins select group of nations having niche capability to indigenously design, build, and integrate a state of art aircraft carriers.

Vikrant, designed by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design (DND), is being built at the Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL), a public sector unit under the Ministry of Shipping.It is 262 m long, 62 m at the widest part and has a height of 59 m, including the superstructure. There are 14 decks in all, including five in the superstructure.

The ship has over 2,300 compartments, designed for a crew of around 1,700 people, including specialised cabins to accommodate women officers.

Designed with a very high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability, Vikrant has a top speed of around 28 knots and cruising speed of 18 knots with an endurance of about 7,500 nautical miles.It can accommodate an assortment of fixed wing and rotary aircraft.Indian Navy's ship building programme is rightly poised to provide requisite 'Economic Stimulus', with 44 ships and submarine on order being built indigenously, the Navy said.

Flood situation worsens in Bengal; PM Modi speaks to Mamata

Kolkata | Agencies

With the flood situation turning grim in at least seven districts of West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who went to Howrah district to conduct a preliminary survey of the situation on Wednesday, complained to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the flood situation has aggravated in the state because of the excessive release of water by the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC).

The allegations were raised during a phone call with the Prime Minister on Wednesday. Besides taking stock of the situation on the ground, Modi also took stock of the damages caused by the floods in the state, and promised Banerjee that the Centre would assist the state in alleviating the flood situation.

Sources in the CMO said that Banerjee slammed the DVC dams for releasing excessive amount of water without consulting the state, causing flooding in several areas. The conversation between the two leaders lasted for about seven minutes.

West Bengal Irrigation Minister Soumen Mahapatra had also hit out at the DVC on Tuesday, saying: "The DVC deliberately released so much water that it led to a flood-like situation. The Central government deliberately created this man-made flood situation in Bengal. We condemn such politics."

Earlier, the Chief Minister had promised that she would conduct an aerial survey of the flood affected districts, particularly at Khanakul in Hooghly and Udaynarayanpur in Howrah district, but she had to cancel her trip to Khanakul because of the rough weather condition and visited only Udaynarayanpur by road.

CBI TAKES OVER PROBE IN DEATH OF JHARKHAND JUDGE, SETS UP

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case in connection with the death of Dhanbad Additional District Judge Uttam Anand on the request of the Jharkhand government and constituted a SIT.

CBI spokesperson R.C. Joshi said: "CBI has today registered a case related to death of Uttam Anand, ADJ Dhanbad, on the request of Jharkhand Government and further notification from the Centre and taken over the investigation."

Joshi said that the CBI has set up a Special Investigation Team and it is proceeding to Dhanbad.

A case was earlier registered by Dhanbad police as the judge was killed after an autorickshaw hit him on July 28 while he was on a morning walk, on a complaint from wife against an unknown auto driver. After the CCTV footage surfaced, the Jharkhand government had formed an SIT to probe the matter. But, later it recommended the CBI probe into the death.The SIT probing the killing of the judge has so far not made any headway, despite arresting a total of 17 people in the case including autorickshaw driver Lakhan Verma and his associate Rahul Verma.

PILOT, CO-PILOT OF CRASHED HELICOPTER IN J&K STILL MISSING

Jammu | Agencies

The pilot and the co-pilot of the Dhruv helicopter that crashed on Tuesday into the Ranjit Sagar Dam in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district are still missing.

Although there been no official defence statement on this crash, sources had said on Tuesday that both the pilot and the co-pilot 'were safe'.

Police sources in Kathua, who were part of the rescue operation after the helicopter crashed in Basohli area of the district, where the Ranjit Sagar Dam is situated, said the two are still missing.

"The rescuers have recovered a helmet, a pithoo bag and a pair of shoes from the Dam waters, but there has been no trace of the missing pilot and the co-pilot.

"Rescue operation was called off due to darkness yesterday. It is being resumed today morning," a senior police officer said.

The helicopter had taken off from Pathankot in Punjab and after flying very low, it crashed into the Dam.

FOUR KILLED, TWO INJURED IN FIRING IN BIHAR'S NALANDA

Patna: Four persons were killed and two others injured during cross-firing in Bihar's Nalanda district on Wednesday, police said.

The firing took place between two groups in Lodhipur village under Chabilapur police station, due to a land dispute between two relatives.

Nalanda SP Sri Hari Prasath S. said that the situation remains tense in the village and a large police contingent from different police stations and police lines was deployed there.

The accused persons are at large now.The district police are tightlipped in this matter and not sharing any information related to this incident.The incident comes as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar chaired a meeting to assess the law and order situation. He has already taken several initiatives to resolve property disputes in the state.

Supporters of some K'taka BJP leaders protest denial of cabinet berths

Bengaluru | Agencies

Emotionally charged protests broke out on Wednesday in various places in north Karnataka where BJP aspirants were hoping to make it to the new Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's cabinet.

Supporters of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa's bitterest critic, Aravind Bellad, Dalit leader from Haveri district, Neharu Olekar and Scheduled Tribe leader, Narasimha (Raju Gouda) Nayak of Surpur in Kalaburagi district erupted in protests.

Bellad's supporters in Hubballi shouted slogans demanding ministerial berth for their leader but did raise any slogans against any leader in the state, while Olekar's supporters carried out "Urulu Seve" (rolling over) in Haveri in protest, whereas Nayak's supporters held a sit-in protest in Bengaluru.

Among three leaders, Olekar, the MLA from Haveri Assembly constituency, openly criticised Bommai, who represents Shiggaon constituency in Haveri district.

"I will raise my concerns with Sangh Parivar leaders. I cannot share anything about my anger with you (media) people but surely tell everything to people who matter in the party and Sangh Parivar," he said.

He added that the party will have bear the brunt of such wrong decisions of accommodating two leaders (Bommai and B.C. Patil) from same community from Haveri at the expense of Dalits and backward classes.

"Both of these leaders (Bommai and Patil) belonged to politically dominant community... when will people like us get an chance," a BJP Dalit leader of Haveri shot back in response to a question by a local channel.

NUTRITIONAL CRISIS DURING COVID TO AFFECT 9.3 MN CHILDREN BY 2022

Jaipur | Agencies

Addressing a webinar on 'Fighting nutrition crisis in India during Covid-19, especially for women and children in India', several experts on Wednesday raised concern over the adverse effects of the pandemic which are affecting millions of children and women due to lack of intake of quality food and micronutrients.

Speaking on the occasion, Sudhir Bhandari, Principal, SMS Medical College, Jaipur, said, "India initially faced physical challenges during Covid-19. However, over time, we realised how nutrition affected the lives of many. Around 9.3 million children would be affected by 2022 out of which 20-25 per cent might suffer due to stunted growth.

"Children experiencing under-nutrition are more likely to suffer from pandemic complications as it may cause more sickness and mortality due to Covid-19 and other infectious and inflammatory diseases, including pneumonia."

"In countries with the 1st and 2nd waves of Covid-19, obesity and non-communicable diseases have been associated with the more severe outcome of the virus. Covid-19 has had a severe effect on maternal and young children's nutritional status. We must strengthen the food security and functioning of the food supply chain to the population."

Bhandari added that last year, almost 58 million children between the age group of 6 months and 23 months did not develop the right eating habits.

D.K. Mangal, advisor, SD Gupta School of Public Health at IIHMR University, said, "India bears a disproportionate burden of malnutrition. Response to the pandemic has disrupted routine nutrition programmes such as the ICDS and the Mid-Day Meal programme. This has adversely affected the nutrition status of millions of children and women." he webinar was organised by the NGO Saksham Sanchar.

JD-U MP CLAIMS HIS PHONE WAS TAPPED IN PAST

Patna: A day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar demanded investigation in the Pegasussnooping case, a JD-U MP on Tuesday alleged that his phone was also tapped in the past.

Kaushalendra Kumar, who represents Nalanda, said that many leaders and ministers of the NDA government are claiming that their phones were being tapped."It is the need of the hour to investigate the Pegasus phone tapping case thoroughly. Our Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has also advocated the same and he is absolutely spot on," he said.However, clarifying that they were "not opposing the NDA or the Narendra Modi government, he said: "The investigations in this extremely sensitive espionage case will eventually help the NDA government in future.""The phones of many Union Ministers were tapped during the Pegasus incident. Clarity will come only after investigations of the cases," he added.

MUMBAI'S FIRST GENOME SEQUENCING LAB INAUGURATED

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday inaugurated the first-ever Genome Sequencing Laboratory in Mumbai and a Spinraza Therapy Centre for children in BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation-run hospitals, officials said here.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Speaking on the occasion, Thackeray said that the facility shall handle 400 samples simultaneously, and the results would be available within four hours.

The GSL facility will be run at the BMC's Kasturba Hospital by the staff of the BYL Nair Charitable Hospital as part of the latter's Centenary Year, falling on September 4, 2021.

The GSF was one of the recommendations of the State Task Force for Covid-19 to tackle the pandemic and to detect and treat the genetic mutations in the virus that have been experienced in recent months.

Nair Hospital Dean Ramesh Bharmal said that the GSL can handle 1,000-cases simultaneously and provide the results within the next few hours. The entire cost of the equipment and the operating expenses have been raised through donations by a US-company, ATE Chandra Foundation and the TM Nair Medical College Global Alumni Association.

Bharmal said that the GSL will prove extremely useful, and the data analysed here especially pertaining to genetic research, would help in tackling not only the current Covid-19 pandemic but also for other future epidemics.

The CM further said it was very critical to have a virus testing lab in Mumbai to avoid delays in getting the test report which often led to fatalities in the past.

"We are currently fighting a war with a hidden enemy like the Coronavirus The new GSL will enable detect and treat the Covid-19 virus or its incarnations, and even other contagious diseased speedily," Thackeray pointed out.

In order to fight the virus, it is imperative to study its genetics and the Coronavirus has shown that the longer it takes to identify the virus types, the more difficult it is to understand its effects and take steps to combat it.

Present on the occasion were Mayor Kishori Pednekar, Municipal Commissioner IS Chahal, Public Health Committee Chairperson Rajul Patel, Shashank Joshi, Sanjay Oak and others.

RBI cautions against offers of buying or selling old notes

In a statement, the central bank said that certain elements are fraudulently using the name and logo of the Reserve Bank of India, and seeking charges, commission and tax from public, in transactions related to buying and selling of old banknotes and coins through various online and offline platforms.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cautioned the public from falling prey to offers of buying or selling of old bank notes and coins.

In a statement, the central bank said that certain elements are fraudulently using the name and logo of the Reserve Bank of India, and seeking charges, commission and tax from public, in transactions related to buying and selling of old banknotes and coins through various online and offline platforms. "It is clarified that Reserve Bank of India does not deal in such matters and never seeks charges/commissions of any sort. The Reserve Bank of India has also not authorised any institution/firm/person etc to collect charges/commission on its behalf in such transactions," it said. The RBI has advised members of public to remain cautious and not to fall prey to elements using its name to extract money through such fictitious and fraudulent offers.

NHRC calls for report after suicide in Taloja prison

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken a serious view of the death due to suicide by the prisoner of Taloja Jail in Navi Mumbai and non-submission of requisite reports in the matter by the concerned authorities despite its notices. The Commission has called for reports on the conditions of prisons in Maharashtra from the Secretary, Legal Service Authority, the officials informed on Wednesday.

"While dealing with the proceedings related to the said case, the Commission has observed that the incident reveals mismanagement in the jail in Maharashtra. There are adequate provisions in jail manuals providing for an atmosphere free from temptations, which do not give an opportunity to any inmate to commit suicide. It is for this reason that ceiling fans and hanging hooks are not provided in the prison cells," Commission stated in its communication.

The suicide by an undertrial prisoner in the Taloja Central Jail happened on May 27, 2020.In the said case, the Commission has asked the Secretary, Legal Service Authority, through the Registrars of the High Courts of Mumbai to submit a report within four weeks about the conditions in the Jail premises in Maharashtra, which do not give an opportunity to an inmate to commit suicide.

The Commission has also sent final reminders to the District Magistrate, Raigad, Maharashtra to submit the requisite reports in the said case, including the magisterial enquiry report, within four weeks.The Commission has aid that if the concerned authorities fail to send the reports, it would be constrained to take coercive steps under Section 13 of the PHR Act, 1993.

The Commission has also issued similar directives in connection with a suicide of a convicted prisoner in West Bengal in April last year.

Study deepening of rivers, building protective walls: Uddhav Thackeray

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As many parts of Maharashtra struggle to recuperate from last month's flood havoc, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday ordered formulating a comprehensive and permanent policy for flood mitigation measures for people living in all the flood-prone areas in the state.

"The frequency and intensity of the floods are increasing... It should be studied by a committee of experts in the field, the National Water Commission and government officials to evolve long-term permanent solutions," he said.

Thackeray called for plans to examine scientifically to deepen the rivers like Savitri, Vashishthi, and Gandhari which wreaked havoc in Raigad and Ratnagiri districts, improve the riverbed and build flood protection walls, besides setting a Real Time Data Acquisition System in the next three months.The CM's directive came a day after PWD Minister Ashok Chavan revealed that as many as

4,138 roads, bridges, and causeways were damaged or destroyed across the state, with floods hitting for the third consecutive year.

Chavan has called for construction of 'elevated' roads in the flood-prone areas of the state as a precaution against future floods on account of the global climate change.

An expert and ex-Member (Judicial) of Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (MWRRA), Vinod Tiwari said that rules to this effect have already been framed by the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court, but even surveys and demarcation of floodlines have not been carried out yet.

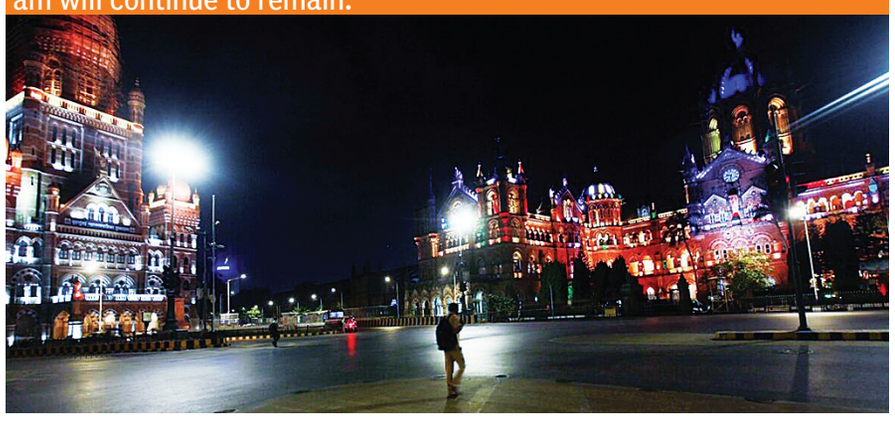
"The rules are mostly violated with no action against the encroachers, resulting in huge loss of lives and massive damages every year. There are many examples in Mumbai, Pune and other flood-prone areas in the state," he said.

For starters, he said that state Urban Development Department can modify the Development Control Rules to mandate only constructions above stilt level, parking lots should be at higher levels, while underground parking lots must be completely banned in all areas falling under floodline.

Day after Covid-19 curfew relaxations: BMC clarifies rules, night curfew to stay

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Covid curfew, restrictions: A day after the Mumbai civic body announced relaxations in lockdown norms, it issued a clarification on Tuesday stating that the night curfew in the city between 11 pm and 5 am will continue to remain.



The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Tuesday clarified that the night curfew will continue in the city from 11 pm to 5 am. There is no restriction on the movement of people from 5 am to 11 pm but any gathering is prohibited at all times.

day after the Mumbai civic body announced relaxations in lockdown norms, it issued a clarification on Tuesday stating that the night curfew in the city between 11 pm and 5 am will continue to remain.

According to the new rules, all the shops are allowed to remain open till 10 pm on all days. However, malls and shops within the malls will remain shut, the BMC clarified.According to the new relaxations, hotels and restaurants will be allowed to remain open till 4 pm on all days for dine-in, including weekends. So far, they were allowed to operate only on weekdays. The corporation has also allowed all indoor and outdoor sports activities except for swimming pools and other sporting activities where close physical contact is required. The shooting of films is also allowed."Except for the above relaxations, all other activities will have to be followed as per the earlier restrictions that are imposed for private offices, malls and theatres followed by the opening of public grounds and gardens," said the order issued by BMC Commissioner IS Chahal.

INEBRIATED WOMAN CREATES SCENE, BLOCKS TRAFFIC

Pune: A woman, who was apparently drunk, sat in the middle of a busy road in Pune city, disrupting traffic in the area for some time, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place late Tuesday night in Swargate area here in Maharashtra and after police reached the spot, the woman got up and went away, they said. In a video that went viral on social media platforms, the woman, who appeared to be drunk, was seen sitting and lying in the middle of a road near Hirabaug chowk, blocking vehicular movement, the police said.

"The incident took place near Hirabaug around 11 pm on Tuesday. We received a call from some people that a woman was creating a scene on the road. However, when she saw police personnel approaching her, she got up and went away," Swargate police station's senior inspector Balasaheb Kopnar said.

No case has been registered in connection with the incident, he added.

Shortage: Vaccination drive remained suspended in Mumbai

According to a statement issued by the civic body, the drive will resume once it receives fresh stock of vaccines. The corporation was expecting the fresh stock to come by Wednesday evening to resume the drive.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The vaccination drive at 311 civic- and government-run vaccination centres in Mumbai remain suspended on Wednesday due to a shortage of vaccines, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said.

According to a statement issued by the civic body, the drive will resume once it receives fresh stock of vaccines. The corporation is expecting the fresh stock to come by Wednesday to resume the drive.

Due to a shortage of vaccines, only half of the civic and government-run centres were functional in the city since Monday. The BMC had received 1.8 lakh doses of vaccine last week. The civic body managed to inoculate over 1 lakh citizens in a day twice in the past week. The city recorded 70,000 inoculations every day over the last few weeks.

Earlier in June, 1.54 lakh doses were administered in a day - the highest jabs in a single day so far.

At present, the number of citizens, who received their first dose stands at 55,04,338. Over 6.24 lakh citizens above 60 years of age have been fully vaccinated.

In the 18-44 years age group, over 26 lakh have received their first dose, data showed.

RAIGAD LOK ADALAT SETTLES 34,568 CASES IN ONE YEAR

Raigad: The 'Lok Adalat' in Maharashtra's Raigad district has settled 34,568 cases amicably in the last one year and sanctioned compensation to the tune of over Rs 16.91 crore, an official said on Wednesday.

Of the 34,586 cases, 33,220 were heard by the court and 1,438 were pending cases that were resolved, the official said, adding that the total settlement amount in all these cases was over Rs 16.91 crore.Ads byAt least 73 accident claims were settled and a compensation worth over Rs 2.69 crore were made in these cases, he said.

With this, Raigad district has been ranked second in the state in hearing and settling cases in the Lok Adalat, it was stated.

Instagram 'friend' from UK promised woman costly gifts, duped her of Rs 4.29 lakh

In her complaint, the Mumbai-based woman said she had received a follow request on her Instagram profile from a man who claimed to be from London.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A cyber fraudster impersonating as a UK citizen befriended a 34-year-old woman from Andheri on Instagram and cheated her of Rs 4.29 lakh, according to an FIR registered at Andheri Police Station.

In her complaint, the woman said she had received a follow request on her Instagram profile from a man who claimed to be from London. She exchanged phone numbers with him and started chatting with him. On July 27, the fraudster, who was using an international number, told her that he sent her some gifts through cargo shipping and even showed her pictures of the items. He also gave her a link to track its delivery.On July 29, she received a phone call from a man who claimed he was calling from the customs office. He told her that the "gift parcel" has a lot of cash in it and she would have to pay charges for procuring an "anti-money laundering certificate."The complainant paid Rs 4.29 lakh. The next day, a woman impersonating an income tax officer called her demanding Rs 5.69 lakh as taxes on the gift parcel. The complainant refused to give any money and asked her to prove her identity. The fraudster cut the call and the complainant realized she had been duped.

EXCESS DEATHS IN MAHARASHTRA WERE AT LEAST 3 TIMES THE OFFICIAL COVID TOLL

The number of "excess deaths" registered by the Civil Registration System (CRS) in Maharashtra ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit (from April 2020 to May 2021), was an estimated 2,12,589 which is 2.8 times the official reported figure of 75,877 deaths for the same period.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The figures were arrived at from data on deaths registered month-wise in the online Civil Registration System from January 2018 to May 2021 in Maharashtra and accessed by The Hindu. As with other States, not all excess deaths could be related to COVID-19, but a bulk of them will be, during the pandemic period.

The online death registrations data accessed by The Hindu showed a total of 6,67,900 and 6,93,800 deaths in 2018 and 2019 respectively, which corresponded to 63.9% and 66.6% of the numbers released by the CRS' annual report on vital statistics in the year 2019.Six districts Pune, Satara, Sangli, Yavatmal, Sindhudurg and Gondiya, with a combined officially recorded COVID-19 toll of 21,110 deaths between April 2020 and May 2021, were not considered for this analysis as the month-wise CRS registration data accessed was inconsistent between 2018 and 2019 for them.

Considering only close to 60% of deaths which were available in the online data for the baseline years 2018 and 2019 for calculating excess deaths, the estimate of 2,12,589 is a conservative one. Deaths registered for districts such as Mumbai, Thane, Akola, Amravati, Nandurbar were more than 90% of those recorded in the annual report while those for Ratnagiri, Raigarh, Kolhapur, Hingoli, Buldana, Washim were less than 40%.

If the excess deaths calculated were adjusted based on the percentage availability of data for 2018 and 2019 (by dividing them by the average of the percentage availability for these years) and re-calculated for the State (without the six omitted districts), the estimate increased to 3,10,727 deaths corresponding to a multiple of 4.1 over the official death toll of 75,877.

In sum, the estimated excess deaths in the pandemic period for 29 districts in Maharashtra could be in a range of 2.8 to 4.1 times the official COVID-19 death toll in the State. The overall COVID-19 death toll for all 35 districts as of May 31, 2021 was 95,344, which has since increased to 1,32,948 as of August 1.Excess deaths were an estimated 2.8 to 4.1 times the COVID-19 toll in Maharashtra during the pandemic period (April 2020 to May 2021).

Heavy rains and floods in MP:

More than 8 thousand people safely evacuated from affected areas: CM

- Army and air lift arranged with the help of PM Modi
- 75 special teams and 5 helicopters are engaged in rescue works become a paradigm in the country

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan informed that a total of 1225 villages of Shivpuri, Sheopur, Datia, Gwalior, Guna, Bhind and Morena districts are affected by heavy rains and floods in the state. So far 1500 people have been evacuated safely from 32 villages of Sheopur district. Similarly, SDERF, NDERF, Army and BSF together have succeeded in evacuating 2000 people from 90 villages of Shivpuri and 5950 from 90 villages of Datia, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind. According to the information so far, efforts are on to evacuate 1950 people. Air Force helicopters were facing difficulty in rescue work yesterday due to bad weather. Today again the helicopters resumed the rescue operations. Chouhan was interacting with media representatives at Smart Park regarding the situation of excessive rainfall and floods in Gwalior-Chambal division of the state.

Chouhan said that about 800 mm of rain has been received in Shivpuri and Sheopur till yesterday. This is an unprecedented situation. The communication system has come to a complete standstill in Sheopur district. Efforts are being made to restore the arrangements by talking to the Ministry of Telecommunications. Rail service between Guna-Shivpuri is closed. There has been a lot of damage to the infrastructure, but it is a matter of relief that the rescue work is going on continuously. We have been successful in saving the lives of the affected.

Chouhan said that 3 teams of NDERF were already engaged in rescue work, two more teams are coming. Four columns of Army and more than 70 teams of SDERF are engaged in rescue work along with district administration. So far, four helicopters of the Air Force are engaged in rescue work in Gwalior and one in Shivpuri.Chouhan said that now due to less rainfall, the water level of Parvati river has started receding. In Gwalior 46 villages are affected, 17 rescue sites have been set up and 3,000 people have been shifted to relief camps. The army has reached Datia. 36 villages of the district are affected, 18 rescue sites have been set up, about 1100 people have been rescued. Here the priest trapped in the temple has been saved by sending motor boats. All main roads are closed. NH-3 has also been closed for security reasons. Ratangarh bridge has been damaged. 22 villages have been affected in Shivpuri. Rescue work is going on, 801 people have been evacuated safely. The villages of Jwalapur, Kherawat, Mewara and Jatkheda in Sheopur were completely surrounded by water. Here the water level is decreasing. The army is trying to reach the villages. Due to high water and damaged bridges, the army has to move ahead by making its way. But people are safe. The water level is decreasing. Life of no person is not in danger.

Chouhan informed that the water in Chambal river is continuously increasing. Water released from Kota barrage will also increase the water level. This is a matter of concern for Bhind and Morena districts. The work of evacuating the villages settled in the low-lying areas of these districts is going on continuously. 800 people have been shifted to safer places in Bhind. Villages are being evacuated in Morena as a precaution. Efforts are being made to take people to safe places. The water in Sindh river is also increasing continuously.

Chouhan said that camps and food arrangements are being made for relief. I am in constant touch with the central government. With the help of the Centre, arrangements have been made to airlift the people. It was only due to the cooperation of PM Modi that it was possible to call the army immediately. All possible rescue and relief efforts are on.Chouhan said that I am sure that we will rescue all the people and the work of making relief and arrangements will continue. Better operation of public service works will be ensured.

Ensure arrangements for food, drinking water, doctors and medicines in relief camps: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that all possible help will be provided to the district administration immediately to evacuate the people safely from the areas affected by excessive rains and floods. Saving life is the top priority. Along with the district administration, SDREF, NDREF, BSF, Army and Air Force are engaged in rescue and relief works. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is constantly being apprised of the situation in the state. All possible cooperation is being received from the Army and the Central Government without any delay. It is time to test the administrative efficiency of the officers and employees. Excellent work is being done by the district administration including SDREF, NDREF, BSF, Army, Air Force in this difficult situation.

Chouhan was taking stock of the areas affected by excessive rains and floods from the Situation Room at Mantralaya. Chief Minister inquired about the situation from the Collector and Superintendent of Police of all the affected districts. Chouhan said that better arrangements should be ensured in the relief camps. Food, clean drinking water along with doctors and medicines should be provided mandatorily. It is necessary to prevent the spread of diseases that occur during the rainy season. The infrastructure destroyed by floods and heavy rains will be restored immediately.

Chouhan discussed with the officials of Central Telecom Department, Army, Air Force, Railway and Meteorological Department from the State Situation Room regarding relief work and restoration of arrangements. Chouhan took district-wise information about relief and rescue operations from the Collectors and SPs of Sheopur, Shivpuri, Gwalior, Datia, Guna, Bhind and Morena. Collector Sheopur said that the communication network in the district has collapsed. All communication networks are down. NDREF team is reaching Sheopur from Ghaziabad for relief. A large number of women home guards have been deployed in relief operations in Sheopur. During the rescue, the delivery of a woman in Plod village was performed by the female home guard when she was in labour pain; both the mother and the child are healthy. Collector Datia gave information regarding the houses surrounded by floods, the breaking of the bridge of Sevdha and the loss of contact with Gwalior from the Harsi river side. It was also informed that the water level in Shivpuri was coming down.Chouhan directed to restore the National Highway at the earliest. The water level of Chambal river is rising and water has been released from Kota-barrage. Due to this, in view of the possible flood situation in Morena and Bhind, instructions were also given to shift the people of low-lying villages to safer places and take other necessary precautions.

Chouhan discussed with the Central officials to restore the communication network in the affected districts at the earliest. It was apprised by the Centre that as an immediate arrangement, infrastructural roaming is being allowed in the affected districts. With this, if a signal is received from any network, then the phones of other networks will also work on this network. Along with this, priority route is being given from the mobile numbers of the officers and employees engaged in relief and rescue works. With this, these people will not face any kind of problem in staying in contact.Chouhan directed to take precautions and stay alert in view of the possibility of rain in Gwalior-Chambal division in the next 48 hours on the basis of the information given by the officials of the Meteorological Department.Chouhan thanked Air Force Group Captain Sherawat and NDREF incharge Aseem Upadhyay on behalf of the people of the state for their cooperation in relief and rescue work.

Corona increasing again, vigilance necessary for protection: CM

- Corona positives increase from 6 to 28 in the state
- 15 cases were found in Damoh and 7 in Sagar

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that 71 thousand 103 tests were conducted in the state yesterday. Of these, 28 positives have been found. The number of positive cases in the state had come down to 6. Now increasing gradually it has reached 28. There have been 15 positive cases in Damoh and 7 in Sagar. Finding positive cases in Bundelkhand is a matter of concern. Chief Minister said this during a discussion with media representatives at Smart Garden. Chouhan said that vigilance is necessary to prevent corona infection. The residents of the state must follow the precautions like applying masks, social distancing. Appealing to the people of the state, Chief Minister said that a lot of caution is required. Cases are also increasing in the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh. The situation in Kerala is also before us. Therefore, by being alert and careful, the people of the state should cooperate in stopping the third wave.Chouhan said that all necessary measures will be taken by the state government. Along with testing, actions like isolating people, creating micro-containment zones will be taken.

Probe ordered after selfie with jail inmate goes viral

Team Absolute | Gwalior

An alleged video showing several youths with a jail inmate of Gwalior Central jail in Madhya Pradesh has gone viral on the social media, which has exposed the security apparatus in the jail. Following the incident, the Jail Superintendent Manoj Sahu has ordered a probe into the matter.

Despite mobile phones are prohibited inside a meeting room where prisoners meet with the visitors, this incident has brought forth the lapses on the part of the jail administration.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, special guidelines are being followed in the jail. The room where the prisoners and the visitors meet is surrounded by a glass wall.Aniket Shivhare, the son of a liquor trader, is lodged in the Gwalior Central Jail. Recently, several youths met him in the jail. The meeting took place following all jail regulations while they interacted standing opposite to the each other surrounded by a glass wall.

After this meeting, a video went viral on social media in which Aniket is seen meeting the youths standing in the visitors room inside the jail and taking selfie.One of the youths who went to meet Aniket shared a video and pictures of their meeting on the social media. After the matter came to the fore, the jail administration has come under severe criticism.

Picture and video were taken despite there are three prison guards or security personnel deployed inside the visitors room. Following the incident, Jail Superintendent Manoj Sahu spoke to the media and said, "The incident is a serious negligence. How did a mobile phone reach inside the jail premises? I have ordered a probe into the matter."

CM PLANTS NEEM SAPLING IN SMART PARK

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a Neem sapling in Smart City Park today. Chief Minister Chouhan plants saplings every day in fulfillment of his resolve. Rich in antibiotic elements, Neem is known as the supreme medicine. Neem may be bitter in taste, but its benefits are like nectar. Neem is also very useful from environmental point of view.

Married woman raped by cousin as husband records video

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 21-year-old married woman was allegedly raped by her cousin in the presence of her husband, who recorded the entire incident on his smartphone in Gunga locality in state capitalBhopal around ten days back.

The survivor's husband brought her to Bhopal from Shajapur on the pretext of meeting an occult practitioner (witch doctor) to cure her infertility problem.

Gunga station house officer sub-inspector Ramesh Rai said that the survivor hails from a village in Shajapur district. She was married to a Kalapipal-based man around two years back and the couple have no children.

The SHO Rai said the survivor alleged that on July 21, the accused, along with his wife (survivor) and her brother, had come to Bhopal to visit one of her aunts, who resides in Kadampur village, Gunga.The accused told the survivor that they were going to meet an occult practitioner, who would treat her infertility problem with the help of black magic."After residing a day or two, the accused aunt locked the room door from outside, while the survivor was chatting with her husband and her cousin. Her husband helped the accused cousin when he allegedly outraged her modesty and the husband recorded the incident over his smartphone," said SHO Rai, adding that when the survivor complained about the horrible incident to her aunt, they threatened to kick her out of the home if she dared to reveal it to anyone.

The SHO said that on July 26, the survivor returned home in Shajapur and narrated the ordeal to her in-laws.

To her surprise, they too threatened her of dire consequences if she dared to approach the police.

"Later, she somehow managed to contact her family members and they helped her in filing a police complaint against the accused family members," said Rai, adding that on July 31, a zero FIR was registered at Kalapipal police station on the complaint of the survivor.As the incident took place under the jurisdiction of Gunga police station, the case diary was transferred here.

On receiving zero FIR on Tuesday, a case on charges of rape and hatching criminal conspiracy was registered against the accused cousin brother and four members of the survivor's family members including her husband, aunt, mother-in-law and father-in-law under relevant sections of IPC. It was not clear yet that the incident took place before meeting the occult practitioner or after. It would be clear during investigations," added SHO Rai. The names of the accused in the case were withheld to protect the identity of the survivor.

Taking care of the plantation is the responsibility of the society: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that it is the responsibility of the society to take care of the plantation. He has said that the crisis of corona epidemic has told us how important oxygen is for our life. If there are trees, there will be oxygen. Patel was interacting with the villagers by observing the development works of Pipariyakalan village in the district on Wednesday. During his village stay, Patel distributed benefits to the beneficiaries in the Government Secondary School, Pipariyakalan. He had food at the residence of the tribal Tarabai Kasde in the village itself. Appreciating the food of the family members, Patel also presented fruits to them as a gift.

Patel has said that by giving forest rights pattas to the forest dwellers, the government has protected their rights on water, forest and land. The state government is doing effective work for the self-reliance of the tribal brothers. Giving wages and bonus of more than Rs 1180 crore to the families collecting more than 17 lakh tendu leaves of the state and the arrangement of purchase of forest produce at the minimum support price shows the commitment of the government. Expressing his gratitude for the affection of the villagers of Pipariyakalan, he said that the soul of our country resides in the villages. Villages play a very important role in the development of the country. The government is constantly making efforts for the upliftment of the villages. He said that the beneficiaries who have benefited from the schemes of the government should also motivate other eligible people. Governor Shri Patel said that the education of children, The government is running many schemes to take care of the elderly and help the needy. The youth should come forward in the works of providing these benefits to the deserving people. "Sabka Saath - Sabka Vikas" and everyone's faith is the mantra of progress.Patel said that Yoga is the best and easiest way to keep the body healthy. I would like the children of the village to practice yoga and personal hygiene regularly in anganwadis and schools. It is the duty of every person to reach the benefits of the schemes implemented by the government to the needy and eligible persons. Efforts are constantly being made by the government for the upliftment of the villages. They will be completely successful When society goes ahead and cooperates in it. He inspected the development works in village Pipariyakalan and the pond constructed under MNREGA at a cost of Rs.5 lakh 69 thousand. He also discussed with the beneficiary farmers Baldev Singh and Sumer Singh Kasde. The farmers told the Governor that the pond has proved to be very useful for irrigation in their fields. Patel honored the elders in the village by presenting them with shawls.

Four die in road accident

Ujjain Superintendent of police (SP), Satyendra Shukla, said that there had been four passengers in the car. The incident occurred when the car was moving from Dewas district to Nimach district.

Team Absolute | Ujjain

Four persons were killed near Ingoriya Chowpatty village around 2am on Wednesday when a car rammed into a stationary tractor-trolley, the police said.

Superintendent of police (SP), Satyendra Shukla, said that there had been four passengers in the car. The incident occurred when the car was moving from Dewas district to Nimach district.

On getting the information, the police rushed to the spot.Two of the four persons who were in the car died on the spot. The police rushed two others to the district hospital in Ujjain.

Those who died have been identified as Kailash, Rahul, Kukaram and Lalaram. All of them were residents of Alori Garbada Ratangarh, Neemuch district, police said.

The police have arrested the trolley driver, a resident of Rajasthan.

EDITOR'S SPECS

Covid causes myopia in children

Significant curbs on time spent outdoors and sharp rise in screen time during the coronavirus pandemic have led to the rise in childhood short-sightedness, also known as myopia, suggests a study. The condition changes the shape of the eye, causing light rays to bend (refract) incorrectly, focusing images in front of, instead of on the surface of, the retina. Short-sightedness in children matters because it puts them at risk of developing complications that increase the risk of irreversible impaired eyesight/blindness later in life, said researchers. To find out if enforced behavioural and lifestyle changes during the pandemic might have affected children's vision, the team studied the eyes of 1,793 children. Around 1 in 5 (19.5 per cent) of the children in the Covid-19 group developed short-sightedness between January and August 2020, compared with around 1 in 3 (37 per cent) of those in the pre-Covid-19 group over a period of three years. The estimated 1-year incidence of short-sightedness was 28 per cent, 27 per cent, and 26 per cent, respectively, for 6, 7 and 8 year olds in the Covid-19 group, compared with 17 per cent, 16 per cent, and 15 per cent, respectively, for 6, 7, and 8 year olds in the pre-Covid-19 group. These changes coincided with a reduction in the time the children spent outdoors, from around an hour and 15 minutes to around 24 minutes/day and an increase in screen time from around 2.5 hours/day to around 7 hours/day. This is an observational study, and as such, can't establish cause, added to which the research included questionnaire data, which rely on recall. And the findings might not reflect the impact of Covid-19 in other parts of the world, where social distancing, quarantine, and school closure policies may be different, cautioned the researchers.

INDIAN NAVY TASK FORCE IN SOUTH CHINA SEA, WESTERN PACIFIC FOR 2

A Task Force of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet will proceed on over two month overseas deployment to Southeast Asia, the South China Sea, and the Western Pacific from early August.

The deployment of the Indian Navy ships seeks to underscore the operational reach, peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly countries towards ensuring good order in the maritime domain and to strengthen existing bonds between India and countries of the Indo-Pacific, a Navy statement said.

The deployment is in pursuit of India's 'Act East' policy and to enhance military cooperation with friendly countries, it said.The Indian Task Force comprises Guided Missile Destroyer Ranvijay, Guided Missile Frigate Shivalik, Anti-Submarine Corvette Kadmatt, and Guided Missile Corvette Kora.The latter three ships are indigenously designed and are equipped with

a versatile array of weapons and sensors, and are Made in India by defence shipyards.During the deployment in the Indo Pacific, the ships are scheduled to participate in bilateral exercises with the Vietnamese Peoples' Navy, the Republic of Philippines Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (SIMBEX), and the Indonesian Navy (Samudra Shakti) and Royal Australian Navy (AUS-INDEX).

Further, they would also participate in multilateral exercise MALABAR-21 alongside the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, the Royal Australian Navy and the United States Navy in Western Pacific.The Indian Navy undertakes regular deployments to friendly foreign countries and Indian and the Pacific Ocean regions in furtherance of the Prime Minister's initiative of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region - SAGAR', the statement said.

Further, such engagements build 'Bridges of Friendship' and strengthen international cooperation, it said, adding that these maritime initiatives enhance synergy and coordination between the Indian Navy and friendly countries, based on common maritime interests and commitment towards Freedom of Navigation at sea.

Besides regular port calls, the task group will operate in conjunction with friendly navies, to build military relations and develop interoperability in the conduct of maritime operations.

Mizos losing crops, pullback from lands on Assam border

Subir Bhaumik

Lalthanpuii left behind her entire crop of areca nuts after Assam police and villagers stormed her settlement near here on July 10. That was almost a fortnight before the bloody clash between Assam and Mizoram police at Vairengte, which left seven, including six Assam policemen dead and more than 60 injured on both sides.

"Hundred policemen and several hundreds of Assam villagers attacked our village. They pushed all Mizos out, took away our areca nuts. Later they drained the water in our ponds and took away all our fish," said Lathanpuii, tears in her eyes. "I have lost everything."She says five Mizo women, including herself, were among those who suffered injuries in a futile bid to stop the incursion from Assam.

Now Lalthanpuii and other Mizo villagers of Verte are living behind the Mizoram police camp at Buarchip.

"We have lost our crops and fish in our ponds and left without any livelihood now. The future is very uncertain," says Joe Lalsangliana, another Verte resident now in Buarchip. A small river flowing through the area separates the police camps of Mizoram and Assam, with the CRPF forces deployed between them to maintain peace.

The policemen don't encourage movement of villagers that they feel could trigger violence. A local palm oil processing project by Godrej is in doldrums because the Mizo farmers are pulling back from the plantations due to spiralling state border tensions. At nearby mountains on I-Tlang, Mizo jhumias (shifting cultivators) complain that Assam police started razing their crops from early June. Pointing to their fields in the distant mountains, they say Assam Forest Department has now started planting teak on their traditional jhum lands at I-Tlang after the police razed their crop."No wonder the Assam Chief Minister now says the disputed zone is forest land and they want control over it by planting teak trees. But truth is these are Mizo jhum pastures for centuries where our shifting cultivators have harvested a wide mix of crops," says Pi Sangte, a village council member of Vairengte-1.Sangte has worked in Mumbai and Europe in the hospitality industry before returning to her ancestral Vairengte , where she is now a community leader. "You can see for yourself a forward policy by Assam police in this whole disputed area since June that led to tensions that finally exploded into the bloody July 26 clash," Sangte told.Assam police denies the charge and says they were only taking control of the state's constitutional boundaries.

RBI's MPC to maintain rates, accommodative stance

Rohit Vaid

In a quest to sustain economic growth, the Reserve Bank is expected to continue with its easy monetary policy as well as the accommodative stance.

Accordingly, economists and industry experts, cited that despite high retail inflation, growth concerns will act as a major deterrent for any tightening of monetary policy.

Besides, a growth-boosting accommodative stance is expected to be maintained in the third monetary policy review of FY22.

"We expect a pause on rates and the stance, amid an upward revision in the inflation projections," said Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA.

"This will inject uneasiness into the tone of the policy, even as the MPC is likely to endeavour to support growth for as long as possible."

The MPC has maintained the repo - or short-term lending rate - for commercial banks at 4 per cent.

It will release the monetary policy resolution on August 6. "We don't expect

any action on interest rates or any major step towards recalibration of systemic liquidity at this point in time," said Suman Chowdhury, Chief Analytical Officer at Acuite Ratings and Research.

"The combination of elevated commodity prices, Covid related disruptions, vaccination progress, and policy support led economic revival has resulted in an acceleration in inflation in most countries including India."

Consequently, the high rate of retail inflation has led to expectations of a readjustment in monetary policy.

However, systemically important central banks, including the RBI, have so far treated the rise in inflation as 'transitory', while continuing to focus on supporting growth recovery.Notably, the benchmark CPI inflation in India has remained above 6 per cent over the months of May and June and is likely to remain sticky in the near future.

On the other hand, a strong kharif crop output led by a favourable monsoon and the easing of supply bottlenecks from a tapering down of the pandemic may partly cool down the inflationary pressures from Q3FY22.

"MPC may still choose to look through the spike in inflation in the near term, with the monetary reaction function currently hinging more on growth revival becoming sustainable," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, Emkay Global."We still do not see any change in policy rates this year."

A policy tightening, if administered, would theoretically force commercial banks to increase their lending rates, thereby, burdening both consumers and the industry with expensive finance.

Subsequently, the decreased money flow in the hands of the consumers would dampen demand, and reduce the capital flow needed for investment cycle. Nevertheless, this would have stunted the high retail inflation.

international

Afghan Defence Minister targeted in car bomb attack

Kabul: | Agencies

An explosives-laden car detonated close to the residence of Afghanistan Acting Defence Minister Bismillah Muhammadi in Kabul city Tuesday night.

Local media reports said since Muhammadi was not at the residence at the time of the explosion, neither he nor his family members were harmed.

The Afghan Acting Defence Minister in a video clip confirmed that he and his family members were safe but added that several of his bodyguards were injured.

"Attacks of this sort by vampires will not weaken my morale in defending the Afghan people and my country," said Muhammadi in his video clip.The attack left five dead and 20 more wounded.The report said the explosion which was heard in kilometers was followed by a gunfight between the guards at the residence and gunmen who entered the home.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior Affairs Mirwais Stanikzai said the gunfight came to an end nearly four hours after the gunmen entered the home and started fighting the

police Special Forces deployed at the place.Stanikzai though did not disclose the number of assailants killed, police had said they had gunned down three gunmen.The assailants had taken 80 people hostage who were later saved by the police special forces.No one has taken responsibility for the attack.Meanwhile, Afghanistan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar, during a telephone conversation with the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, talked about the escalation of violence, widespread human rights violations by the Taliban, and the foreign terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan.Atmar emphasised the need to hold a special session of the UN Security Council on Afghanistan. India currently holds the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council, a statement by Afghan Foreign Office said.

Atmar discussed the unprecedented increase in the Taliban's brutal attacks on the Afghan people, which have resulted in the killing of scores of civilians and displacement of many thousands of others.Atmar highlighted the war crimes committed by the Taliban in their recent attacks carried out in collusion with foreign fighters and terrorist groups in Afghanistan, calling them flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and warned of catastrophic ramifications.

Given the catastrophic consequences of the Afghan war on stability, security, and prosperity in the region, the Foreign Minister raised with his Indian counterpart the proposition of Kabul regarding convening an emergency UN Security Council meeting on issues related to Afghanistan, particularly an immediate cessation of violence and the success of peace talks.The Indian Minister of External Affairs expressed his country's deep concern over the escalation of violence, insecurity, and explicit human rights violations by the Taliban and terrorists in Afghanistan.Jaishankar called the holding of the UN Security Council meeting important for the immediate cessation of human rights abuses and the establishment of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. He reassured Minister Atmar of his country's commitment to reviewing Afghanistan's proposal and conducting the necessary consultations.

Lightning strikes wedding party in Bangladesh, 17 dead

- At least 17 members of a wedding party travelling on a boat were killed on Wednesday during a massive lightning strike in Bangladesh's Chapainawabganj district, some 302 km northwest of capital Dhaka, a senior official said.
ty to pay dues.

Dhaka | Agencies

Sakib Al Rabbi, head of Chapainawabganj's Shibganj sub-district administration, told Xinhua over the phone that "17 people were killed on the spot after lightning struck a wedding party boat".

The incident took place at a boat terminal on the bank of the river Padma on Wednesday noon. The boat carrying dozens of people of the wedding party was crossing the river amid a heavy downpour.After the boat anchored at a terminal on the riverbank, it was struck by a massive lightning, killing 17 people and injuring 6 others.

Lightning strikes over the past couple of months have killed scores and has been on the rise over the past few years.Experts here blame the rise in lightning strike deaths directly on climate change that made Bangladesh more vulnerable to the impacts.

Hijack bid onboard ship off UAE ends: Report

Muscat | Agencies

A UK maritime security agency has said the potential hijacking of the Panama-flagged MV Asphalt Princess has ended after men who boarded and seized the ship in the Gulf of Oman left the vessel. All those remaining on board are safe, officials said.

However, there has been no further details given to the media, according to a BBC report.The bitumen tanker was seized on Tuesday heading into the congested approach to the Strait of Hormuz. It is not clear who seized the ship, but analysts suspected Iranian forces.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards dismissed the reports of possible involvement as a pretext for "hostile action" against Tehran.

The men who boarded the MV Asphalt Princess were reportedly armed and are said to have ordered it to sail to Iran.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) initially warned ships of an incident before declaring a "potential hijack" hours later.On Wednesday, the UKMTO tweeted that those who boarded the vessel had left, adding: "Vessel is safe. Incident complete."

The incident occurred less than a week after an oil tanker operated by an Israeli-owned company was attacked by a drone off Oman, killing two security guards -- one British and the other Romanian.

The US, UK and Israel blamed Iran for the attack - a claim it strongly denies.

BBC Security Correspondent Frank Gardner said the MV Asphalt Princess is owned by a Dubai-based company that had one of its ships hijacked two years ago by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

Gardner told BBC, according to reports, up to nine armed men boarded the vessel as it neared the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world's maritime oil supplies passes.

The UKMTO earlier advised shipping services near Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman to exercise extreme caution.Earlier in the day, four oil tankers reported that they were "not under command", which usually means that a vessel has lost power and cannot steer. One of the ships later began moving, media reports said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said reports involving several ships on Tuesday were "suspicious" and warned against any effort to "create a false atmosphere" against Tehran.

Pak lobbying contract for ex-CIA station chief

Robert Laurent Grenier who was CIA Station Chief in Islamabad was given a lobbying contract on behalf of Pakistan after he founded his own firm.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Robert Laurent Grenier is a former CIA official, who was CIA Station Chief in Islamabad, Pakistan (2001-02) -- right in the center of storm post 9/11. In 2002 he was promoted to the chief of the Iraq Issues Group, where he helped coordinate covert operations in support of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Grenier served as Director, CIA's Counter-terrorist Center for about a year, but was fired from that position on February 6, 2006 by the Director of the National Clandestine Service Jose A. Rodriguez, Jr in the CIA leak case and Libby trial.

Grenier was identified in court documents in connection with the CIA leak grand jury investigation and charges against I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

In 2009 Grenier was appointed Chairman of ERG Partners, an independent financial and strategic advisory firm solely focused on the security and intelligence sectors. He is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Subsequently, Grenier opened a Lobby Firm Grenier Consulting LLC on April 1, 2020. And within a year, in July 2021 he is awarded a Lobbying contract on behalf of Pakistan, signed by Iftikhar Ur Rehman Durrani the then Special Advisor to Pak PM Imran Khan. An advance of $25,000 and another $5,000 for research for six months was given by the Pakistan side, with the clause of renewal of contract in six months, according to an investigation by Disinfo Lab.

Another contract was given to a firm affiliated to Robin Raphel, a former Diplomat/CIA Analyst/US AID functionary about lobbyist.

Raphel retired in 2005, and soon joined Cassidy & Associates, a Washington based lobby firm as Senior Vice President, heading its Global Affairs and Trade Group. Shortly after she comes on board, Cassidy & Associates bags $1.2 million lobbying contract from Pakistan.

Cassidy subsequently had to cancel the contract after Gen Musharraf declared Martial Law in Pakistan.In 2013, Raphel was under investigation of FBI based on an intercept of Pakistani officials by FBI, which indicated that Raphel might have been working for Pakistani agencies. FBI had also found unauthorized classified documents at Raphel's residence, which they suspected were being supplied to a 'foreign country'. However, in 2016 FBI decided not to pursue the matter further. Raphel is reported to be active again, being one of the major back-channels to Taliban.

Raphel started her carrier with CIA in Iran, and later joined US-Aid Diplomatic Corps as economics analyst till 1978. In 1991, she joined as Political Counselor at US Embassy in New Delhi.

DisinfoLab reported that she is credited with the creation of All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), which earned her the moniker of Mother of Hurriyat. She was married to Arnold Raphel, who was US Ambassador to Pakistan (1987-88), and who died in the plane crash with Zia-ul-Haq.

During her stint with US State Department during 1992-96, she worked towards shaping the US Govt policy towards engagement with Taliban. She was also instrumental in ensuring an exception to Pakistan from the Pressler Amendment that banned military export to Pakistan.

Camila's 'Cinderella' is a feminist re-telling of the classic

Los Angeles | Agencies

The trailer of actress Camila Cabello's upcoming film "Cinderella" was released on Tuesday.

As opposed to the story in the fairytale told about a damsel in distress, this version has a contemporary twist with the protagonist aiming to be independent and ambitious.

The film shows Camila as Cinderella, who is a talented designer and wants to start her own business of making dresses.

Written for the screen and directed by Kay Cannon with covers of songs written by musical artists of all time, "Cinderella" has an ensemble cast that includes IdinaMenzel, Minnie Driver, Nicholas Galitzine, with Billy Porter and Pierce Brosnan.

The film will stream on Amazon Prime Video from September 3.

Rita Ora sports curly tresses for sizzling snaps

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rita Ora sported 80s-inspired curly tresses as she flashed her abs in her latest round of sizzling Instagram snaps.

The songstress, 30, looked incredible with her blonde tresses in a cut updo, while donning a black backless blazer , with a cut out section across her honed midriff.

The pinstripe top teased a glimpse of her honed midriff and was paired with statement matching high-waisted flares.She captioned the snaps: "Ok so on Tuesdays we wear a suit at work and take pictures- thanks."

Ora has been spending time between Australia - where she is a host on The Voice - and the United States over the past few months.

CHRISTIAN BALE SEEN FOR FIRST TIME AS VILLAINOUS GORR-THE GOD BUTCHER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Christian Bale was spotted for the first time in character as he filmed Thor: Love And Thunder in Malibu this week.The 47-year-old superhero star is featuring as the villainous Gorr The God Butcher who was introduced in the comics in 2012.He was pictured emerging on set in full costume - a menacing silver ensemble that included a full face prosthetic.Christian's character is an alien who hails from a planet afflicted by environmental calamities and whose prayers to the gods go unanswered.

After the deaths of his parents and pregnant wife Gorr becomes violently opposed to the gods as a result of their indifference.Gorr and his army of Berserkers set off on a mission to systematically eliminate the Norse deities earning him his nickname of God Butcher.

His supervillain ensemble includes a flowing hooded sleeveless robes that could be seen fluttering in the breeze as Christian crossed the set.

Lily James transformation into blonde bombshell Pamela

Los Angeles | Agencies

It has been revealed on Wednesday that Lily James' transformation into Pamela Anderson took three to five hours every day during filming for Pam & Tommy. The actress is taking on the iconic role in the upcoming Hulu mini-series - which wrapped filming on Friday - where she stars alongside Sebastian Stan who plays her husband Tommy Lee. The head of the hair department on set Barry Lee Moe told Variety: 'We had anywhere from three to five hours of hair and makeup every morning before we even started filming. We ended up using 25 wigs in the end. Everyone from Seth Rogen to Nick Offerman, Taylor Schilling all wore wigs because we transform them into new characters.

Lily started filming Pam & Tommy at the beginning of April, with her playing Pamela and Sebastian Stan playing her husband Tommy Lee.

'WE ALL LEARNED FROM YOU': TAYLOR SWIFT HAILS SIMONE BILES

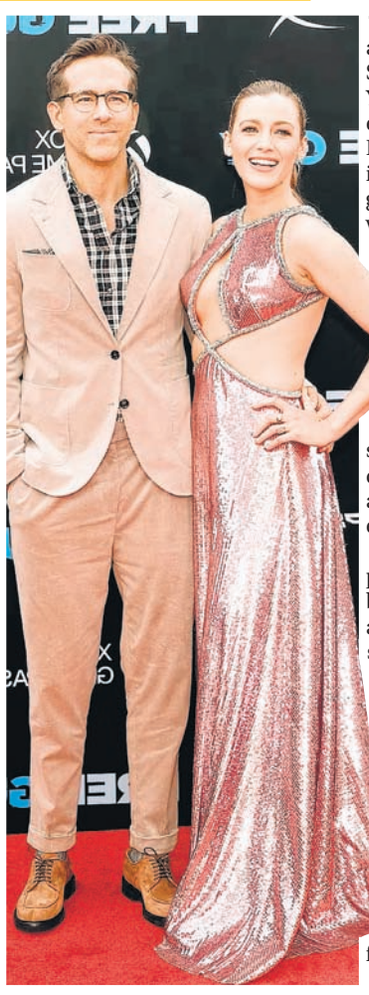
Los Angeles: Taylor Swift paid homage to Olympic gymnast Simone Biles as the pair exchanged pleasantries on Twitter Tuesday.The exchange began with an NBC commercial promoting Tuesday evening's Tokyo Summer Olympics balance beam finals, with the famed singer, 31, doing a voice over in support of the 24-year-old Olympian after she temporarily withdrew from competition to address her mental health.

In the clip scored to her Swift's song this is me trying, the singer narrated about Biles' resilience amid the intense times.Biles cited the tweet and addressed the Shake It Off singer, writing, 'I'm crying how special. I love you @taylorswift13.'

The 11-time Grammy winner responded to Biles, 'I cried watching YOU. I feel so lucky to have gotten to watch you all these years, but this week was a lesson in emotional intelligence and resilience. We all learned from you. Thank you.'

Blake Lively, Ryan Reynolds joins red carpet premiere of Free Guy

Los Angeles | Agencies



Ryan Reynold's action-comedy film Free Guy premiered at the AMC Lincoln Square Theater in New York City which he attended with his stunning wife Blake Lively.Blake dazzled in a pink sequin-covered gown, which featured silver beaded lining along the perimeters of its unique bodice. The gown featured dramatic cut-outs that exposed Lively's cinched waist, ample cleavage, and toned back.Ryan beamed for shutterbugs in a beige corduroy suit with a black and white plaid shirt layered beneath.

The Deadpool star completed the look with some brown suede dress shoes and a pair of grey marled socks. Blake and Ryan, who married in 2012, appeared to be having a blast on the red carpet, often posing with their arms linked and their eyes locked on one another.The Hollywood lovebirds were spotted walking up to the premiere together as fans cheered from the sidelines.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Ashley Greene

Chin-up for bronze

Indian women to play for bronze after semifinal 2-1 loss

Tokyo | Agencies

India's dream of a gold medal on their maiden entry into the knockout stages of the women's hockey competition came to a premature end when the team lost 1-2 to Argentina in the semi-finals at the Tokyo Olympics here on Wednesday. It looked like India's fairy-tale run, which saw them reach the semifinals after losing their first three matches, will continue when drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur put them ahead in the second minute. Reaching the final would have assured India a medal but that was not to be as Argentina came back strongly and ended India's dream. Skipper Maria Noel Barrionuevo scored a brace of goals as Argentina emerged 2-1 winners to reach the final and set up a clash with reigning world champions the Netherlands on Friday.

India will play Great Britain for the bronze medal on Friday.

India made a brilliant start as they earned an early penalty corner and went into the lead. Gurjit Kaur put India ahead in the second minute when she sent a powerful flick past the experienced Argentine goalkeeper Maria Belen Succi to give her side the lead.

The Indians dominated the first quarter and held possession. VandanaKatariya and Navneet Kaur made some good runs into the shooting circle.

The second quarter belonged to Argentina as the Las Leonas firmly established their superiority. They went into the lead in the 36th minute when skipper Marina Noel capitalised on another penalty corner and the ball took a deflection off an Indian player's foot and went into the goal.

The umpire checked with the video umpire whether it had hit the Indian defender's leg above the knee. The video umpire replied in the negative and the goal stood, making it 2-1 for Argentina.

RAVI DHAIYA DEFEATS KAZAKHSTAN'S SUNYAEV, MOVES TO FINAL

Tokyo | Agencies

The Tokyo Olympic Games twitter handle '#Tokyo2020' too got into the act of applauding the Indian grappler's massive achievement, tweeting, "He was 3-9 down, with momentum and time against him. But he still didn't lose heart and with a couple of amazing offensive moves, pinned down a two-time world championship medallist. (Clapping hands sign). Ravi Kumar Dahiya, you are a champion! (Raising hands sign)"

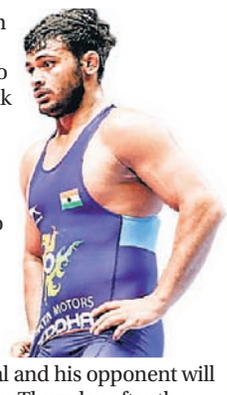
It was a victory for the ages as the 23-year-old Dahiya - who has trained under Satpal Singh at the Chhatrasal Stadium in Delhi since the age of 10 - turned the bout on its head when everything seemed lost of the Indian. The Indian grappler assured India of at least a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics when he stormed into the men's 57kg freestyle final with a 'victory by fall' over Kazakhstan's NurislamSanayev in the semifinal. In what was a tight start to the contest at the MakuhariMesse Hall in Chiba, Dahiya conceded the first points due to a passivity call but roared back instantly with a two-point take down.

Leading 2-1 heading into the second period, Dahiya was dealt a massive blow when the action restarted, as Sanayev got behind the Indian, caught hold of his ankles and twirled him around a few times to flip the score 9-2 in his favour.

Desperately looking to turn things around, Dahiya made a brilliant comeback by first managing to push Sanayev out of bounds to reduce the deficit to 9-5. The move apparently injured the Kazakh wrestler, but he decided to continue.

With just 50 seconds left on the clock, Dahiya scored a two-point takedown and converted it to a pin - exposing both his opponent's shoulders to the mat - and won the bout by fall.

Punia to fight for bronze



Tokyo: American grappler David Taylor proved too strong for Deepak Punia as the Indian lost his 86kg category semifinal bout 10-0 at the Tokyo Olympic Games on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old Punia will now fight for the bronze medal and his opponent will be known later on Thursday after the repechage. Punia was not match for the American, who used his superior technique and aggressive play to romp home to a 10-0 win on technical superiority and secure a place in the final.

From BaroMukhia to Tokyo

Lovlina's journey to an Olympic medal

Tokyo | Agencies

A week ago, BaroMukhia village in Assam's Golaghat district had connectivity with the world through a muddy road. Now, people in the state are working hard to turn the road into a concrete one.

Thanks to Lovlina's bronze medal in the welterweight category at the Tokyo Olympics, the village is now getting those things which they have been deprived of in the past.

It was a bout where Busenaz outboxed Lovlina. But the Assamese boxer had already got her name in the list of Olympic medallists from India after defeating Chen Nien-Chin of Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals.

"I don't want to stop on bronze. I want to go for the gold. Medal is only one. That is gold," Lovlina had said during the media interaction last Friday. Lovlina's journey from

BaroMukhia to Tokyo has been inspiring. She has managed to get her way through various obstacles to win a medal at the Olympics.

Growing up in the village, Lovlina would initially get into practicing Muay Thai, following in the footsteps of her twin sisters Lima and Licha.

It was only the sight of boxing coach PadumBoro in 2012 which saw a huge shift in Lovlina's life. A few months later, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) held trials at Barpathar Girls High School, where Lovlina studied. She got a chance to show her skills in the trials and got selected as a trainee in Guwahati. Boro noticed her exceptional talent and began to hone her skills. Boro, who worked at Sports Authority of India's Shillong and Dimapur centres, introduced Lovlina to boxing. From there onwards, there has been no looking back for Lovlina.

In her journey to reach the podium at the Olympics, she battled the patriarchal mind-set of the society, overcame the battle against COVID-19 and worries about her mother Mamoni's kidney issues.

Lovlina's first major breakthrough moment came with a bronze at the 2018 World Championships in New Delhi and 2019 World Championships in Ulan-Ude, Russia.

Now with the Olympics bronze medal, Lovlina has the licence to go high after a long journey to the podium at Tokyo.

Neeraj Chopra qualifies for javelin throw final

Tokyo | Agencies

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra raised India's hopes of a track and field medal when he qualified for the final at the Tokyo Olympic Games on Wednesday, sealing a top place from his group, and finishing ahead of Germany's Johannes Vetter, who is the favourite for gold at the quadrennial showpiece. At the Olympic Stadium, the 23-year-old Chopra, the junior world champion, cleared the automatic qualifying mark of 83.50 metres with his first attempt of 86.65 metres in Group A to emerge a strong contender for a medal in the final to be held on Saturday. Vetter qualified second from Group A with a throw of 85.64 metres.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who shared the podium with Chopra at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, was overall third with his best throw of 85.16 metres after he topped Group B. All eyes will be on Chopra in Saturday's final as he is on a roll this season and is the owner of the national record - 88.07m - which he achieved at the Indian Grand Prix in March.

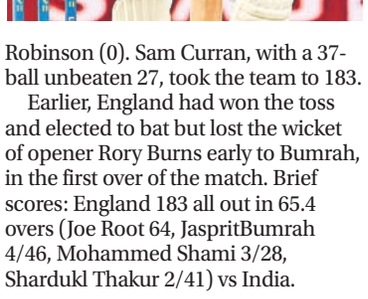
1st Test: Indian pacers skittle out England for 183

Nottingham | Agencies

Pace bowlers JaspritBumrah (4/46) and Mohammed Shami (3/28) skittled out England for 183 in the first innings on the first day of the first Test here at the Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

England's batting fell apart after the fall of Jonny Bairstow's wicket just before tea as the Indian bowlers ran through the tail. Shami picked the wicket of Jonny Bairstow (29) at the stroke of tea to revive India after the No. 5 batsman and skipper Joe Root (64) had added 72 runs for the fourth wicket. England had gone into the tea break at 138/4. Soon after tea, Shami got the wicket of Daniel Lawrence without any addition to the score.

Jos Buttler was removed by Bumrah for a duck before Shardul Thakur got the wickets of Root and pacer Ollie



Robinson (0). Sam Curran, with a 37-ball unbeaten 27, took the team to 183.

Earlier, England had won the toss and elected to bat but lost the wicket of opener Rory Burns early to Bumrah, in the first over of the match. Brief scores: England 183 all out in 65.4 overs (Joe Root 64, JaspritBumrah 4/46, Mohammed Shami 3/28, Shardukl Thakur 2/41) vs India.

We are ready for Germany: Manpreet Singh

Tokyo | Agencies

The Indian men's hockey team will hope to bounce back from their semifinal loss to Belgium when they take on Germany in the bronze medal playoffs at the Olympic Games on Thursday.

India who finished in the Top-2 in Pool A with four wins (3-2 vs New Zealand, 3-0 vs Spain, 3-1 vs Argentina, 5-3 vs Japan). They suffered a loss to Australia. In the quarterfinal, India beat Great Britain 3-1 and lost 2-5 to Belgium in the semifinal.

"I think we should just forget about what happened in the semifinal and put all our focus and energy into the game against Germany. The team has the experience of playing them in recent times.

We are ready for the challenge," said Manpreet Singh on the eve of the bronze medal playoff.

He added, "We have the entire country's support. We are pumped up for the game."

Chief coach Graham Reid said the team paid the price for not converting opportunities early in the game.

"At 2-1, we created a lot of opportunities, and really we should have converted. We couldn't get that scoreboard pressure to go to 3-1. When it was 2-2 also, we had the opportunity to go 3-2. The number of opportunities at that time, we didn't get that scoreboard pressure back on Belgium. There were few periods of play when we lost the ball and they scored, and we spiralled a little bit after that. I think we paid the price of not getting that scoreboard pressure back onto them when we could have," rued Reid.

CANADA'S ANDRE DE GRASSE WINS MEN'S 200M TITLE

Tokyo | Agencies

Canada's Andre De Grasse claimed the men's 200m gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics here on Wednesday, adding to his bronze medal in the 100m. Grasse won the 200m race with a national record of 19.62 seconds. He had come second in this event behind Usain Bolt of Jamaica at Rio 2016.

Kenneth Bednarek of the United States took silver in a personal best of 19.68, with Noah Lyles, the 2019 world champion, having to settle for bronze in 19.74. WojciechNowicki of Poland won the men's hammer throw gold medal at the Olympics here.

All five legitimate attempts by Nowicki were above 80 metres, including a personal best of 82.52 that lifted him from the bronze medal in Rio 2016 to the highest podium at Tokyo 2020.

Norwegian ElvindHenriksen won silver with an 81.58m throw on his fifth attempt, while Nowicki's teammate PawelFajdek - a four-time world champion - recorded 81.53m for bronze.

Wrestler Anshu still in with a chance to win bronze

Tokyo | Agencies

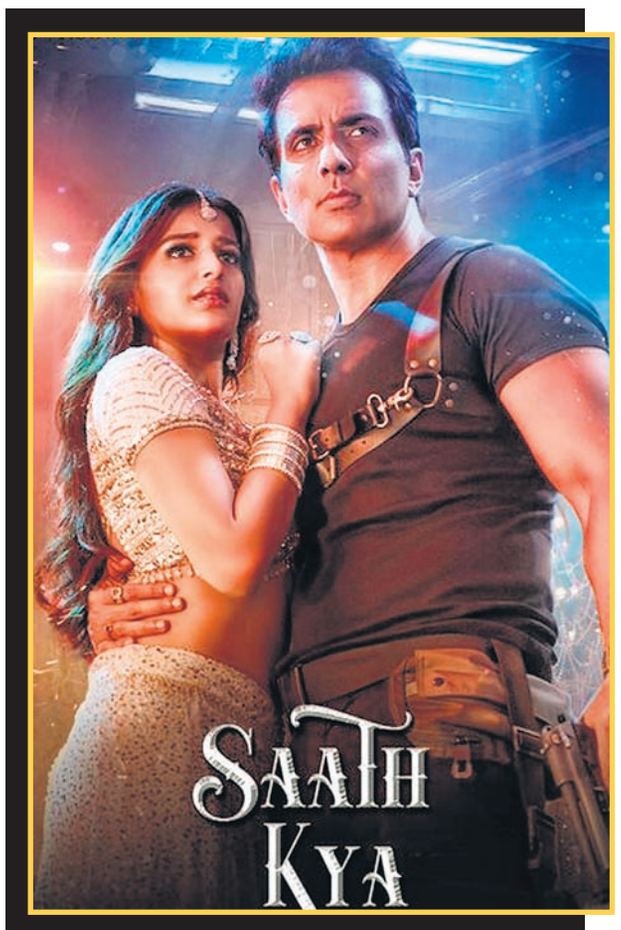
India's Anshu Malik has got a shot at bronze medal after IrynaKurachkina, who she lost to in the pre-quarter final bout of women's 57 kg category, reached the final. According to the rules of wrestling competition at the Olympics, the losers against the eventual finalists get to fight among themselves for a chance against the losing semi-finalist for bronze medal. While the Belarusian Iryna beat Anshu in the pre-quarter final, she prevailed over Russian Olympic Committee (ROC)'s Valeria Koblova in the quarter-finals. She then defeated Bulgaria's EvelinaNikolova in the semi-final. Her entry into final will give a chance to both Anshu and Valeria an opportunity to fight losing semi-finalist Evelina for bronze medal. But for that to happen, Anshu and Valeria, the two wrestlers who lost to the Belarusian before the semi-final stage, have to battle against each other. The winner of their bout, scheduled at 7.37 am, will get an opportunity to fight for the bronze medal against Evelina. In short, Anshu has two bouts to win to get a bronze.

Chennaiyin FC rope in defender Deepak Devrani

Chennai | Agencies

Chennaiyin FC have signed defender Deepak Devrani on a one-year deal ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League (ISL) season.

The 28-year-old will make a return to the country's premier football league after playing a crucial role in Gokulam Kerala FC's I-League winning campaign in 2020/21, in which he was also voted to the team of the season. Devrani had turned out for FC Pune City in the inaugural edition of the ISL in 2014, and now makes his comeback to the competition seven years later. Devrani made his I-League debut in 2012/13 with the Indian Arrows, formerly known as Pailan Arrows. Since then, he has been a part of the three I-League winning campaigns, his first, coming during a loan spell at Mohun Bagan in 2014/15. He won the second title in 2017/18 during his three-year stint with Minerva Academy FC. His third and most recent stint came with Malabarians last season, in which he produced four assists in 14 appearances.



FIRST LOOK OF 'SAATH KYA NIBHAOGE' MUSIC VIDEO OUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the first look of the upcoming music video 'Saath Kya Nibhaoge' was unveiled featuring SonuSood and NidhhiAgerwal, the fans of Sonu are excited for the video. The producer of the video hopes that fans shower more love once the video is released. The video is directed by Farah Khan and Sonu unveiled the first look of the video on social media. The video is produced by Desi Music Factory and is a recreated version of the famous 90s' jam 'Saath Kya Nibhaoge' and is sung by Altaf Raja and Tony Kakkar.

TANNISHTHA CHATTERJEE ROPED IN FOR 'FIERY' ROLE IN 'CARTEL'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tannishtha Chatterjee who is known for her films like 'Angry Indian Goddesses', 'Parched', and 'UnIndian' opposite Brett Lee, has joined the cast of upcoming action-drama 'Cartel'.

She plays a pivotal role of 'Romila' who is an author, opposite MadhuBhau (essayed by Jitendra Joshi) in the series 'Cartel'. The actress will be performing a pole dance in one of the sequences.

While speaking about her character, Tannishtha quips: "Romila is a very fiery character. She owns her body, her mind, and her sexuality. But behind all her outward strength, there is a hidden pain of non-acceptance. She is a very different character than my real personality and yes, the pole dancing was one of the highlights for me as well."

'Cartel' is streaming from August 20 on ALTBalaji.

Sara Ali Khan to star in new discovery+ content

Team Absolute | Mumbai

OTT platform discovery+ has announced a host of new projects for the Indian audience. The platform is coming up with new content featuring Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, Ananya Pandey and Nora Fatehi, among others.

After the first season of the popular cooking show 'Star vs Food', 'Star vs Food S2' in collaboration with Korea Tourism and backed by Endemol India, will feature celebs like AnanyaPanday, Anil Kapoor, Nora Fatehi, Badshah and other prominent personalities.

Sara Ali Khan will be seen in a new avatar as the franchise of 'Mission Frontline' returns in August. Sara will be seen performing extreme physical training routines alongside the Veerangana Force, India's first female commando unit to tackle rising crimes against women in Assam.

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Iconic actress Rekha can be seen with her poise and perfect portrayal of emotions in the newly-launched promo of the show 'Ghum Hai KisikeyPyaarMeiin'. In her intense voice, she tells the upcoming twist in the story of Sai (Ayesha Singh) and Virat (Neil Bhatt) in the promo of 'Ghum Hai KisikeyPyaarMeiin'. This serial brings out a love triangle between Patralekha (Aishwarya Sharma), Sai(Ayesha Singh) and Virat (Neil Bhatt) and as a new turn is about to come in their relationship, the show has launched this promo. Producer Rajesh Ram Singh shares about the same and says: "With this upcoming twist on the show, we will be offering our audience another perspective and a peek into the emotional turmoil of our central characters. The promo has also been conceptualised after a lot of thought and Rekhaji has simply made it magical with her presence and top-notch performance." 'Ghum Hai KisikeyPyaarMeiin' airs on Star Plus.

Lara plays Indira Gandhi in 'Bell Bottom'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Lara Dutta Bhupathi is all set to take the audience by surprise as she plays Indira Gandhi in the espionage drama 'Bell Bottom', which is slated for an August 19 theatrical release.

Calling it an opportunity of a lifetime, she said it was a great responsibility to play the late former Prime Minister.

"It is a great responsibility when you portray someone who's an iconic figure like Mrs Gandhi. It was very important to get her body language right," the 46-year-old actress said at the 'Bell Bottom' trailer launch.

The film, incidentally, is set in 1984, the year that saw Operation Bluestar as well as Mrs Gandhi's assassination.

"The film is about a hijack that took place during Mrs Gandhi's tenure," the actress said, describing the outline of the plot.

"Given the dramatic events that were unfolding, she was extremely centred. It was important therefore to portray her in that way. As a result, a lot of homework and research went into the role. It was an opportunity I am very thankful for."

Jasleen Royal recalls her emotions during recording of 'Ranjha'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer-composer Jasleen Royal is known for composing songs like 'Din Shagna Da', 'Kho gaye Hum Kahan' and 'Kesari's 'Deh Shiva'. Jasleen is back with another soulful melody which she has sung along with B Praak, in the upcoming biographical war film 'Shershaah' directed by Vishnuvardhan. This song is from Jasleen's second patriotic movie that is based on true events which celebrates a war hero.'Ranjha' is a heartbreaking love song that perfectly depicts the feeling of love and loss through its lyrics and Jasleen's soulful voice. She shares in detail about the track and how the entire song is a depiction of her mental state because of her friend who was going through a depressing phase.

Talking more about the song Jasleen says: "This song is special to me at many levels. It was kind of therapeutic. This song has layers of emotions of love, separation and everything in between. I really hope people resonate with it too." The song 'Ranjha' is releasing on Thursday.

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