

absolute india

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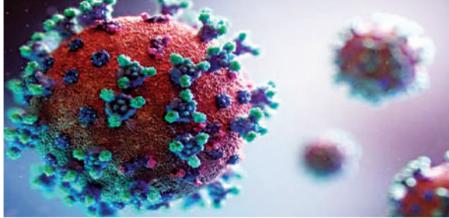


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SPIKE PROTEIN CHANGES IN COVID VARIANTS CAN MAKE VAX INEFFECTIVE

LONDON | Agencies

As SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, evolves it tends to mutate and bring new variants as well as cause changes to the spike protein -- a fact that can render the current vaccines targeting the protein ineffective.



Researchers from the Boston Children's Hospital, have found new properties in the spike protein of the Alpha, first identified in the UK and Beta, first identified in South Africa variants. The changes to the 'spike' protein explains faster spread of Alpha, and how the Beta variant evades immune responses, suggesting the need for a booster with an updated vaccine.

booster with the new genetic sequence can be beneficial for protecting against this variant," Chen added.

Spike proteins, on the surface of SARS CoV-2, are what enable the virus to attach to and enter our cells, and all current vaccines are directed against them. The new study, published in Science, used cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) to compare the spike protein from the original virus with that of the Alpha and Beta variants.

The structural findings indicate that mutations in the Beta variant (also known as B1351) change the shape of the spike surface at certain locations. As a result, neutralising antibodies induced by

current vaccines are less able to bind to the Beta virus, which may allow it to evade the immune system even when people are vaccinated.

However, the study also found that mutations in the Beta variant make the spike less effective in binding to ACE2 -- suggesting that this variant is less transmissible than the Alpha variant.

As for the Alpha variant (B117), the study confirms that a genetic change in the spike (a single amino acid substitution) helps the virus bind better to ACE2 receptors, making it more infectious. However, testing indicates that antibodies elicited by existing vaccines can still neutralise this variant.

Ayodhya to be global tourism hub, PM reviews development plan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the development plan for Ayodhya as Uttar Pradesh government officials made a presentation which encompassed various aspects of Ayodhya's development.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also present in the meeting.

Ayodhya's development is being envisaged as a spiritual centre, global tourism hub and a sustainable smart city. The Prime Minister was informed about various upcoming and proposed infrastructure projects to improve connectivity with Ayodhya. Various infrastructure projects like Airport, expansion of Railway Station, Bus station, roads and highways were discussed.

An upcoming Greenfield township was also discussed which includes lodging facilities for devotees, space for Ashrams, Maths, Hotels, Bhavans of various states. A tourist facilitation centre and a world class museum will also be built. Special attention is

being given to development of infrastructure around the Sarayu river and its ghats. Cruise operation on the Sarayu river will also be made a regular feature.

The city will be developed to ensure sustainability with adequate spaces for cyclists and people on foot.

Traffic management will also be done in a modern manner using Smart City infrastructure.

Prime Minister Modi described Ayodhya as a city that is etched in the cultural consciousness of every Indian. Ayodhya should manifest the finest of our traditions and the best of

our developmental transformations.

"Ayodhya is both spiritual and sublime. The human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure, which is beneficial for everyone including tourists and pilgrims," the Prime Minister said.

He said that the coming generations should feel the desire to visit Ayodhya at least once in their lifetime. PM pointed out that developmental works in Ayodhya will continue in the foreseeable future. At the same time, the momentum towards heralding Ayodhya to this next leap of progress must begin now. It is our collective endeavour to celebrate the identity of Ayodhya and keep its cultural vibrancy alive through innovative ways.

He said that the way Lord Ram had the ability to bring people together, the development works of Ayodhya should be guided by a spirit of healthy public participation, especially by the youth. He called for the skills of our talented youngsters to be leveraged in this development of the city.

It's simple, we are with farmers: Rahul Gandhi

RG tweeted with the hashtag #Farmersprotest. On the completion of seven months of their protest at several points on the borders of the national capital, the farmers under the banner of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) are observing 'Kheti Bachao, Loktantra Bachao Diwas.'



in their support saying we are with the 'farmers'. In a tweet in Hindi, Rahul Gandhi said, "It's simple - We are with Satyagrahi Annadata (farmers)." The Congress Lok Sabha MP from Kerala's Wayanad tweeted with the hashtag #Farmersprotest. On the completion of seven months of their protest at several points on the borders of the national capital, the farmers under the banner of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) are observing 'Kheti Bachao, Loktantra Bachao Diwas.' Farmers will also visit the Raj Bhavan (the Governor House) in several states.

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As the farmers are intensifying their protest over the three farm laws on the completion of seven months of their agitation at the borders of the national capital, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday came out



three crore Covid cases on Wednesday. This is the ninth consecutive day in the last two months when the death toll has been below the

VACCINATED & COVID-RECOVERED TESTS POSITIVE FOR DELTA+

Jaipur: In the first case of Delta positive in Rajasthan, a 65-year-old woman, who recovered from Covid-19 in May and had undergone both doses of vaccination, has tested positive with the variant. However, the woman is healthy, confirmed government officials. With this, Rajasthan became the ninth state in the country to register the new virus strain. According to Bikaner's PBM Hospital Superintendent Parmendra Sirohi: "The patient's sample was sent to NIV on May 31 and after 25 days, the state government received the reports which were then sent to Bikaner district collector for further action." Bikaner CMHO O.P. Chahar said: "Special instructions have been issued for tracing in and around the residence of the woman. All those people who tested positive in the area in last one month will be tested again," he added. This woman has already recovered from the Covid infection," Chahar said. Rajasthan government is taking this issue seriously. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said that there will be no laxity in services and the new guidelines will ensure that the Delta plus variant does not spread across the state. Delta plus variant has also been traced in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnatak, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The highest number of patients have been reported in Maharashtra with 21 cases.



Parliamentary panel to seek explanation from Twitter for locking accounts: Tharoor

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After Union Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Congress MP Shashi Tharoor were temporarily locked out of their Twitter accounts on Friday, the latter said that he would seek an explanation from the microblogging platform for its actions.

"As Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, I can state that we will be seeking an explanation from @TwitterIndia for the locking of @rsprasad's & my accounts & the rules & procedures they follow while operating in India," Tharoor said in a tweet. In an earlier tweet, the Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram had said: "And @Twitter locked me out again because to explain the problem, the first tweet in this thread included



the offending copyrighted video. Locking is a foolish response to a DCMA notice; disabling the video (which they've now done) should be enough. @Twitter has a lot to learn."

Earlier in the day, Prasad was denied access to his Twitter account for almost an hour over alleged violation of the US' Digital Millennium Copyright Act. After being temporarily blocked, Prasad said in a series posts

on Koo, the India-made micro-blogging platform: "Twitter's actions were in gross violation of Rule 4(B) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 where they failed to provide me any prior notice before denying me access to my own account." Prasad, who has been at the forefront of the government's drive to bring in more compliance and stricter norms for social media platforms, added: "It is apparent that my statements calling out the high handedness and arbitrary actions of Twitter, particularly sharing the clips of my interviews to TV channels and its powerful impact, have clearly ruffled its feathers."

"No matter what any platform does, they will have to abide by the new IT Rules fully and there shall be no compromise on that," he added.

Over 48K Covid cases, 1,183 deaths in 24 hours in India

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Witnessing a slight dip, India reported 48,698 new Covid-19 cases and 1,183 deaths in the last 24 hours, according to data released by the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry on Saturday.

The total caseload rose to 3,01,83,143 cases as India crossed the mark of over



three crore Covid cases on Wednesday. This is the ninth consecutive day in the last two months when the death toll has been below the

2,000-mark. India has become the second country after the US to record more than three crore cases of Covid. India added one crore cases in the last 50 days.

It is also the 19th consecutive day when India reported less than one lakh new coronavirus cases. On March 23, India had recorded 47,262 cases while on June 22 India reported 42,640 cases.

'US pull out from Afghanistan may push some militants into Kashmir'

SRINAGAR | Agencies

The Army has said that the US pull out from Afghanistan may push some militants into Kashmir, but the security forces are ready to tackle any situation.

Lt. General Davendra Pratap Pandey, the GoC of Srinagar-based 15 Corps, made the remarks while speaking to reporters on Friday on the sidelines of a passing out parade at the JAKLI regimental centre here.

"Some people who are fond of so-called Azadi must ponder over what

is the situation across the LoC and in Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Whatever happened 30 year ago caused huge distress to the people of Kashmir. Yes, there is a possibility that US forces pull out from Afghanistan may push some militants into Kashmir, but the situation is not what it was 30 years ago," he said. "We are ready and fully geared up to foil all bids and to face every challenge whether on LoC or the hinterland." He said that for the Army the first priority is always conventional training, then counter-insurgency operations

or counter-infiltration operations. "Wherever police needs us for any kind of operation we are joining them. Ceasefire or no ceasefire, our eyes are set on our enemy. We are ready to face any misadventure be that on the LoC or in the hinterland. We are ready to respond at every level effectively." Talking about the induction of latest weaponry, the GoC said it was a normal process which is part of the annual turnover. He, however, added that "given the Chinese situation on the LAC, a balance of forces is being maintained." He said earlier

under narco-modules, only money would come, but now drugs are also coming." The Jammu and Kashmir Police is dealing with narco-infiltration very effectively and a lot of drugs have been seized. It is high time for parents, civil society, and teachers to keep focus on children so that they stay away from drug," he said. Asked whether the recent dialogue between Jammu and Kashmir politicians and New Delhi would have any impact on Kashmir's security situation, he said security situation and political process are two different things.

MP may get two births in Modi cabinet:

Scindia, Vijayvargiya among new ministers tipped in cabinet reshuffle

The reshuffle is being necessitated by some vacancies caused due to untimely deaths like Ram Vilas Paswan and Suresh Angadi and exits of Akali Dal and Shiv Sena. Many ministers are saddled with multiple portfolios due the deaths and exits.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

With the all-party meeting on J&K done and dusted, the impending Cabinet reshuffle has once again gathered pace. As many as 27 probables including heavyweights Jyotiraditya Scindia, Sushil Modi, Sarbananda Sonowal, Narayan Rane and Bhupender Yadav could be part of the massive reshuffle of the Union Cabinet reportedly imminent.

The new ministers in the Narendra Modi government, who are likely to be sworn in include former Congress heavyweight from Madhya Pradesh, Scindia, who is now in the BJP; former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi; senior BJP organisational heavyweights party general secretary, Bhupender Yadav from Rajasthan and Kailash Vijayvargiya,

from Madhya Pradesh, who was in charge of the BJP campaign in West Bengal. BJP spokesperson and minority face Syed Zafar Islam is also tipped for a central government role. Also on the master list are former Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal and former Maharashtra CM Narayan Rane, besides, Maharashtra Beed MP Pritam Munde and Gopinath Munde's daughter is on the reshuffle candidates list. From Uttar Pradesh which is headed for 'make or break' elections for the BJP next year, BJP UP chief Swatantra Dev Singh, a certainty; Pankaj Chaudhary, MP from



Maharajan, Varun Gandhi, and alliance partner, Anupriya Patel are among the probables. Rajya Sabha MP Anil Jain, Odisha MPs, Ashwini Vaishnav and former Bajajayant Panda; former Railway Minister from Bengal Dinesh Trivedi are also on the list. Jain is also President of the All India Tennis Association.

There is a sizeable contingent from Rajasthan, including former Union Minister in Modi government PP Choudhry, youngest MP from Rajasthan hailing from Churu, Rahul Kaswan and Sikar MP Sumedhanand Saraswati.

The lone entrant from Delhi will be New Delhi MP Meenakshi

Lekhi. Amid the significant churn in Bihar, Pasupati Paras who rebelled against Chirag Paswan is likely getting a central berth from IJP, as are JDU nominations RCP Singh and Santosh Kumar. Karnataka may well be represented by Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar. Gujarat BJP President CR Patil is moving to the government along with Ahmedabad West MP Kirit Solaki. From Haryana, Sirsa MP Sunita Duggal, a former Income Tax officer is also among the probables. Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal who impressed with his Parliament speech is also being considered. The reshuffle is being necessitated by some vacancies caused due to untimely deaths like Ram Vilas Paswan and Suresh Angadi and exits of Akali Dal and Shiv Sena. Many ministers are saddled with multiple portfolios due the deaths and exits. Upcoming elections in UP are a factor in the reshuffle and also the need to add some heft to government with the entry of Bhupender Yadav, a strong organisational face. Since PM Modi came back to power in 2019, this will be the first such reshuffle cum expansion.



NADDA DISCUSSES ASSEMBLY POLLS PREPARATIONS WITH SENIOR UNION MINISTERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi



The Bharatiya Janata Party top leadership on Saturday discussed party preparations for assembly polls in five states scheduled early next year. BJP Chief JP Nadda and Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smriti Irani, Piyush Goyal, Dharmendra Pradhan, Hardeep Singh Puri and Kiran Rijiju were present in the meeting held at the party national headquarters here. National General Secretary, Bhupendra Yadav and other national office bearers were also present at the meeting which lasted for over two hours. Sources said that preparations for the five poll bound states, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur were discussed by the saffron party leaders. Recently, BJP national general secretary (Organisation) B L Santhosh had visited Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh to take stock of the ground situation. He also collected feedback from MLAs, Ministers and cadre during his visit. "With today's meeting of top party leaders, BJP started working on its 'Mission 2022' for these poll bound five states. Plans for these states were discussed and the party will start its poll activities as per plan in the coming days," a party insider said. After discussing the poll preparations for the five states with the Union ministers, Nadda will be holding a meeting with the party general secretaries to discuss organisational activities in the evening.

CITING 'PRIVILEGES', KERALA GOVT MOVES SC TO DROP SUITS AGAINST LEFT LEADERS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Pinarayi Vijayan government has moved the Supreme Court seeking its nod to withdraw cases against CPI(M) leaders, including Kerala Education Minister V. Sivankutty, for vandalism inside Assembly in 2015, when the current regime was not in power. The Kerala High Court, in an order passed on March 12, had refused to give its nod to the same saying that the elected representatives were expected to uphold prestige of the House or face consequences. The MLAs had vandalised the Speaker's dais, uprooted his chair, pulled out mike system, computer etc. The special leave petition filed by the state government said: "When Article 105(3), 194(3) of the Constitution of India confers certain privileges and immunities to the members of the Parliament and State Legislature, is it proper for the Secretary of Legislative Assembly to file

cases against the MLAs with regard to an incident that happened on the floor of the House during the protest made by the opposition members, that too without the consent of the Speaker of the Assembly?" The state government contended that the high court failed to appreciate the fact that the alleged offences under Section 447 and 427 of IPC and Section 3(1) of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, happened on the floor of the Legislative Assembly during the Budget Session of the legislature as a part of the protest by opposition members against the budget presentation by the then Finance Minister due to the then prevailing political reason. "The FIR registered by the Secretary Legislative Assembly without the consent of the Speaker is wrong and therefore the application filed under section 321 Cr.P.C. is liable to be allowed. "The act of the accused persons being in relation to their function to protest as mem-

Sukhbir questioned for Kotkapura police firing

Chandigarh | Agencies



After interrogating Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, the Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing case in Punjab, on Saturday questioned his son and party SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal for four hours here. Sukhbir was the Deputy Chief Minister and also the Home Minister when the incidents of the desecration of a religious text and the subsequent police firing took place in Faridkot in 2015. The SIT team, led by ADGP LK Yadav, quizzed the former Deputy Chief Minister. Earlier this week, the SIT questioned former five-time Chief Minister Badal at his residence here for three hours. Badal was the Chief Minister of Punjab when the police had opened fire on protesters on October 14, 2015, killing two and injuring others after alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in Bargari village in Faridkot district took place. The SIT is to ascertain as to who gave the orders to open fire, whether the cops fired in self-defence and if standard

operating procedure was followed. After the High Court order on April 9, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has constituted a new SIT. Responding to the questioning of the Sukhbir, Harcharan Bains, Principal Advisor to party president, said the Kotkapura firing "must be the only incident in the world where the SIT wants to know who ordered firing after the relevant competent authority, the SDM, has already declared that he ordered it". "It's like SIT telling the SDM please don't say you ordered it. We want to blame it on someone else," he added. In an interesting development in the case, a former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap, who was handling the probe into police firing after the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib, this week joined Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the presence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal after opting voluntary retirement from his service. After joining the politics, Vijay Pratap blamed the accused of the sacrilege case for dictating the state government.

Karnataka on alert in border areas to keep track of Delta+ strain

Bengaluru | Agencies

Raising concern over the intensity of the second wave not declining in neighbouring Maharashtra and Kerala, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Friday directed officials intensify its surveillance on border areas to keep track of passengers those arriving from these states. After a meeting with ministers and bureaucrats concerned to discuss strategies to curb the spread of new mutant - Delta Plus - of coronavirus' Delta variant, he, in a statement, said that there is need to increase surveillance on border areas to keep check on its carriers entering from neighbouring states. "We need to subject everyone who arrive from Maharashtra and Kerala to tests as in these states, Covid cases are still on the rise and cases related to Delta Plus mutant were also recorded more in number in these states than in southern states," he said. Yediyurappa contended that at least in Karnataka, the Delta Plus strain has not yet appeared on large scale as of now and things are under control in this regard. He also instructed the authorities concerned to identify malnourished children and provide them nutritious food and medical

care that is required. Earlier in the day expressing similar concerns, Health Minister K. Sudhakar observed that there is a surge in cases in Kerala where the positivity rate is more than 10 per cent. "We need to be cautious as we share a border with this state. Same is with Maharashtra too. We need to conduct more tests in border areas. We have instructed the district administration to conduct more tests in border areas to keep tight vigil on the spread of Delta Plus strain," he said. However, the minister firmly ruled out sealing down borders. "It is not appropriate to close the borders. We need to be extra cautious at bus and railway stations," he said. He said that there are two cases of Delta Plus variant in the state, one in Bengaluru and the other in Mysuru, both with mild symptoms. "The one in Mysuru is completely recovered. There was no severity in both the cases. Primary contacts of these cases have tested negative. Therefore, there is no need to panic about this mutant," he said. The minister reiterated that genome sequencing is carried out regularly to detect new strains. "We are planning to set up six genome sequencing labs at Bengaluru, Mysuru, Shivamogga, Hubballi, Mangaluru and Vijayapura," he added.

Stalin juggles between inclusive politics, all-out attack on AIADMK

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin had set a new benchmark in inclusive politics by accommodating former Health Minister and AIADMK leader C. Vijayabaskar in a 13-member-committee of legislators to combat Covid-19. But that did not stop him from taking issue with the opposition party's claims. Stalin, after assuming office, reached out to opposition parties to set up the committee with legislators from across the political spectrum. The development was hailed and the Chief Minister noted that the presence of the former Health Minister would provide support to the government in its fight against Covid. However, this did not stop Stalin from openly contradicting the claims made by the AIADMK leadership



including former Chief Minister K. Palaniswami that his government had a better track record of containing Covid-19. Stalin said that it was the DMK government under his leadership that has contained Covid and the AIADMK government was found wanting in several crucial moments during the first wave of the pandemic. State Health Minister M Subramanian also came out heavily against the previous AIADMK government in the matter of containing the deadly pandemic. The sudden change by the DMK leadership in the house and outside is seen by political

observers as a calculated political move to capture the public mind and to discredit the opposition. Talking to IANS, Madurai based journalist and political observer S. Sivashankar said: "Stalin is a shrewd politician and he knows that he had to take credit for the decreasing number of Covid-19 cases and that he should not provide space to the AIADMK in this game of one-upmanship. While he wants to project an image of a politician with inclusiveness, at crucial junctures, he wants to break free of that image and cater to his cadre base as well as send a strong message to the people that it was his leading role that helped contain the disease." With the assembly now adjourned, the verbal duel which took place in the house between the DMK and the AIADMK is expected to continue on the streets.

Delhi reports 85 new Covid cases, lowest since April 19 last year

This is the second time in the last one week that Delhi's single-day tally fell below the 100-mark after June 21, when the national capital had reported 89 cases.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The national capital on Saturday reported 85 new Covid-19 cases, the lowest since April 19 last year, with a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent, while nine people fell prey to the virus in the last 24 hours. This is the second time in the last one week that Delhi's single-day tally fell below the 100-mark after June 21, when the national capital had reported 89 cases. With nine more deaths getting reported in the last 24

hours, Delhi's overall Covid death toll has gone up to 24,961. During the same time period, 158 people recovered from the disease, taking the national capital's total number of recoveries to 14,07,116 till date. Delhi presently has 1,598 active cases, with the number of patients under home isolation dropping below the 500-mark. A total of 72,920 Covid samples were tested in the last 24 hours, including 50,839 through RT-PCR and 20,081 through the Rapid Antigen method.

Now, Suwendu wants central probe into Kolkata's fake vax drive

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, has demanded an investigation by central agencies into a fake vaccination drive in Kolkata conducted by a man allegedly posing as an IAS officer. Adhikari has written a letter to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan. "Decorated with trademark blue and white balloons characteristic of TMC government events, these camps had already been held in Amherst Street, Sonarpur and hundreds of persons have already been inoculated in these camps. "While copies of Aadhaar cards were procured from the recipients in Kasba, none of them received any certificate of vaccination. All these



happened under the watch of local administration including police and civic authorities," Adhikari wrote. He wrote that one Debanjan Deb impersonating as an IAS officer working as Joint Commissioner of Kolkata Municipal Corporation has been holding illegal 'vaccination camps' in Ward No 107 of Kasba

right in the heart of Kolkata under the banner of KMC. Adhikari mentioned that several incriminating photos suggest the accused's influence in the ruling party of West Bengal which have come to the fore during Kolkata Police investigation. "Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim, West Bengal Government Minister Subrata Mukherjee, TMC MP Santanu Sen, TMC MLAs Debasish Kumar and Lovely Maitra, KMC councillor Baiswanor Chatterjee and others are seen directly or indirectly endorsing the activities of Debanjan Deb," Adhikari wrote. Adhikari alleged that accused has previously been seen posing with Government of West Bengal files or hosting 'Duare Sarkar' camps of West Bengal government in Ward 66 of

KMC. Raising doubt over Kolkata Police investigation, Adhikari said, "In such a situation with so many influential ruling party leaders and government representatives being seen in close proximity to the accused, we have serious doubts about an impartial investigation from Kolkata Police that follows the instructions of the same government. "I sincerely urge you to order a thorough investigation by concerned central agencies into this vaccination fraud and punish the guilty. An impartial investigation by central agencies, undaunted by any pressure from the state's ruling party or government, is the need of the hour to restore credibility of the entire Covid vaccination process in West Bengal," Adhikari wrote.

Medicines in govt hospitals must meet WHO standards: Jagan

"Special attention should be paid to sanitation in hospitals and food provided to patients along with hospital maintenance and medical infrastructure with regular monitoring," he said.



Amaravati | Agencies

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday directed officials to ensure that all government hospitals and ESI facilities use medicines complying with World Health Organisation (WHO) and

GMP standards. Reddy gave the instructions while reviewing coronavirus control and vaccination at his camp office. "Special attention should be paid to sanitation in hospitals and food provided to patients along with hospital maintenance and medical infrastructure with regular monitoring," he said. The Chief Minister instructed authorities to prepare SOPs ensuring proper mechanism in place, including appointing a special office to see that all hospitals have access to infrastructure, proper sanitation, and to monitor attendance of doctors, nurses, and other staff. As many people are going to other states for cancer, heart disease and paediatric surgeries, Reddy directed authorities to ensure that medical services for these ailments are available in AP and prioritising the establishment of such speciality hospitals in the planned hubs.

GOA-DELHI RAJDHANI EXPRESS DERAILS, NO CASUALTIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

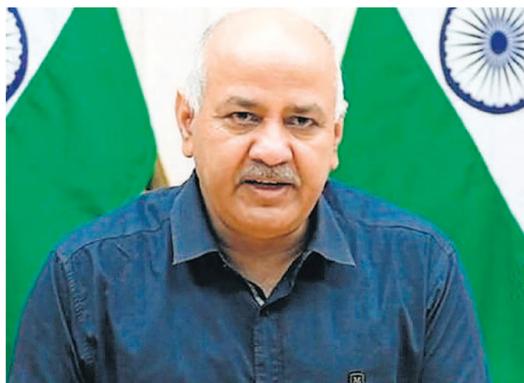
The front wheel of the locomotive hauling the Nizamuddin-Madgaon Rajdhani Superfast Special derailed while it zoomed through a tunnel in Ratnagiri, officials said here on Saturday. The incident occurred around 4.15 a.m. as the train sped between Ukshi and Bhoke stations in the Karbude Tunnel on the Konkan Railway route. The mishap occurred owing to a boulder crash in the tunnel, but there were no injuries to any of the passengers sleeping in the train, according to the officials. A KRC official spokesperson said that an accident relief van with re-railing equipment which left from Ratnagiri early on Saturday reached the accident site along with senior officials to ensure early clearance of the blocked coastal rail route. After massive efforts of nearly four hours, the derailed locomotive was re-railed, the tracks certified as fit and the Delhi-Goa Rajdhani Superfast Special cleared the line. Later, normal train traffic was restored on the route around 10.27 a.m., nearly 6 hours after the mishap, said the spokesperson.



DoE issues circular to start teaching learning activities in Govt schools

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Directorate of Education (DoE) of the Delhi Government has issued a circular on the approach and implementation strategy to conduct teaching-learning activities in all government schools from Nursery to Class 12. It has directed the school authorities to implement the new strategy for the current academic session, until schools reopen. The action plan for the new session 2021-22 which includes a staggered approach for students to ease into the teaching-learning process has been divided into three stages. In the first stage, which will commence on June 28, the DoE has directed school authorities to contact students and parents, update their details and make WhatsApp groups and prepare a list of students with smartphones, normal



phones or no phone. During the second stage, which will start from July 5, teachers will connect with their students to enquire about their well being, understand their situation and need for support and introduce light activities like reading, writing etc. As per the DoE circular, "For classes 9 to 12, the focus would be recapitulating and understanding where the child currently is through online classes and worksheets apart from supporting emo-

tional well being. This stage will be till the end of July." During the third stage which will commence from August, DoE has directed to focus on class specific activities to bridge the learning loss. "While Nursery to Class 8 will receive generic and subject-specific worksheets, for classes 9 to 12 the online classes by the respective subject teachers shall be conducted," DoE said. The circular emphasizes that, "the focus of the online classes for the classes 9 to 12 will to guide the students on how to learn. Students who have difficulty in accessing digital devices will be provided short notes capturing the points of their online classes. These notes can be collected by the parents from the school on a weekly basis." DoE's circular said, "In terms of assessing students, there shall be regular monthly assessment, using innovative approach to understand the participation level and learning

of students. The nature of these assessments will be based on Project/Activity/Assignment. The record of such assessment shall be maintained by the schools which will be uploaded on students' module as part of Internal/External assessment for the session 2021-2022." Meanwhile, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, reiterated that schools will remain closed until the Covid pandemic situation eases but the engagement between teachers and students will resume immediately, using an online and semi-online approach. "With the onset of the pandemic, learning loss has been massive. This year, we not only need to reduce the learning loss but also provide deep emotional support to our children. They need to be mentally prepared for any teaching-learning activities," he added.



#ShareFactsOnDrugs

VISION OF A DRUGS FREE INDIA

"Remember - addiction is neither cool nor a style statement."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking said that drugs bring with it darkness, destruction and devastation and we should save lives and realize the vision of Drug free India.

In his message Prime Minister Modi said, "Today, on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I laud all those working at the grassroots to eliminate the menace of drugs from our society. Every such effort to #SaveLives is vital. After all, drugs bring with it darkness, destruction and devastation." "Let us reiterate our commit-



ment to #ShareFactsOnDrugs and realise our vision of a Drugs Free India. Remember - addiction is neither cool nor a style statement. Sharing an old #MannKiBaat episode which contained many aspects of overcoming the drugs menace," he added.

While Government agencies like NCB is on toes to detect and stop the drug racket in the country, the agency on Thursday busted an international drug smuggling racket with the arrest of a wanted drug smuggler linked to a Pakistan Lahore-based operative in connection with the recovery of 56 kg of heroin from the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan.

Rajasthan first state to develop facility for genome sequencing

Team Absolute | Jaipur

The facility for Genome Sequencing has been started in the SMS Medical College here, thus making Rajasthan the first state to have its own Genome Sequencing lab.

This has been done on the directions of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, said Health Minister Dr Raghu Sharma Friday.

Sharma said that the facility of genome sequencing has been made available in the state to prevent the Covid-19 spread. Information about the new variants of the virus could be known with the technique of genome sequencing.

He said that the system of genome sequencing has been started at the SMS Medical College by spending Rs one crore. Sharma also said till now the samples from the state were being sent to the IGIB lab in Delhi set up for Rajasthan by Central Government's Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). As per the fixed limit, 10 samples per day, that is 300 samples in a month were sent, but their reports were not being received on time. He said that the



machine installed at the SMS Medical College has started functioning from June 15. The capacity of the machine is to check 20 samples per day and soon its capacity will be increased to check 80 samples per day. The report of the sample is received in 3-4 days.

Sharma said that till now genome sequencing of around 100 samples of Covid-19 has been done. As per the test report, Delta variant was found in around 90 per cent of the samples and covid-19 B.1.1 variant was found in the remaining 10 per cent of the samples.

He expressed confidence that effective monitoring on the changing variants of Covid-19 can be done with the availability of genome sequencing facility in the state.

Gurugram: Sputnik to be administered at govt facilities from July

GURUGRAM | Agencies

The Gurugram health department can start administering the Russian-made vaccine against Covid-19, Sputnik V, from the first week of July at the government health centres without any charge, officials said on Friday.

With this initiative, the Gurugram district will be among the first ones across Haryana, where the Russian-made vaccine will be administered at government facilities. Officials said the health department has made the necessary arrangements for administering Sputnik V.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Gurugram, Virender Yadav, said that Sputnik V will be made avail-



able in Gurugram under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme. The vaccine will be administered free of cost on first-come-first-serve basis. "The health department has made all the necessary arrangements for the storage of Sputnik V. We have placed deep freezers to maintain the temperature required Sputnik V at the

Polyclinic in Sector 31, Civil Hospital in Sector 10, Wazirabad Community Health Centre, and the sub-divisional government hospitals in Sohna and Pataudi," said Yadav. The Fortis Memorial Research Institute has become the first hospital in Haryana to introduce Sputnik V as part of a pilot soft launch last week.

STALIN LAUNCHES DRY RATION KIT SCHEME FOR MIGRANT LABOURERS

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday launched a scheme to provide dry ration kits to migrant labourers, struggling over Covid-related issues including lockdowns and loss of jobs.

A release from the Chief Minister's office said that Stalin also launched a vaccination drive for construction workers that would benefit over two lakh labourers who have been registered by the Tamil Nadu Construction Labourers Welfare Board.

The dry ration kit provided by the Tamil Nadu government consists of 15 kg of rice, 1 kg of Tur Dal and 1 kg of cooking oil. Medical and Family Welfare Minister Ma Subramanian, Labour Welfare and Skill Development Minister C.M. Ganesan, Rajya Sabha MP M. Shanmugham, Chennai South MP, Thamilzhachi Thangapandian and other senior officials were present during the programme held at the Secretariat on Friday.



BFSI, commodities expected to drive FY22 earnings: MOFSL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector along with commodities are expected to drive FY22 earnings, said Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL) in a report.

Accordingly, MOFSL has placed BFSI, IT, metals, and cement in the 'OW' (overweight) category in its model portfolio. "Corporate earnings in 4QFY21 were led by cyclical and a combination of low base and strong demand revival as economic activity improved. Corporate India displayed tremendous resilience in FY21, with the Nifty ending the year with a healthy (14 per cent) earnings growth, which was unthinkable a year back," the report said.

"The second Covid wave in April-May, 2021 has soured sentiments and impacted economic activity. Since the restrictions this time were localized and less stringent versus the lockdown in CY20, we expect



the impact in 1QFY22 to be contained."

According to the report, earnings momentum is expected to accelerate in FY22 as the pace of vaccinations picks up and the economy opens up further.

"BFSI and commodities are expected to drive FY22E earnings. The market has been strong and largely looked through the second Covid wave on the back of strong liquidity and robust participation from non-institutional investors."

Govt announces tax relief on expenditure towards Covid treatment, extends deadlines

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Friday announced income-tax exemption on the amount received by a taxpayer from his/her employer or from any other person for the treatment of Covid-19 during FY 2019-20 and subsequent years.

The government also provided relief to the family members of a taxpayer falling prey to Covid by providing income-tax exemption on the ex-gratia payment received by them from the employer or from any other person.

This exemption shall be allowed without any limit for the amount received from the employer, while the exemption shall be limited to Rs 10 lakh in aggregate for the amount received from any other person, a



Finance Ministry statement said.

Necessary legislative amendments for the above decisions shall be proposed in due course of time, the statement added.

Further, the ministry has extended the timelines for various tax compliances to address the issue of the inconvenience being faced by the taxpayers due to the pandemic. It had earlier extended timelines for filing income tax and corporate tax returns.

The government has also extended the last date of linkage of Aadhaar with PAN under Section 139AA of the Act to September 30, 2021.

The last date of payment of amount under 'Vivad se Vishwas' (without additional amount), which was earlier extended to June 30, 2021, has been further extended to August 31, 2021.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Pankaj Tripathi on Saturday pledged support to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. He says authorities from NCB Patna Zonal Unit have reached out to him for the cause.

"The authorities from NCB Patna reached out to me for this cause, and anything that is associated with Bihar and in public concerns, I personally have interest to lend my support for such campaigns and awareness creation drives," he says. Pankaj says it



is his social responsibility to fulfil his duty. "Cinema is one of the favourite mediums of the youth, and as an actor if we initiate any awareness campaign it may reach out to

maximum people, creating more impact. It's a social responsibility for me as an actor and as a citizen to fulfil my duty as much as I can," he said.

Sreejesh, Deepika recommended for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna

Indian men's hockey team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and former women's player Deepika were on Saturday nominated by Hockey India (HI) for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sreejesh played a key role in India's silver medal-winning performance at the 2018 Champions Trophy in Breda, the bronze medal win at the Jakarta Asian Games and the gold-medal win at the 2019 FIH Men's Series Finals in Bhubaneswar.

Sreejesh is also the recipient of the Arjuna Award in 2015 and the Padma Shri Award in 2017.

Deepika played a key role in the Indian women's team's silver medal-winning performance at the 2018 Asian Games and the Asian Champions Trophy.

Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh (100 international caps), Vandana Kataria (200 international caps) and Navjot Kaur (150 international caps) have been nominated for the Arjuna for their consistent performances in the last few years.

Hockey India president Gyanendra Ningombam, said, "It was a proud moment when Rani won the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award last year and it is with great pride that we are recommending two of the finest hockey players the country has seen -- PR Sreejesh and Deepika -- for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award this year."



NCB busts international drug syndicate active over darknet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday said that it has busted a drug trafficking syndicate operating over darknet.

The syndicate was supplying drugs to international markets with the use of multi cryptocurrencies, said an NCB official, adding that they even used internet pharmacy as method. The official said that the syndicate were operating nine websites all registered in geographical space beyond India. He said that the syndicate is spread across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in India and having tentacles in US, UK, Canada and Philippines.

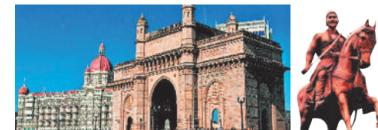
The official pointed out that the destination of the consignments were primarily to US, UK, Europe and other countries. Highlighting the payment method, the official



said that multi crypto currencies used and bitcoin had major share in the transactions. He further said that bank accounts beyond India are under investigation.

The official said that total 37 seizures took place, with 22 lakh psychotropic tablets like Tramadol and 245 Kg psychotropic drugs have been seized. A pharmaceutical manufacturing company based in Haridwar involved in this network already busted. The official further said that herbal supplement packages were used to disguise and conceal the contrabands.

He also said that the digital forensics reveal orders to the tune of Rs 1 lakh already shipped out by this module.



TWO AIDES ARRESTED, ANIL DESHMUKH SKIPS ED SUMMONS

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had summoned Deshmukh to record his statement after arresting his two aides in a money laundering case on Saturday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh skipped summons by Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning on Saturday in a money laundering case, however, the ED arrested his two aides in connection with an alleged 'hafta' case, officials said here.

They are Kundan Shinde and Sanjeev Palande working as personal staffers with Deshmukh, a senior leader of the Nationalist Congress Party. The action came a day after the ED carried out raids on the Nagpur and Mumbai residences of Deshmukh besides his aides and associates, sparking protests from a ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

However, Deshmukh skipped ED summons for questioning in the money laundering case. He sought more time, they added. His lawyers have submitted a letter seeking time to appear



before the ED for statement. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had summoned Deshmukh to record his statement after arresting his two aides in a money laundering case on Saturday.

The Enforcement Directorate will produce Deshmukh's private secretary Sanjeev Palande, who is an additional collector rank officer, and personal assistant Kundan Shinde before the court, where the Enforcement Directorate will seek their remand. On Friday, the Enforcement Directorate carried out raids against Deshmukh in Mumbai and Nagpur. The ED is following a trail of Rs 4 crore that it believes is part of money collected by dismissed cop Sachin Waze from 12 bars and passed on to Deshmukh. "The money from the bar owners was deposited into accounts

of shell firms and then diverted to an entity linked to the Deshmukh family," said a source.

Deshmukh has been accused by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh of asking sacked cop Sachin Waze, now in jail over planting explosives near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house and murdering a businessman, to collect Rs 100 crore from bars and restaurants every month for him.

A day before the searches, the ED had recorded the statement of DCP Raju Bhujbal, a key witness. Deshmukh allegedly repeated the Rs 100 crore demand after calling Bhujbal, along with ACP Sanjay Patil, at his official residence.

After the controversy, CBI registered a corruption case against Deshmukh and he resigned from the home minister's post. Subsequently, the ED registered a money laundering case last month against Deshmukh. Earlier on April 24, the Central Bureau of Investigation had raided around 10 locations of Deshmukh in multiple cities after he was booked.

The 71-year-old leader was detained for several hours at his home during the searches on his premises then. Following the allegations against him and the Bombay High Court directives, Deshmukh quit as the Home Minister of Maharashtra on April 5.

Devendra Fadnavis, BJP workers detained during protest to demand OBC quota in local bodies

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Police on Saturday detained hundreds of protestors, along with BJP party workers who were gathered at their BJP unit office to start a 'marcha' in front of the Maharashtra Secretariat to demand political reservation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the local bodies.

The protestors had planned for a 'Chakkajam,' but just before they could start their march toward the Secretariat, Mumbai police detained several protestors including ex Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan, Mumbai BJP President Mangal Prabhat Lodha, and MLC Rahul Narvekar.

All the detained protestors have been taken to the Marine Line Police station, police said.

Meanwhile, in Nagpur, police detained former Maharashtra CM and LoP Devendra Fadnavis during the protest over the OBC reservation. Slamming the MVA government for their incapacity of protecting OBC reservations, MLA Kalidas Kolambakar said, "The MVA government has failed to protect the OBC's reservation. The issue can be solved through Centre Government's intervention, and our leader, Devendra Fadnavis can help with the same. The MVA leaders should come to him to take his help over the issue, but they would not come because they would rather delay it. It is a matter of credit taking for them." "Today we are holding protests statewide, at a 1000 places to pressurize the Government to expedite the process. Our



demand is to restore the 27 per cent political reservation in all local body elections in the state," he added. The BJP on Thursday announced that it will hold a state-wide protest on Saturday against the MVA government who failed to protect the political reservation of OBC's. Earlier this month, after a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had said the Centre is expected to take positive decisions on issues like Maratha, OBC reservation. The Other Backward Classes (OBC) had lost their political reservations in the local bodies of Maharashtra comprising of municipal corporations, municipal councils, zilla parishads, gram panchayats etc.

This is after the Supreme Court rejected the state government's revision petition concerning reservation to the OBCs. The SC also observed that the reservation in the favour of the OBC in local bodies should not result in exceeding the 50 per cent cap in reservation quota.

Expand Congress' base without hurting Maharashtra government: Central leadership to Patole

Patole, who was on a tour of north Maharashtra to expand the party base, was abruptly summoned to the national capital on Friday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid Congress' worsening ties with the Shiv Sena, the party's Maharashtra unit chief Nana Patole was asked by the central leadership on Friday to refrain from making controversial statements that could land the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in trouble, especially at a time when there's a strong buzz of the Sena turning soft towards the BJP.

Patole, who was on a tour of north Maharashtra to

expand the party base, was abruptly summoned to the national capital on Friday. Some of his recent statements have not gone down well with the MVA allies and sparking concerns even within the party.

He had announced that the Congress would be going solo in future elections, prompting Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray to lash out at the party. "The party leadership has asked Patole to expand the party base without hurting the incumbent government. The Congress wants the MVA to last its full five-year term. It does not want to lose a resourceful state like Maharashtra at this juncture when the party is struggling to float. It is in power in Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, but these states cannot be compared with

Maharashtra," said a highly placed source.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leaders in the state are also unhappy with Maharashtra in-charge HK Patil for interfering in district-level appointments for party posts. "If he wants to do anything, he should convey a message through the state president or another senior state functionary. Patil recently sent a voice mail to all district units asking them to submit three names each for district president. It's not his call to appoint Congress district presidents; it is the right of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee. Patil is overstepping his brief," said a source.

Several complaint letters have gone to Congress president Sonia Gandhi seeking Patil's replacement, the source added.

Level-3 curbs kicks in Pune, Nagpur amid Delta Plus variant concerns

This came a day after the Maharashtra government announced to tighten the Covid-19 curbs following the death of an 80-year-old Ratnagiri resident from Delta plus variant

Team Absolute | Nagpur

The Municipal Corporations of Nagpur and Pune on Saturday decided to clamp new restrictions in the city from 28 June under the "level 3" of unlocking amid concerns over the Delta Plus variant of Covid-19.

The Delta Plus variant is currently a variant of concern and therefore Nagpur District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has decided to clamp more restrictions in various activities by implementing the level 3 curbs in the city with effect from Monday, the notification read.

This came a day after the Maharashtra government announced to tighten the Covid-19 curbs following the death of an 80-year-old Ratnagiri resident from Delta plus variant. With the new curbs kicking in, the daily timings of the shops selling



essential and non-essential items will be reduced by four hours till 4 pm. Malls, theatres and multiplexes will remain closed. Non-essential shops and establishments will remain closed on weekends, according to the order issued by Nagpur Municipal Commissioner Radhakrishnan B.

All essential and non-essential shops will be allowed to operate till 4 pm while malls, theatres and multiplexes (allowed to operate with the 50%

capacity) will remain closed. Besides, gatherings (social/cultural/entertainment) and marriages are allowed with 50% capacity of the hall or 50 persons whichever is less till 4 pm. A maximum of 20 people is allowed to attend a funeral.

Salons, beauty care and wellness centres will operate till 4 pm. E-commerce services are allowed to operate regularly, it said.

"Inter-district travel either by private cars/taxis/buses is made regular except if moving to (areas under) level 5, wherein e-pass will be required. Religious places and swimming pools will also remain closed along with coaching classes," as per the order. Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope had earlier said that 21 cases of the Delta plus variant of coronavirus were found in the state, including the highest nine cases in Ratnagiri, seven in Jalgaon, two in Mumbai, and one case each in Palghar, Thane and Sindhudurg districts.

The Delta Plus variant is currently a variant of concern and therefore Nagpur and Pune District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA) have decided to clamp more restrictions in various activities by implementing the level 3 curbs in the city with effect from June 28.

Train with a view:

Railways launches Vistadome coach on Mumbai-Pune route

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Railways on Saturday launched a Vistadome coach service on the Mumbai-Pune Deccan Express Special train, which ran full house.

Sharing photos of the new coach on his Twitter handle, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal wrote: "A Panoramic View of the Western Ghats: Wide window panes & glass rooftops of the first ever Vistadome Coach in Pune-Mumbai Deccan Express provide passengers with an unhindered, unique and unforgettable travel experience. Come, experience the Western Ghats as never before."

Railway Ministry officials said that the Mumbai-Pune Deccan Express Special train started its first run with LHB rake and Vistadome coach on Saturday. An official added that first trip on the Vistadome coach from Mumbai to Pune was a sellout.

The Vistadome coach has big glass windows, glass roof, observation lounge along with rotatable seats that allow the passengers to enjoy the beautiful locations during

The Vistadome coach has big glass windows, glass roof, observation lounge along with rotatable seats that allow the passengers to enjoy the beautiful locations during the journey through the Western Ghats.



the journey through the Western Ghats.

The official said that the passengers were eager to enjoy unhindered views of the valleys and waterfalls enroute, adding that the experience is similar to travelling in a Vistadome coach on the Mumbai-Goa route. At present, the Vistadome coach

service is operational in the Mumbai-Madgaon Jan Shadabdi Special train.

Now passengers on the Mumbai-Pune route can also enjoy the scenic beauty and experience being with nature while passing near the Matheran hill (near Neral), Songir hill (near Palasdhari), Ulhas river

(near Jambrung), Ulhas valley, areas of Khandala, Lonavala etc., as well as the waterfalls and tunnels on the South East Ghat section.

The Railways had launched the newly-designed Vistadome coaches last year.

The official said that the Vistadome tourist coach has a larger viewing area, including a glass roof, with 44 seats for the passengers that can be rotated up to 180 degrees. The coach also has a Wi-Fi-based passenger information system.

The official said that for the first time, the Vistadome coach has been built on the LHB platform, which is more safe.

Pointing out the stand-out features of the new Vistadome coaches, the official said that they are equipped with air-spring suspension in secondary stage for better ride comfort, large glass windows and glass roof that boast electrically controlled opalescence, transparent roof for the passengers to get a panoramic view of their journey, and an observatory lounge with a larger window at one end.

Child makes hoax call about two gunmen entering Taj Hotel; cops say nothing serious

Mumbai Police said the call was made by a child about two gunmen at Taj Hotel. However, nothing serious was found about it

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Panic gripped Taj Hotel management in Maharashtra Mumbai after a call that two gunmen were about to enter the hotel premises.

After the call was received at the hotel, the control room of Mumbai Police was informed about the incident.

Mumbai Police reached the spot and carried out a search but nothing was found.

Police later said that the phone call was made by a child and nothing serious

was found in it. Mumbai Police has now initiated a probe into the incident.

In a similar incident in June last year, a bomb threat call was made from Pakistan leading to security being tightened at and around Mumbai's Taj Hotel and Taj Lands End hotel.

A person who claimed to be a member of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit made the call to the two iconic hotels and threatened to blow them up.

Following the bomb threat call, heavy security forces were deployed outside the hotels and all roads leading to them were shut.

In November 2008, multiple terrorists staged attacks at various targets in Mumbai including at Taj Hotel. Dozens of Indians and foreign tourists were killed in the terrorist attacks who came from Pakistan.

25 cattle rescued, two held

Police have rescued 25 cattle that were found locked inside a room at Nalasopara in Palghar district.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Police have rescued 25 cattle that were found locked inside a room at Nalasopara in Maharashtra's Palghar district with the intention of slaughter, and arrested two persons in this connection, an official said on Saturday. These animals included cows and bulls, he said.

The action was taken by the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar police on Thursday following a tip-off, an official release said.

"The police team raided the place at Vaza Mohalla locality of Nalasopara and rescued the cattle that were crammed inside a room in

unhygienic conditions for the purpose of slaughter. Police also found a tempo parked there that was used for transporting the cattle," it said.

The two accused, who had held the animals captive, were identified as Saddam Mohammad Rafique (27) and Shahnavaz Shah (36), both drivers, police said.

The tempo has been seized by the police. The collective amount of the seized vehicle, cattle and other equipment is worth around Rs 13 lakh, they said, adding the animals have been sent to a cattle shed for safety. An offence has been registered against the duo at Nalasopara police.

Thief arrested as aide dies after falling from building during robbery bid

Luck did not go in the 16-year-old's favour during the robbery bid and he fell off from the fifth floor while returning as the bamboo stick broke.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In yet another shocking incident, a 21-year-old thief was held after his 16-year-old aide lost his life as he fell off the fifth floor of a building while walking on a bamboo stick in order to cross over to a neighbouring building. He was arrested for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

As per the RCF cops the thief and his partner-in-crime were in a bid to rob valuables from a fifth-floor flat of building number five at MHADA colony in Vashi Naka, according to reports.

An officer said, "Early Tuesday, they first went to the fifth floor of a dilapidated building, where no one stays. From there they planned to enter a fifth-floor flat of the neighbouring building by walking on a bamboo stick."

Reports suggest that the minor decided to walk on the bamboo stick and enter the building as he was lightweight. The minor also entered the flat while crossing the bamboo stick and stole two

mobile phones. However, luck did not go in his favour and he fell off from the fifth floor while returning as the bamboo stick broke.

Following the case, Shahbaz Khan took him to the hospital immediately, however, he could not be saved. Further interrogation into the matter revealed that he took the body back where the accident took place and informed the cops about the same saying that one person died by suicide.

Elaborating further on the episode, the officer added that they are habitual offenders and multiple cases have been lodged against them.



Colombian National Sentenced To Ten Years In Drug Case

According to the prosecution, the Mumbai zonal unit of the Narcotic Control Bureau had recovered cocaine from the laptop bag of the accused during a raid at a hotel in 2017, following which he was placed under arrest.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special NDPS court has sentenced a 32-year-old Colombian national to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment in a

drug case. Special judge GB Guroo on Thursday held Freddy Renteria, guilty of offences committed under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act for possession of a commercial quantity of drugs. The detailed order in the case was made available on Saturday.

According to the prosecution, the Mumbai zonal unit of the Narcotic Control Bureau had recovered cocaine from the laptop bag of the accused during a raid at a hotel in 2017, following which he was placed under arrest.

The court upon perusal of evidence found that the accused had been in pos-

session of 5.9 kg of cocaine at the time of his arrest, which he had brought to India from Colombia.

The judge noted that the offence was serious and against society at large.

"If the accused would have succeeded in disposing of cocaine in India, then it might have destroyed many families," he observed.

Freddy Renteria has been in jail since his arrest in 2017, and the court, in its order, said set off be given for the period of detention undergone by the accused. Apart from sentencing the accused to 10 years of imprisonment, the court directed him to pay a fine of ? 2 lakh.



PUBLIC COOPERATION AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT IN DEALING WITH COVID: CM

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday virtually dedicates 60 bedded Covid Care Centre built by Lupin Foundation in Mandideep

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that necessary preparations are being made in the state to face the third wave of Corona. The general public is being motivated to follow Covid friendly behaviour. Adequate supply of oxygen beds, children's ICU wards, equipment and essential materials is being made in all health institutions. Public cooperation and private sector participation are also being obtained. This Covid Care Centre built by Lupin Foundation in Mandideep is a testimony to the initiative of the private sector.

Chouhan was addressing the virtual inauguration programme of Covid Care Centre set up by Lupin Foundation at Mandideep in Raisen district from his residence. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary also addressed the programme.



Chouhan said that in view of the emergency situation of Corona, Lupin Foundation has set up this Covid Care Centre. It is a symbol of their social responsibility and sensitivity. Chouhan appealed that we should follow the precautions to prevent corona so earnestly that this

centre is not used as a Covid Care Center. This centre may be used in vaccination and the treatment of other common diseases. Chief Minister Chouhan said that Mandideep is a big industrial centre of the state. A hospital will soon be set up here for the convenience of

the working class. Chouhan said that the land related problem of Rahul Nagar of Mandideep region would also be resolved.

Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary said that the construction of such Covid Care Centres develops a sense of security among the people at the local level. A 60-bedded Covid Care Centre has been set up by Lupin Foundation under the CSR programme in the municipal building located at Shopping Complex, Mandideep. It has 25 oxygenated beds, a ventilator has also been provided. A separate 10-bedded ward has also been prepared for children. In this centre all the necessary machines have been provided by Lupin Foundation. This centre will be run by Block Medical Officer Obaidullaganj. With its launch, people of Mandideep, Obaidullaganj, Gauharganj, Chiklod and Bari areas will be benefited.

Eight cases of Delta Plus variant found in MP: Sarang

At least eight persons have been found infected with the Delta Plus variant of coronavirus in Madhya Pradesh so far

Team Absolute | Bhopal

At least eight persons have been found infected with the Delta Plus variant of coronavirus in Madhya Pradesh so far, state Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said on Saturday, adding none of the contacts of these patients was found to be infected with this strain.

According to officials, two persons who died in May this year were found to be infected with the Delta Plus variant. Speaking to reporters, Sarang said the patients infected with the Delta Plus variant are being tested as per protocol and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)

has been regularly sharing information with the state in this regard.

"At least eight cases of the Delta Plus variant of coronavirus have been brought to our notice so far. Our constant focus is to ramp up testing," Sarang said. The authorities had carried out contact tracing of these patients and none of the contacts was found to be infected with this variant, he said. The minister further said Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has decided to set up a laboratory in Bhopal for genome sequencing so that people infected with different mutations of coronavirus can be detected at the earliest. Once a genome sequencing machine is installed in Bhopal, the test reports for various mutations of coronavirus can be received within five days, he said. Meanwhile, officials said two persons who died in May this year were found to be infected with the Delta Plus variant. They were residents of Ashoknagar and Ujjain. While the deaths had

occurred in May, their reports of being infected with Delta Plus variant were received later, it was stated.

The Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) of Ashoknagar Himanshu Sharma on Saturday told PTI that the person found infected with the Delta Plus variant was being treated in Bhopal after testing positive for coronavirus in May, and had died on May 13. A couple of days earlier, it was found during a random genome sequencing test that he had been infected with the Delta Plus variant, he said. Earlier on Friday, Ujjain Collector Ashish Singh had confirmed that a 59-year-old woman, who died of COVID-19 on May 23, was infected with the Delta Plus variant. She had tested positive for coronavirus on May 17. Madhya Pradesh on Friday recorded 50 new cases of COVID-19 and 22 casualties that pushed the tally of infections to 7,89,611 and took the toll to 8,871, as per the state Health department.



A tree plantation drive was carried out on Friday at Chandanpura near Kaliasot jointly by team SPG and GENIUS under guidance of AS Singhdeo alias Baba Singhdeo

Digvijaya Singh calls Prime Minister Narendra Modi a 'destroyer'

If social service is in Jyotiraditya's DNA, then he should stay away from race for minister's post, said Digvijaya Singh.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi a destroyer. Singh who is on a two-day visit to Guna district said, "I had earlier said and I am again saying that he (Modi) is a destroyer. It is written in his kundali (horoscope) that wherever he will go, will destroy everything," Singh said while talking to journalists.

Former state chief minister Singh further said prices of petrol-diesel have crossed Rs 100 per litre, LPG

cylinder rate has touched Rs 900. "But, his (Narendra Modi) supporters keep shouting, Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi. The country will be destroyed by Modi," he said.

Singh also lashed out at state government over Covid deaths and said Shivraj Singh Chouhan's government fudged figures. He said state government has presented wrong figures of people who died of corona to show less number of fatalities.

He said there were 471 deaths in Guna Hospital in May-June while administration reported 44. In Ashok Nagar, administration reported 34



deaths while Member of Parliament Jyotiraditya Scindia paid tribute to 150 people during his visit to Guna in the past. On club house chat, Singh said BJP made a fake Twitter account and misrepresented him as a traitor, Talibani and even Pakistani, which will be legally examined and a complaint will be made in cyber cell. He said if social service is in DNA of Jyotiraditya Scindia, then he should stay away from race for post of minister. He accused Modi of not making adequate preparations to protect people against corona despite warn-

ing given by Rahul Gandhi in advance. "Once the corona entered country, PM kept on talking big. Keep saying that war of Mahabharata was won in 18 days, we will win war against corona in 21 days. But what happened after that? Whole country has not been able to get rid of corona even today," he added. On the alleged scam of buying land for Ram temple, he said, "BJP always says Apda Mein Avsar" (opportunity in disaster) and now they are following this".

Earlier, Singh visited families whose members have died. Singh first visited the residence of former district panchayat president Sumer Singh Garha to express condolences on death of Garha's father. He also visited residence of Jan Shikshak Chandramouleshwar Shrivastava who committed suicide after being harassed by authorities.

Farmers activists detained, later released: submits memorandum to Governor

Talking to journalists, Medha Patkar said all activists and farmer leaders wanted to submit a memorandum to the Governor. 'There is an emergency like situation in Madhya Pradesh. But the government is not ready to listen to the pleas of people,' she said.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Police were on its toes right from the morning to quell farmers' protest in the state capital. It briefly detained farmer activists at three separate places to release them later.

Farmer leader Shiv Kumar Kakkaji was not allowed to move outside from his house (police refrains calling it house arrest) in the morning. However, later he was allowed to go to Raj Bhawan to submit the memorandum.

Another team of farmers was detained in Neelam Park and not allowed to go anywhere.

Medha Patkar, Dr Sunilam and others were 'House arrested' in Gandhi Bhawan and were not given permission to go to Governor House to submit the protest memorandum demanding repeal of farm laws.

Later in the afternoon the police said Medha Patkar was to free to go to Raj Bhawan. However, she and her



team refused to go to out demanding 'release' of other activists being detained at Neelam Park.

Talking to journalists, Medha Patkar said all activists and farmer leaders wanted to submit a memorandum to the Governor. 'There is an emergency like situation in Madhya

Pradesh. But the government is not ready to listen to the pleas of people,' she said. Around five dozen farm activists detained in Neelam Park were then released after which Badal Saroj, Medha Patkar and three others were allowed to go to Governor House to submit the memorandum.

Nevertheless, they were not allowed to go inside the governor house and the memorandum was taken at the gate itself by the Raj Bhawan staff. But farm activists then mailed it to the governor and the president, later.

Badal Saroj said that the government did not want any kind of protest. They used the state machinery not hold peaceful protest pressing repeal of farm laws.

According to information, Sanyukt Kisan Morcha has called a nationwide Kheti Bachao, Loktantra Bachao march. To participate in the march, social activists and farmer leaders from across the state gathered in state capital and were trying to march towards the Governor's house, when they were detained.

Sources said farmer leaders and farmers who had gathered at Neelam Park and other places in Bhopal were also detained and taken to the district police line.

Samples to be sent to NCDC to detect Delta Plus, Alpha, Delta Covid variants

As for Delta variants, Bhopal contributed 120 cases while Indore contributed 44 cases. About 37 are from Gwalior.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In all, 150 random samples will be sent to National Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC), New Delhi, every 15 days from state for detection of Delta Plus, Alpha

and Delta Covid variants. State health commissioner Akash Tripathi has issued directive to all District Surveillance Officers in this regard. Nineteen RTPCR labs and two private labs have been notified for samples collection and then randomly samples will be picked up and sent to NCDC, New Delhi. Eight Delta Plus cases have been reported while 60 alpha variants and 334 delta variants have been reported. As for alpha variants, 30 are from Indore, 17 from Bhopal, nine from Gwalior, three

from Vidisha and one from Raisen.

As for Delta variants, Bhopal contributed 120 cases while Indore contributed 44 cases. About 37 are from Gwalior. Ujjain contributed 28 cases and Ratlam contributed 25. Datia, Vidisha and Raisen contributed 24, 18 and 6 cases respectively.

Sagar, Betul, Tikamgarh contributed five cases each while Hoshangabad and Sehore contributed two each and Morena, Chhattarpur and Agar-Malwa contributed one case each.

Beneficiaries will be given free fair price ration in bags

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that free ration will be given to all the public distribution system beneficiaries of the state till the month of November by the Central Government. Along with this, the state government will also provide fair price ration at Re 1 kg. Each member of the beneficiary family will get 5 kg free ration and 5 kg ration at the cost of Re 1 kg. This ration will be given to the beneficiaries in 10 kg bags. Chouhan said that 4 crore 81 lakh beneficiaries of the state would be benefited through the scheme. He gave instructions to the officers for proper implementation of the scheme. Chouhan was taking a meeting related to Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana at Mantralaya today. Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Bisahul Singh, Cooperation, Public Service Management Minister Arvind Singh Bhadauria, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Principal Secretary Agriculture Ajit Kesri etc. were present in the meeting.

Under the Chief Minister Annapurna Yojna, 5 kg of food grains wheat/rice per person per month are provided at Re 1 kg. Along with this, one kg of salt and one kg of reasonable price sugar are also given. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, 5 kg of free food grains will be provided per member till November. In this way, 10 kg of food grains will be given per member every month till November. There are a total of 25 thousand 423 fair price shops in the state, one crore 13 lakh eligible families and 4 crore 81 lakh beneficiaries. Monthly allocation of food grains is 2 lakh 62 thousand metric ton,

monthly allocation of sugar is 1450 metric ton and monthly allocation of salt is 11 thousand 326 metric ton.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, an Anna Mahotsav will soon be organized at every fair price shop in the state. On this day, free food grains will be distributed to the beneficiaries by keeping them in bags.

THREE CHILDREN DROWN IN RAINWATER-FILLED PIT

Shajapur: The three children - a boy and his two cousin sisters - drowned when they were playing close to their house, police said.

Two minor sisters and their eight-year-old cousin brother drowned in a pit filled with rainwater at a village in Shajapur district of Madhya Pradesh, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred on Friday evening at Gulana village, they said.

Gulana police post in-charge Takesingh Dhulia while talking to this newspaper over phone said the three children - the boy and his two cousin sisters aged eight and six years - drowned in the rainwater-filled pit while they were playing close to their house.

The girls, who were residents of another village in the same district, had come to their uncle's place, when the mishap occurred, he said. The bodies of the three children were handed over to the family members after post-mortem, Dhulia said. A case has been registered and the incident is being investigated.

Chief Minister reviews corona infection control:

ALERTNESS NECESSARY TO AVOID THIRD WAVE, WILL NOT LET THE TEST DECREASE CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that 46 cases of corona have been reported in the state today. A total of 204 persons have been discharged. Presently there are 927 active cases left in the state. This is a clear indication that corona is now under control. Madhya Pradesh is at number 31 in the country. The seven-day positivity rate is 0.1 percent. Even after this situation, corona tests will not be allowed to decrease in the state. 80,000 tests should be done every day. Chouhan was addressing the review meeting of Corona infection control virtually from the Chief Minister's residence. Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang was also present in the meeting. All the Covid in-charge ministers and officers virtually attended the meeting.

Chouhan said that the possibility of third wave is not over. Therefore, more and more tests are necessary to be constantly alert. Testing and tracing in every nook and corner of the state will make it possible to identify and control the infection immediately. It should be our endeavor to identify the causes of each episode of infection. This will allow all



precautions to be taken. Chief Minister said that it would be our goal to eliminate the causes of third wave in the state. Chouhan said that the treatment of Mucor mycosis is very expensive. It is necessary to save the poor and middle class families from the financial burden of treatment. Therefore, best arrangements should be made for the treatment of mucor mycosis in government health institutions. It was informed in the review that at present 532 patients of Mucor mycosis are being treated in medical colleges and 200 patients in private hospitals. Chouhan said that necessary mechanisms should be developed to provide financial relief and emotional support to the patient and his family in serious and costly diseases like cancer. The treat-

ment of patients of corona infection, their condition, necessary arrangements and support etc. were reviewed daily. Relief was provided to the aggrieved patients and families. Similarly, a system of regular monitoring of patients and families suffering from serious and costly diseases like kidney problem, bypass surgery, thalassemia should be established and they should be supported. Chouhan said that it is a good sign that fear and confusion regarding vaccination has been removed in the state. People themselves are coming forward for vaccination. Every effort will have to be made to ensure that all persons above 18 years of age are vaccinated in the state at the earliest. It was informed in the review that 30 percent of the eligible population above the age of 18 years has received the first dose of the vaccine. 68 percent in Indore, 60 percent in Bhopal, 44 percent in Shahdol and Ujjain, 41 percent in Jabalpur and 40 percent in Gwalior have been given the first dose of vaccine to the eligible population. In the vaccination campaign from June 21 to 25, 4 lakh 46 thousand 445 doses were applied in Indore, 2 lakh 60 thousand 633 in Bhopal, one lakh 94 thousand 28 in Ujjain and one lakh 69 thousand 191 in Jabalpur.

TOM CRUISE COULD BE CAUSE OF MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 7 COVID DELAY



Los Angeles | Agencies

Tom Cruise had vowed to sack anyone who caused further delays to Mission Impossible 7 but after work on the production was stopped again because of a positive test, some people

have pointed their fingers at the actor himself. An insider said, "Filming on Mission Impossible 7 is on hold again because of coronavirus. And this time, those working on the production have said they think Tom could be the possible cause of the postponement."

"Now people are speculating that he could have come into contact with the person who tested positive. And in some cases, people are even gossiping and saying it could be him. In an impassioned speech Tom pleaded with those on the production to stick within the rules to avoid further

hold-ups. Despite his appeal, the latest instalment of the blockbuster has been hit by endless delays - leaving Tom ripping his hair out over getting the film finished. And things got even more tense when it was revealed on June 9 how he had just 21 days to get the movie in the can.

K-pop band TXT drop new remix track

Seoul | Agencies

K-pop's fourth generation "It boys", Tomorrow X Together, popular as TXT, have released "0X1=LOVESONG (I Know I Love You) feat. pH-1, Woodie Gochild and Seori". The number is a remix of their newest title track of "The Chaos Chapter: Freeze", which made its Billboard 200 debut in the top five. The original track, "0X1=LOVESONG (I Know I Love You) feat. Seori" is a hybrid pop rock song, with vocals that are simultaneously rough and delicate, complemented by the dreamy voice of featuring artist Seori. In addition to a number five debut on Billboard 200 charts, the original has also made its

mark on Billboard's World Digital Song Sales chart, Global 200 Excl. US and Global 200, besides Spotify's Global Top 200. The new remix differs from the original with its use of acoustic guitar, bass, electric guitar, and electric keyboard. Korean rappers pH-1 and Woodie Gochild add their interpretations of love. TXT are a quintet comprising Soobin, Yeonjun, Beomgyu, Taehyun and HuenINGKAI. They released their second studio album "The Chaos Chapter: Freeze" on May 31. The album features eight tracks including the band's first English song, "Magic".



Bella Thorne vacationing in Italy

Los Angeles | Agencies

Bella Thorne shows off her toned figure in a TINY purple bikini as she soaks up the sun on vacation in Italy. She's been enjoying a sun-drenched getaway in Lake Como, Italy for her fiancé Benjamin Mascolo's birthday. The actress enjoyed a bit of girl time on Friday at the decadent

Grand Hotel Tremezzo, with prices starting from £1,074 a night. Bella teamed the skimpy swimwear with tie-dye shorts that accentuated her trim pins, and concealed her gaze behind statement narrow-frame sunglasses. The 23-year-old former Disney star showed off her toned figure in a tiny purple string bikini as she lounged about by the pool with her bikini-clad pals.

MUMFORD AND SONS STAR WINSTON MARSHALL QUILTS BAND FIVE MONTHS AFTER TWITTER STORM

Los Angeles | Agencies

Mumford & Sons star Winston Marshall has quit the band - five months after being embroiled in a Twitter storm. The banjoist and lead guitarist, 33, said he made the "difficult decision" after he caused controver-

sy earlier this year after tweeting about US journalist Andy Ngo's book titled Unmasked: Inside Antifa's Radical Plan To Destroy Democracy. In a tweet, which he later deleted, Winston said he had read the "important" book and he praised Ngo as a "brave man". Announcing his departure from Mumford & Sons, whose other members include Marcus Mumford, Ben Lovett and Ted Dwane, the musician said being a part of the band has been "exhilarating". In a statement, he said, "From odysseys through the Scottish Islands to headlining Glastonbury, from The Betsy Trotwood to Madison Square Garden.



DAVID BECKHAM SHARES THROWBACK CHILDHOOD SNAP ON MUM SANDRA'S BIRTHDAY

London | Agencies

David Beckham has shared a sweet throwback childhood snap with his mum Sandra as he wished her a happy birthday on Saturday. The football legend, 46, looked adorable as he grinned in the forefront of the snap posted to Instagram, accompanied by his sister Joanne and their beloved parent. It comes after his wife Victoria shared a very animated throwback family snap as she marked her mother-in-law's big day. Captioning his childhood snap, David wrote: 'Happy Birthday to the most amazing mum... Thank you for everything that you do for us we love u so much @sandra_bekham49.' The image garnered several comments from his fans, with many of them also wishing Sandra a happy birthday.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Joy Corrigan

PAUL MCCARTNEY CHOPPED ONIONS TO SPARE HIS WIFE THE TEARS!

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Beatles icon Paul McCartney has talked about how he and his late first wife Linda would cook together, and shared why he would always chop the onions. "I would always volunteer because we were very close and I was often in the kitchen by her side. I would say, 'Anything you'd like me to do?' And one thing I didn't mind doing was chopping the onions -- even though it made me very emotional and I'd even cry sometimes! I quite liked chopping the onions. I liked the idea of sparing Linda the tears," he said, reports femalefirst.co.uk. McCartney said he was not a bad cook. "Generally speaking, I wasn't a bad cook. But she was so much better than I only did the occasional meal. I did a good breakfast -- I would use a lot of fruit, peel the mango and cut it all up, slice the melon and deseed it, and make it all nice on the plate. But she was definitely the main cook -- Cook of the House," he shared.



The rocker and Linda became vegetarians in 1975 and she went on to launch the Linda McCartney Foods range, which specialises in vegetarian and vegan items and is still popular. He said, "It was a joint decision, definitely. We were both quite happy eating meat, because she was a great cook, and we didn't really think about it until we were on the farm one day eating a lamb dinner and both realised that the lambs outside were what we were eating. We didn't like that. We said, 'Shall we try going vegetarian?' And actually, it was a very exciting point in our lives, trying to think of what we would have to fill the hole in the middle of the plate. "Now of course, it's really not difficult at all. You just go down the shops and most places will have great veggie options. It was a joint decision and we never looked back. It was a great thing to do, and it turned out we became part of a vegetarian revolution," he concluded.



MITHALI RAJ SET TO BECOME FIRST AFTER TENDULKAR TO PLAY 22 YEARS OF ODI CRICKET

Bristol | Agencies

When Indian women's team captain Mithali Raj takes the field here on Sunday, she will become only the second cricketer after Sachin Tendulkar to play 22 years of One-day International (ODI) cricket.

Tendulkar played for 22 years and 91 days while Mithali would have spent just a day over 22 years when she goes out for toss against England captain Heather Knight on Sunday. The 38-year-old's debut was on June 26, 1999 at Milton Keynes against Ireland. She was only 16 then.

Over the course of 22 years, she has scored 7,098 runs with seven centuries and 55 half-centuries in 214 women's ODIs. The Jodhpur-born player is the only one in women's cricket to score over 6,000 ODI runs. She has also scored 2364 T20 International runs.



"Feels nice to get up to messages congratulating me on my career," said Mithali during a press conference on the eve of the first ODI against England.

"If I have to give a message to a 16-year-old, I would say enjoy getting on to the ground, first time representing your country, which clearly at that time... the expectation was so heavy on my shoulders that I didn't get the opportunity to understand the importance of wearing the blue jersey and playing for the country, that is something I would say to the 16-year-old Mithali," she added.

In her ODI debut 22 years ago, Mithali racked up an unbeaten 114 and shared a 258-run first-wicket partnership with fellow opener Reshma Gandhi, who too cracked a century -- 104 not out. India won that match by 10 wickets.

Since then, Mithali has gone from strength to strength.

World Cup: Manu, Chaudhary clinch silver in mixed 10m air pistol

Osijek (Croatia) | Agencies

India's Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary clinched silver in the 10 metres air pistol mixed team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup here on Saturday.

The pair lost 12-16 to Russia's Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov who won the gold medal.

In a thrilling contest, Chaudhary and Manu fought back from 6-12 to make it 12 all. But the Russian pair held on to their nerves to walk away with the gold medal.

With Saturday's silver medal in the mixed team event, India now has three medals, two of them being bronze.

Russia is leading the field with seven medals, including three gold. Chaudhary and Manu had topped the field in the first qualifying round,



shooting 587 out of 600 after 60 shots (30 shots each team member). But Abhishek Verma and Yashaswini Deswal, the second Indian pair in the fray, shot a combined 577, to finish fourth out of 32 teams.

Verma and Yashaswini lost to Iran's Javad Foroughi and Golnoush Sebgatolahy 7-17 in the bronze medal match.

In the 10m air rifle mixed

team event, India's Elavenil Valarivan and Divyansh Singh Panwar finished sixth while Anjum Moudgil and Deepak Kumar finished 15th overall. On Sunday, Manu and Rahi Sarnobat will be seen in action in the women's 25m pistol event. Sanjeev Rajput and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar will compete in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event.

Denmark beats Wales 4-0 to enter quarter finals

Amsterdam | Agencies

Denmark marked the 29th anniversary of their greatest triumph by marching on to the quarter-finals of Euro 2020 on Saturday as Kasper Dolberg scored twice in an emphatic 4-0 win over Wales.

It was Kasper Dolberg's who opened the scoring with a fizzing strike in the 27th minute. And thereafter goal each from Joakim Maehle and Martin Braithwaite took Denmark to big win.

Martin Braithwaite scores his first Euro 2020 goal that too after a long VAR check for offside. Kasper Dolberg scores his second three minutes into the second half to put Denmark 2-0 up. Joakim Maehle scores Denmark's third off a stinging shot.

Wales started the match brilliantly and had a couple of close chances with the goal as well but Denmark grew into the game and scored through Dolberg in the 27th minute after some neat team play. After the goal, Wales



struggled to even get into the Denmark penalty area while Denmark nearly made it 2-0 towards the end of the half.

Carried by a wave of emotion, Danish dreams are still intact in a tournament that began in such traumatic circumstances for them with Eriksen's collapse in their opening match against Finland in Copenhagen. They now go on to a last-eight tie in Baku against the Netherlands or the Czech Republic.

SAJAN PRAKASH FIRST INDIAN SWIMMER TO GET DIRECT ENTRY TO OLYMPICS

New Delhi: Sajan Prakash became the first Indian swimmer ever to qualify for Olympics by achieving A qualification mark when he clocked 1 minute 56.38 seconds in the men's 200 metres butterfly event at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome on Saturday. His time is better than the Olympic A qualification mark of 1 minute 56.48 second. Six Indian swimmers had achieved the B qualification in the 2019-2020 Olympic qualification period. B qualification is wild card entry while A qualification is automatic berth. While many Indian swimmers have competed at the Olympics before, no one qualified directly by cracking the A qualification mark.

Support Olympic-bound athletes like our cricketers: Rijiju

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union sports minister Kiren Rijiju said on Saturday that India's Olympic-bound athletes are national heroes and urged the people to extend support to them, the same way they back the country's cricketers.

"I want the Olympics movement and the importance of Olympics to be understood by everyone, spread across the length and breadth of India. Sports is the biggest soft power of a nation," said Rijiju.

Chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand spoke about how the athletes were more confident in their abilities than their compatriots in the past and underlined the role of the government in making this change possible.

"Today I can confidently say that



every member of the team is training to be in their best form and possibly win a medal and if they don't have a medal or

have good performances, I am sure they are going to be very disappointed," said Gopichand during a virtual interaction organised by CII-Sportscom Industry Confederation in association with the Sports Ministry. Former hockey international player M.M. Somaya was confident that both the men's and women's hockey teams would do well at the Olympics.

"We have some of the world's best coaches involved with hockey these days and our boys and girls are in good hands," said Somaya, adding that he was hopeful that India could pose a challenge for a medal in Tokyo.

The session was also attended by 2016 Rio Paralympic silver medalist Deepa Malik and 2012 London Olympics bronze medalist in shooting, Gagan Narang, among others.

Mo Farah fails to qualify for Tokyo Olympics

Manchester | Agencies

Long-distance Olympic champion Mo Farah's chances of competing at the Tokyo Olympics disappeared as one of the most successful British athletes failed once again to achieve the qualification time of 27min 28sec at the specially-arranged race at the British Athletics Championships.

The 38-year-old Farah, who won a grand double clinching the 5,000m and 10,000m gold at the 2012 London and 2016 Rio Olympics, had on June 5 failed to clock the qualification time at the European Athletics 10,000m Cup in Birmingham, timing 27:50:54, which was his slowest since 2014 and good enough for eighth place.

On Friday, he failed once again, though his time of 27:47:04 was marginally better than the June 5 race.

Farah was on target pace through the halfway mark, but by the 6,000m mark, he began to drop off the pace. With 2,000m to go, he was 10 seconds adrift and kept losing time. "It's a tough one. I've had an amazing career, thinking



about it tonight it's a bit shocking and I don't really know what to say. I'm lucky enough to have so many medals.

"I'm one of these athletes who, if you can't compete with the best, why bother? Maybe it's time to spend time with my kids," Farah was quoted as saying by The Guardian.

CHENNAIYN FC RETAIN RIGHT-BACK REAGAN SINGH TILL 2023

Chennai: Chennaiyn FC right-back Reagan Singh has signed a fresh contract that will keep him with the two-time Indian Super League (ISL) champions till 2023. The 30-year-old had joined CFC from NorthEast United FC ahead of the 2020-21 season in Goa. Hailing from Manipur, Reagan began his professional career at Royal Wahingdoh in the I-League in 2012. After three years at the Shillong club, he signed for NorthEast United FC, where he spent five years gathering ISL experience.

Reagan helped Chennaiyn FC keep six clean sheets in its 18 games last season, also notching one assist while coming close to scoring on a few occasions. "I feel proud to be part of one of the most successful teams in the country. I believe I contributed well and improved as a player in my first season. My ambition now is to help the club lift their third ISL trophy, and the first of my career. I will work hard and keep improving, and would also like to thank all our supporters for the unconditional support," said Reagan after signing the contract on Friday.



Dutee Chand's Olympic hopes hang by a thread

Patiala | Agencies

Star sprinter Dutee Chand's hopes of cracking Tokyo Olympic qualification time of 11.15 seconds in the women's 100 metres final at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships on Saturday may get dashed after she strained her left quadriceps muscles in the morning session.

"It was a bad day for me on Saturday morning as I strained my left quadriceps muscles during the women's 100m heats. I've taken medicine as well as treatment from physio. My leg injury should be fine. I should be able to run a fast time in the final in the evening," said the 25-year-old 2018 Jakarta Asian Games silver-medallist in 100m/200m.



On Monday, at the Indian Grand Prix IV, Dutee had clocked 11.17 seconds in women's 100m final. It was a national record and better than her previous record of 11.22 secs clocked in 2019 in Ranchi. Dutee says she went all out during women's 4x100m relay heats on Friday and wasn't able to fully recover for Saturday morning's 100m heats.

"I clocked 11.76 seconds to win my heats. I took it easy in the preliminary round in the morning session as the main focus is the final which is in the evening," she added.

To prepare for the evening 100m final, Dutee said she has taken medicine and got treatment from her physio.

Wrestler Punia out for a week due to knee injury

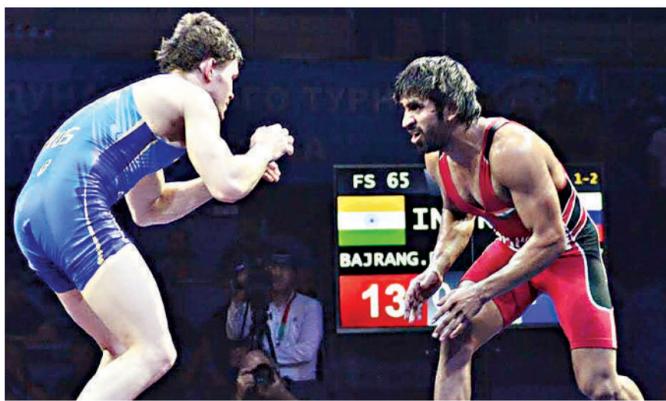
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Freestyle wrestler Bajrang Punia will take a week to recover from a knee injury sustained on Friday during the Ali Aliyev wrestling competition in the Russian city of Kaspitsk.

"My wrestler (Punia) is okay. Nothing to worry about. But he will be off from mat training for nearly a week. But he will do upper body training as we are in the final phase of preparation for the Tokyo Olympic Games," Shako Bentinidis, Punia's personal coach, told IANS on Saturday.

The 27-year-old freestyle wrestler from Haryana has qualified for next month's Tokyo Olympic Games in men's 65kg freestyle event.

Based out of Russian city of Vladikavkaz, Punia injured his right knee during a semi-final match against Russia's



Abdulmazzhid Kudiev at the annual Ali Aliyev tournament.

Punia was trailing 0-4 when he was injured and expressed his inability to continue to fight.

Earlier this month, Punia and his coach had gone for a short training stint to Vladikavkaz to prepare for the July 23 to August 8 Tokyo Olympic Games.

The international wrestler had skipped the Poland Ranking Series held in Warsaw from June 8-13 to practice with top Russian wrestlers and prepare for the Olympics.

"Good sparring partners play an important role in polishing skills. Vladikavkaz has good facilities for wrestlers. There are good sparring partners. I had also trained in Russia before the Asian Wrestling Championships," Punia had said before going to Russia.

Medvedev wins Mallorca Open for his first title on grass



Mallorca | Agencies

World No.2 Daniil Medvedev defeated American Sam Querrey 6-4, 6-2 in the final of Mallorca Open to win the first grass court tennis tournament of his career.

The tournament acts as a warm-up for Wimbledon, which begins on Monday.

Medvedev, who had looked lost after his first-round exit at the Halle Open this month, was in impeccable form, dropping only one set in the entire

tournament enroute to title victory. He had beaten Corentin Moutet, fifth seed Casper Ruud and fourth seed Pablo Carreno Busta on way to the final. The Russian converted three of the four break points and won 90 percent of the points on first serve.

This is his 11th ATP title win. However, Medvedev faces a big challenge in Wimbledon. His first round opponent, Jan-Lennard Struff, had defeated him in the first round of Halle Open. The Russian would love to avenge the defeat.

MALAIKA ARORA TO ARJUN KAPOOR : "HAPPY BIRTHDAY MY SUNSHINE"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Malaika Arora wished Arjun Kapoor on his 36th birthday on Saturday with a mushy wish and a cozy picture of the couple. "Happy birthday my sunshine," posted Malaika on Instagram, along with a picture of the two.

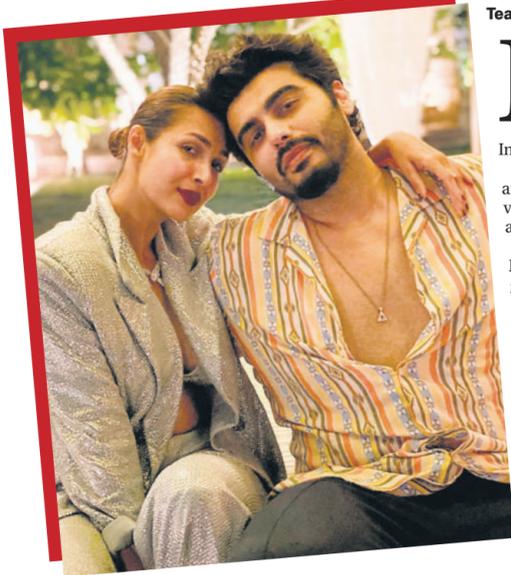
In the picture post, Malaika is seen in Arjun's arms smiling against the backdrop of a picturesque valley. The picture appears to be a throwback from a vacation.

The two stars are seen in activewear. While Malaika wears a blue T-shirt, white sweatshirt and grey track pants, Arjun dons a grey T-shirt, black hoodie, black shorts and a cap.

Celebrations for Arjun's birthday started on Friday night at Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel. The actor had a star-studded birthday bash attended by some of his industry friends and family members.

From Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt to Ranveer Singh and Aditya Roy Kapur, many of Arjun's industry friends attended the bash.

On the work front, Arjun Kapoor has the films "Ek Villain Returns" and "Bhoot Police" in the pipeline while Malaika currently judges the dance reality show "Super Dancer 4".



Asees Kaur on working with AR Rahman: It was an instant yes from me

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Asees Kaur recalls collaborating with AR Rahman for the new track "Meri pukaarsuno" saying although it's always a dream come true working with the Oscar-winning composer, the entire team had to produce the song sitting in their respective homes owing to the pandemic. "Meri pukaarsuno", composed by Rahman and with lyrics by Gulzar, features top voices as Armaan Malik, Alka Yagnik, Shreya Ghosal, KS Chitra, Sadhana Sargam, and Shasha Tirupati along with Asees.

"Generally, he calls everyone to record the song in Chennai but looking at the pandemic situation, we recorded the song and shot for it in our respective homes and studios. I had instructions from him about exactly how he wanted my portion to sound. When you hear 'Meri pukaarsuno' you won't be able to say we all recorded the track sitting in different parts of the country! That's the genius of AR Rahman," says Asees. Recalling, how she came on board for the track, touted as an anthem for hope and peace, the singer says: "AR Rahman had first heard my voice on reality show 'Indian Pro Music League' where he appeared as a guest. He praised my voice. A couple of weeks later, I got a call from his studio asking if I would like to be a part of the song. It was an instant yes! Who would say no to an opportunity to work with AR Rahman?"

Asees is known for her songs "Vemaahi" and "Bolna". Her new track released on Friday.



Taapsee Pannu: Back to business

Team Absolute | Mumbai

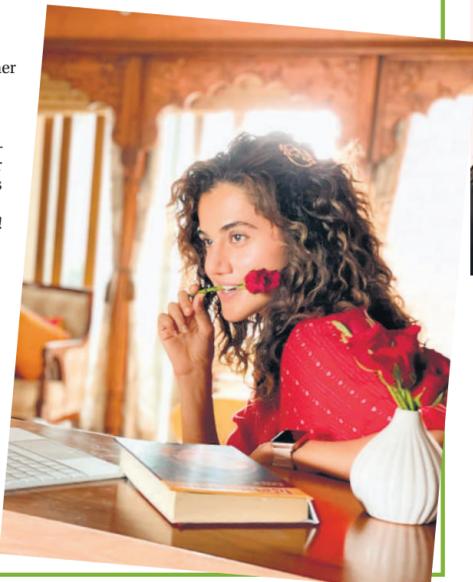
Taapsee Pannu is back being her quirky self she promotes her upcoming film

"Haseen Dilruba". On Friday, she took to social media to share a picture posing with a rose stem in her mouth, setting the tone that things are back to business for her.

"Back to business! Let's do this! #HaseenDilruba 2nd July 2021 on @netflix_in #PromotionReady #Rose #DineshPandit #ipad-pro2021 #ipadpro," she wrote alongside the image.

In the image, the actress, who has returned from a vacation in Russia, is dressed in a red top and she sits with an iPad, a thick book and a flower vase with red roses.

Taapsee plays the lead in Vinil Mathew's "Haseen Dilruba", a crime drama that also features Vikrant Massey and Harshvardhan Rane. The film drops digitally on July 2.



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Actor Abhay Deol on Saturday shared information on his first Disney film "Spin", and posted a trailer of the India-centric family comedy.

"I am aware that most of my audience love me for making edgy, alternative narratives, that challenge the status quo. Which is why this film is all the more special as it is a departure from my own status quo, and catering to a much younger audience. 'Spin' is a Disney film which will go live on their platform for the

**ABHAYDEOL
UPDATES
FANS ON
FIRST
DISNEY
FILM
"SPIN",
SHARES
TRAILER**

U.S. audiences on the 13th of August. It is a gem of a movie, that will leave you smiling and feeling good. Blessed to be a part of it!" Abhay wrote on Instagram along with the trailer.

"Spin" is Disney Channel's first original film to star an Indian-American. The film casts Avantika Vandanapu, American actress of Indian origin, as Indian-American teen Rhea Kumar, who discovers her artistic side through

the unique world of deejaying. Abhay Deol plays Rhea's father Arvind Kumar.

"Spin" is directed by Manjari Makijani, who is the daughter of late actor Mac Mohan and the cousin of actress Raveena Tandon. Meera Syal, Aryan Simhadri, Agam Darshi, Anna Cathcart and Michela Luci co-star in the film.

Apart from "Spin", Abhay's upcoming projects are Ajay Devgan's production "Vellej", besides "Jungle Cry", "Junction" and a web series based on the book "Trial By Fire: The Tragic Tale Of The Uphaar Fire Tragedy", by authors Neelam and Shekhar Krishnamoorthy.



**SHEFALI
SHAH'S
RELAXED
SATURDAY
VIBES**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shefali Shah took to social media on Saturday morning and shared her weekend mood. She is seen in a relaxed mood, posing on a leather couch in earthy summer attire. She is dressed in an off-shoulder beige co-ord dress with a long top and a dhoti skirt.

"#saturdayvibes," the versatile actress wrote on Instagram.

The actress recently donned the hat of a debutant director during lockdown when she directed "Someday" inspired by her own life experience of her grandmother suffering from Alzheimer's. The film will be screened at the 18th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart,

Germany. After her web series "Delhi Crime" won at the International Emmy Awards in the Best Drama Series category, her fans are waiting for season two of the show. Shefali's upcoming film is a dark comedy titled "Darlings" that co-stars Alia Bhatt. The film marks Alia's debut as a producer, through her banner Eternal Sunshine.

Shama Sikander enjoys a family trip in New York



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shama Sikander is going places and she is currently in New York with beau James. She is there to spend quality time with James along with his family.

Shama also took some time to hit some of her favourite places in New York. After the second wave of pandemic Shama shared her views for this vacation. She said, "It was a long time coming. We were planning since quite some time but due to the covid protocols and restrictions it had to be on hold. It was great meeting James's extended family in Florida." "The pandemic is not over yet. The repercussions are very visible everywhere in the world I think. So We have to take care of ourselves and our loved ones and stay protected," she added.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Huma Qureshi