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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI



NATION > 02
Did no one take 'common sense' vax, Kerala Bishop on...



HOLLYWOOD > 06
Paris Hilton wants to be a 'supportive and fun' mother...



SPORTS > 07
Ravi Dhaiya defeats Kazakhstan's Sunyaev, moves to final...

Tokyo Olympic Games 2020: Thursday was best day for India

HOCKEY: A MEDAL AFTER 41 YEARS

▶ THE DREAMS OF BILLIONS OF HOCKEY FANS CAME TRUE WHEN INDIA BAGGED A HISTORIC BRONZE MEDAL IN THE TOKYO OLYMPICS, BEATING GERMANY 5-4 IN AN EDGE-OF-THE-SEAT THRILLER TO CLAIM ITS FIRST MEDAL IN 41 YEARS THAT WILL HOPEFULLY REVIVE THE SPORT'S FORTUNES IN A COUNTRY THAT IS CONSIDERED THE SPIRITUAL HOME OF THE GAME.



Germans who started aggressively and created good pressure by going full press from the start itself.

But the Indians took control of the midfield, capitalised on the gaps created by the hard-pressing Germans, and counter-attacked brilliantly, cutting the German defence to shreds in those four minutes that left the opponents shocked.

TOKYO | Agencies
India fought back brilliantly from a two-goal deficit (1-3) to score four goals in four minutes just around half-time for a sensational victory that would remind fans of the glory days when the Indians were a force to reckon with in world hockey. It was India's fourth medal in the Tokyo Olympics after one silver and three bronze. Weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the (silver medal while shuttler PV Sindhu and boxer Lovlina Borghain claimed the other two bronze medals. India unleashed a four-goal blitz in four minutes as they came roaring back after being pinned down 1-3 by the

India surpass Germany, No. 1 on Olympic hockey medals chart

India last won an Olympic medal in 1980 -- a gold in Moscow. On Thursday, Manpreet Singh's team overcame four decades of disappointments as it captured a well-deserved bronze medal to take India's tally in Olympic Games hockey competitions to 12 medals -- eight gold, one silver and three bronze, surpassing Germany, with whom they were tied at 11 (4 gold, 3 silver, 4 bronze).

THE SCORERS

Simranjeet Singh (17th, 34th) scored a brace of goals while Hardik Singh (27th min), Harmanpreet Singh (29th min), and Rupinderpal Singh (31st min) scored a goal apiece for India while for Germany Timur Cruz (2nd min), Niklas Wellen (24th min), Benedict Furk (25th min) and Lukas Windfeder (48th min) were on target.

WRESTLING: DAHIYA BAGS SILVER IN 57KG FREESTYLE

▶ DAHIYA, WHO HAILS FROM NAHRI VILLAGE IN SONPAT DISTRICT OF HARYANA, WAS INITIALLY TRAINED BY ASIAN GAMES GOLD-MEDALLIST SATPAL SINGH AT THE CHHATRASAL STADIUM IN NORTH DELHI. OLD-TIMERS AT THE STADIUM WOULD RECALL HOW DAHIYA'S FATHER RAKESH DAHIYA, A SMALL FARMER, WOULD TRAVEL EVERY DAY FROM THEIR VILLAGE TO THE STADIUM TO DELIVER FRESH MILK AND FRUITS, WHICH WERE PART OF THE WRESTLER'S DIET, FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. THOSE VISITS PROVED SUCCESSFUL AS DAHIYA MADE HIS FATHER PROUD ON THURSDAY BY WINNING THE SILVER MEDAL.



Kazakhstan with a last-minute fall in the semifinal, found Uguev, a

Uguev, a two-time world champion, in as many meetings. The two met in

TOKYO | Agencies

Indian wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya fought a brave bout but could not overcome the Russian Olympic Committee's (ROC) Zaur Uguev in the final of the men's freestyle 57kg at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday. The 23-year-old Indian had to settle for a silver medal as the ROC wrestler won the bout 7-4 on points.

Dahiya, who had reached the final by beating Nurislam Sanayev of

two-time world champion, too strong and too determined to win the gold. The Russian won early points and then defended strongly, without giving Dahiya many chances.

Dahiya won India's second silver medal in Olympic wrestling after Sushil Kumar who won in 66kg freestyle in the London Olympics in 2012.

India has won five medals, including two silver, at the Tokyo Olympics so far. This was two-time Asian champion Dahiya's second straight loss to Zaur

the semi-finals of the 2019 World Championships in Nur Sultan and the Indian wrestler lost in the final seconds of the bout in a closely fought contest. At the Makuhari Messe hall, Dahiya began the final cautiously as he was aware of Uguev's strength and tried to assess how ready his opponent was before launching his attack. However, Uguev was strong in his defence and turned the tables on the Indian.

Govt introduces bill to nullify contentious retrospective taxation

▶ The Bill proposes to amend the Income Tax Act, 1961 so as to provide that no tax demand shall be raised in future on the basis of the said retrospective amendment for any indirect transfer of Indian assets if the transaction was undertaken before May 28, 2012 - when the finance bill was passed by Parliament in 2012.

▶ The bill also proposes to provide that the demand raised for indirect transfer of Indian assets, made before May 28, 2012, shall be nullified on fulfilment of specified conditions such as withdrawal or furnishing of undertaking for withdrawal of pending litigation and furnishing of an undertaking to the effect that no claim for cost, damages, interest, and others shall be filed. Further, as per the bill, the amount paid in these cases would be refunded without any interest thereon.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The government has set in motion a fresh set of amendments to the tax laws that will nullify the retrospective tax amendment provisions introduced in 2012 that set to tax any gains on indirect transfer of Indian assets made by foreign entities.

This Bill would give UK's Cairn Energy and Vodafone Plc a window to do away with the arbitrations and settle their long-drawn tax disputes with the government. An arbitration tribunal in The Hague had pronounced its award on December 21, 2020 in favour of Cairn Energy Plc and Cairn UK Holdings Ltd (CUHL), making the Indian government liable to pay an arbitration award of \$1.2 billion to it. Recently, the government confirmed in the parliament that a French court has directed the freezing of certain properties of the Indian government in the matter pertaining to the Cairn arbitration award.

Further, in the Vodafone arbitration case, the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague ruled in favour of the company last year.

5-point guide to this big story

- Ideally, retrospective tax is to make adjustments when policies in the past and the present are so vastly different that tax paid before under the old policy could be said to have been less.
- Retrospective tax could correct that situation by charging tax under the existing policy.
- However, retrospective tax faces resistance because taxpayers would have paid under the earlier regime by complying with the rules at that time, and taking into account their entire budgeting ecosystem.
- Prudent financial management may get disrupted when retrospective tax is charged since taxpayers would be paying an additional amount.
- The most controversial retrospective tax amendment in India is the 2012 version, which said tax is payable on indirect transfer of Indian assets before May 2012.

PK RESIGNS AS PUNJAB CM'S PRINCIPAL ADVISOR



Chandigarh: Poll strategist Prashant Kishor on Thursday resigned as Principal Advisor to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, saying "he's resigning in view of his decision to take a temporary break from public life".

The political strategist was appointed as Principal Advisor to Punjab CM on March 1 with a token honorarium of Re 1 per month.

However, he was entitled to a fully-furnished government residence and camp office, executive class travel, official vehicle, medical facilities and secretarial staff as admissible to a cabinet minister.

The Supreme Court seeks Centre's stance on Pegasus row

'Allegations serious if reports true'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday said allegations of the Pegasus-related snooping are serious, if the reports in the newspapers are correct, and sought the Centre's stand on petitions, including by the Editors Guild of India and senior journalist N. Ram, seeking a probe into the Israeli spyware matter.

Opening the argument, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Ram, submitted before a bench comprising Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and Justice Surya Kant that Pegasus is a rogue technology, and it is entirely illegal, as it infiltrates into our lives through telephone, and it hears and watches. Sibal emphasised that it is an assault on privacy and human dignity. At this, Chief Justice Ramana said: "Before going into all that, we have certain questions. No doubt, the allegations are serious, if reports in the newspapers are correct." However, he noted: "Majority of petitions rely on foreign newspapers, but where is the verifiable mate-



rial for us to order an inquiry? The surveillance issue came to light 2 years ago, in May 2019. I don't see any serious effort to raise the issue, why now suddenly?" Emphasising that the petitioners who moved the top court are knowledgeable and educated and they should have made effort to collect more material, he clarified: "We do not say that newspaper reports are not believable." He said only the government can answer "whether the government bought it, used it and why? This spyware is a big threat to everything we stand for as a Republic". The bench listed the matter for further hearing on August 10.

No notice for Prime Minister

The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up advocate M.L. Sharma for making Prime Minister Narendra Modi as respondent in his petition seeking a court monitored SIT probe into the Pegasus snooping issue. Bench said: "You have included certain individuals (Prime Minister in the petition). We can't issue notice like this. Don't try to take advantage of things, you have a defective memo of parties. This is not the way to file a PIL, where is the material other than paper cuttings."

No plan to block any social media platform: Centre



New Delhi: The government has no plan to block any social media platform in the country, the Parliament was informed on Thursday. Under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, the government blocks malicious online content, in the interest of sovereignty and integrity, and defence of India, security of the state among other reasons. Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply. "At present, Government has no plan to block any social media platform in the country," he said. Noting that the government receives various grievances from users about this type of hate content, he said that it responded to them in an appropriate way.

Tamil Nadu launches doorstep healthcare scheme

Team Absolute | Chennai

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday launched the DMK government's flagship scheme, 'Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam', which is aimed to take healthcare to the doorsteps of the people, at Samanapalli village in Krishnagiri district. The scheme was DMK's major promise to the people of the state during the run-up to the Assembly elections. Launching the scheme, Stalin said that it would change the mode of preliminary healthcare delivery by taking it to the doorsteps of the people. Stalin declared the scheme open in seven other districts along with Krishnagiri, in the presence of



state Health Minister Ma Subramanian. The scheme will screen those above 45 years of age and others with infirmities through door-to-door check-ups. 'Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam' will also detect non-communicable diseases that may lead to sudden mortalities and impact people's quality of life. Stalin said that women public health workers, women health volunteers (WHV), physiotherapists and nurses will provide healthcare at the doorsteps of the people. The scheme is also part of the seven-point vision of the state government which envisions enhanced quality of life for all.

Northeast to witness enhanced rainfall, MP to see more showers

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast fairly widespread/widespread rainfall is very likely over Madhya Pradesh during next five days, with reduction thereafter and fairly widespread/widespread rainfall with isolated heavy falls very likely over West Bengal, Odisha, and

Assam, Mizoram agree to keep state forces out of contested areas



Aizawl/Guwahati: Assam and Mizoram held a crucial ministerial level meeting on Thursday where they decided to maintain peace along the inter-state border, welcomed deployment on neutral central forces, and agreed that they would not send their respective forces and officials to the troubled border areas.

A joint statement, issued after the meeting at the Aijal Club in Aizawl,

said that Assam and Mizoram would not send their respective forest officials and police force for patrolling, domination, enforcement, or for fresh deployment to any of the areas where confrontation and conflict had taken place between the two states on July 26. "This would include all such areas along the Assam-Mizoram border in the district of Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar in Assam, and Mamit and Kolasib districts in Mizoram. Representatives of governments of Assam and Mizoram agree to take all necessary measures to promote, preserve, and maintain peace and harmony amongst the people living in Assam and Mizoram, particularly in the border areas," the statement said.



NGOs AND AUTO COMPANIES CAN ISSUE DRIVING LICENCE

New Delhi: The central government has eased the process of creating driving licenses for some time now. That's where the government has now taken another big step in this direction. In fact, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has changed the rules for issuing driving licenses. The new government rules will allow vehicle manufacturers associations, NGOs and private companies to run training centres. After training, all these driving licenses will be issued. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on Wednesday issued guidelines for the same. According to the guidelines, driving licenses will also be issued by regional transport offices (RTO), along with other legitimate institutions. A statement from the Ministry said that legitimate institutions such as firms, NGOs, private companies, automobile associations, vehicle manufacturers associations, autonomous bodies, and private vehicle manufacturers will be able to apply for recognition as driving training centers. The Ministry further said in the statement that these legitimate institutions are required to have necessary facilities on the land prescribed under the Central Motor Vehicles (CMV) Rules, 1989. If someone applies for it in a state or union territory, they will have to show their financial capability to manage the resource.



DID NO ONE TAKE 'COMMON SENSE' VAX, KERALA BISHOP ON NEW NORMS

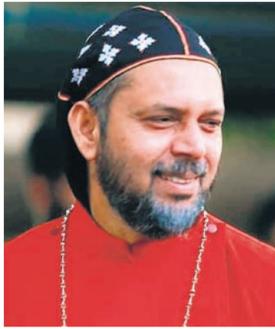
Team Absolute | Thiruvananthapuram

The Kerala government has taken a lot of flak over its new Covid guidelines but the most stinging remark came from a bishop, who sought to know whether those took the decisions had taken a dose of "common sense vaccine".

State Health Minister Veena George on Wednesday announced the new guidelines, which say that those who enter shops, banks and other establishments, should have got at least one dose of vaccine administered or produce an RT-PCR certificate not older than 72 hours.

The issue surfaced in the Kerala Assembly too on Thursday and Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan led a walkout of the House in protest after George categorically said there would be no change in the norms.

Soon after George's remarks, the Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church's Niranam Diocese Metropolitan, Facevarghese Mor Coorilos, in a Facebook post, asked if no one in the Covid Expert



Committee taken the dose of "common sense" vaccine.

"The new decisions appear to be irrational as the new guidelines appears that those who go to buy their stock of liquor need not observe the rules what a person needs to observe when he goes to buy rice. It's really 'commendable' and we must accept the 'expertise' of the expert committee," he wrote. Before walking out of the

Assembly, Satheesan said: "It's strange that to buy 2 kg of rice, one has to be either vaccinated or carry RT-PCR certificate. Fail to understand what sort of rationale and logic is being used."

Incidentally, the relaxed new lockdown norms came hours after Kerala recorded 50 per cent of the daily new Covid cases in the country, and on Wednesday, 22,414 new Covid cases were reported.

Meanwhile, social media was flush with activity, trolling the Kerala government's new guidelines. Many termed it as illogical as only around 50 per cent of the state population has received their first dose, thus forcing the remaining 50 per cent to remain indoors.

And, adding insult to the injury came a fresh Central government guideline which has asked states like Kerala having a high Covid spread to ensure that strict adherence to Covid protocols and festivals should not see any sort of crowding.

With Onam, Kerala's traditional harvest festival, coming soon, the new set of guidelines are going to create a lot of confusion.

According to the new guidelines, all shops, tourism centres and other establishments should display the status of vaccination of employees and the number of customers permitted at a time. It shall be the responsibility of the owner of such establishments to avoid crowding inside and outside the shop. Enforcement agencies will conduct checks and take action to ensure the above.

All establishments in the public sector, including government offices, PSUs, companies, autonomous organisations, and commissions will function from Monday to Friday.

But was irked people was the stipulation that only those who have taken at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccine two weeks prior, or who are in possession of RT-PCR negative certificate taken 72 hours before, or who is in possession of Covid-19 positive results more than a month old will be allowed inside shops, markets, banks, public and private offices, financial institutions, factories, industrial establishments, open tourist spaces and other establishments.

No compromise on Covaxin quality, says Bharat Biotech

Hyderabad | Agencies



Amid concerns in some quarters about the safety of Covaxin, Bharat Biotech has clarified that its Covid-19 vaccine is totally safe and that it is following uncompromising policy on safety and quality. The Hyderabad-based company's clarification came in view of certain media and social media reports.

The vaccine maker stated that as of date, all batches of Covaxin were manufactured and released from its manufacturing facilities at Genome Valley, Hyderabad, which are fully audited and approved by regulatory authorities.

"Every batch of Covaxin is subjected to more than 200 quality control tests at our facilities, followed by submission samples to the Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL), Government of India, only based on approval/release by CDL,

are batches released commercially," it said.

The company said since early June, manufacturing of Covaxin commenced at its sites at Malur, Karnataka, and Ankleshwar, Gujarat, prior to which engineering batches were also executed to study equipment functionality. "Products manufactured from these facilities will be available for supplies during September. This is based on our 120-day timeline for manufacturing, testing, release, regulatory approvals, and distribution," it said.

The clarification came after Covid task force member N.K. Arora told a television channel that the supply of Covaxin has been slowed down because the first few batches at the company's newest facility in Bengaluru were not of the right quality.

Vaccine manufacturing, testing, and release at Bharat Biotech follow validated, stringent GMP processes which were established over 20 years, with several billion doses of vaccines supplied within India and globally, Bharat Biotech said in a statement.

CBSE improvement exams from Aug 25, results out by Sep 30

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The CBSE on Thursday informed the Supreme Court that it will conduct examinations for improvement of marks of classes 10 and 12 candidates from August 25 to September 15, and fixed September 30 as the date for declaration of results. The Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) board said it will commence improvement exams on August 16 and declare results around September 20.

A bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna approved the schedules submitted by the CBSE and the ICSE in their respective affidavits.

"In response, the boards have filed separate affidavits making firm commitment about the Schedule. As there was some ambiguity in the affidavit filed by the CBSE, on instructions, learned counsel appearing for the CBSE has submitted a schedule for conducting exams for Improvement/Compartment/Private/Patrchar students of Class 12 and Class 10," said the bench in its order.

The CBSE said on August 10, its portal will open for registration of candidates -- for improvement, patrchar and private candidates of classes 10 and 12 - and a circular will be issued, declaring date sheet for exams. The examinations would begin from August 25 and the last paper will be held on September 15. It will declare results on September 30.

For ICSE candidates, the registration will begin on August 4 and it declare a detailed examination schedule by August 5 or 6. On August 16, the improvement examination will commence and the results for the improvement examinations shall be declared around September 20.

Red sanders worth Rs 4.5 Cr seized, 2 held in K'taka

Bengaluru | Agencies

City Crime Branch (CCB) of Karnataka Police have seized nine tons of Red sanders worth Rs 4.5 crore and arrested two persons. Sandeep Patil, Joint Commissioner of CCB said that the operation was carried out after a tip off on the accused persons trying to sell off Red sanders.

The arrested persons have been identified as Anand Kumar (51), and Anil Singh (47) residents of Bengaluru. The accused smuggled Red Sanders abroad and operated as a gang. The police are trying to bust the gang operating



at international levels. During investigation the police found that smugglers carried out their operations after smuggling the goods into the city. The

accused persons operated as a gang along with other miscreants. The gang smuggled Red Sanders to foreign countries, said police. Red sanders were smug-

gled from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and stocked at a godown in Bengaluru. The two arrested accused had come with a sample piece of Red sander to be given to a potential customer. The police, after getting information, recovered 9,135 kilograms of Red sanders after raiding the godown. The police seized a truck and a car used to smuggle Red sanders. A complaint has been registered at the Hulimavu police station in this connection. The hunt is on for the accused who have disappeared after the raids. The investigation is on, said police.

8 ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF 'SEXTORTION' IN RAJASTHAN

Jaipur | Agencies

The Alwar Police in Rajasthan have busted a racket that was allegedly involved in blackmailing people through 'sextortion' and 'cat phishing'.

A police officer said that eight accused have been arrested in this connection on Wednesday, most of whom are 10th-12th pass. Two among them are truck drivers.

These accused have also cheated people in the US.

An NRI staying in Texas has been duped of Rs 1.5 lakh. Overall, the gang has duped people of Rs 15 crore. This gang reportedly was expert in opening fake bank accounts, issuing fake mobile SIM cards and cheating from ATMs.

The arrested accused are residents of Kot village in Dausa and Shastri Nagar in Jaipur.

The accused, through sextortion, made recordings via a screen recorder by showing pornographic videos and then used to extort money by blackmailing them which were deposited in fake accounts and were withdrawn from different ATMs.

Similarly, by cat phishing, they used to befriend innocent and unaware individuals in the guise of women and then used to chat with them and later blackmailed them.

CLASS 12 STUDENT OPENS FIRE ON TEACHER AFTER BEING REMOVED FROM SCHOOL

Jaipur: In a shocking incident, a student of Class 12, who was issued a transfer certificate (TC) by his school for his alleged misbehaviour, opened fire on his history teacher at Kotputli town in Jaipur district on Thursday while the latter was returning home from the school.

The injured teacher, Natwar Singh Yadav, was rushed to the hospital after he suffered bullet injuries on his leg.

The accused student is a state-level hockey player who was earlier felicitated by the Rajasthan Governor for scouting.

As per the officials, the student, Motilal, was irked for being issued a transfer certificate for misbehaving in the school. A few months back, he had even slapped his history teacher when the latter tried to stop him from misbehaving. Motilal reportedly pledged to take revenge on his teacher on that very day.

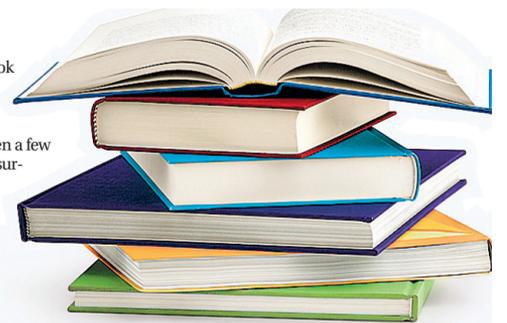
On Thursday, when Yadav was returning home from the school, Motilal along with his friends cornered him and fired on his leg, leaving him in a pool of blood, before fleeing from the spot.

Yadav was referred to a hospital in Jaipur, where his condition is stated to be stable. The police have caught hold of two of Motilal's associates. Further investigation is underway.

TN Text Book Corporation drops caste name from school textbooks

Chennai | Agencies

The Tamil Nadu textbook corporation has started implementing the order of the state government which was given a few years ago to drop the caste surnames in streets and roads of Tamil Nadu, a statement from the state Text Book corporation on Thursday said. Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the late M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) while speaking at the centenary celebrations of Dravidar Kazhagam founder, E.V. Ramaswami Periyar (Thanthai Periyar) in 1978 had said that his government would take steps to remove the caste references from roads and streets of the state and a government order was issued for the same later on. Tamil Nadu textbook corporation removed the surnames of famous scholars like UV. Swaminatha Iyer, his teacher Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, Mayavaram Vedanayagam Pillai who authored the first Tamil novel, C.W.



hamoth- arampillai and Ramalingam Pillai. While UV. Swaminatha Iyer who is known as Tamil Thatha (grand old man of Tamil) for his immense contribution to Tamil literature will henceforth be known as UV. Swaminathar. His teacher and guru, Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai will be known as Meenakshi Sundaranar. Mayavaram Vedanayagam Pillai, who authored the first Tamil novel will here from be known as Vedanayagam.

Pulichintala gate breaks, 6 lakh cusecs of water to be released

Amaravati | Agencies

With the 16th breakdown in the multi-purpose Pulichintala Project in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) Commissioner K. Kannababu on Thursday said up to 6 lakh cusecs of flood water could be released. In an effort to install a stop lock gate, he said officials are continuing to release the flood waters from the Krishna river. Till 7 p.m. on Thursday, water outflow from the project



amounted to 5 lakh cusecs, while another 1.3 lakh was from the Prakasam Barrage at Vijayawada. Kannababu said the first warning could be issued at

the Prakasam barrage on Thursday night, while the Krishna and Guntur district administrations have been alerted to regularly track the water

flow in the river. "Already, a team of 24 National Disaster Response Force members is ready in Vijayawada. If needed, more emergency response teams are also ready," he said.

The Commissioner also appealed to the people to lend a helping hand to officials, if needed, while cautioning all the people living along the river to stay safe and alert. "Do not travel in the river on boats, motor boats and steamers. Avoid swimming, taking baths, fishing or letting cattle, sheep or goats into the river," he added.



Major K'taka pilgrimage centres closed on weekends

Mangaluru | Agencies

Major pilgrimage centres in Dharmasthala, Kukke Subramanya and Kateel will remain closed for devotees on weekends, Karnataka district authorities said. All special poojas, head tonsuring rituals, serving of prasada have been cancelled.

The decision was taken by the district authorities in the wake of a resurgence in Covid cases in these district which share borders with Kerala.

The decision has been taken to put a pause on devotees' movement from other states, as well as other districts, said K.V. Rajendra, the Deputy Commissioner of Mangaluru on Wednesday evening.

The Manjunatheshwara temple of Dharmasthala, Subramanya temple of Kukke Subramanya and Durga Parameshwari temple of Kateel, will only open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on week days. They will remain closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Dharmasthala Manjunatha temple attracts 10,000 devotees and Kukke Subramanya temple about 20,000 footfalls daily.

For those who wish to visit the temples on weekdays and stay in dormitories, the RT-PCR test negative certificate of not less than 72 hours has been made compulsory.

Social distancing have to be maintained in the rooms and dormitories and directions have been issued to sanitize all rooms, dormitories.





FLOODS WREAK HAVOC IN NORTH MP, THOUSANDS MAROONED

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Torrential rain has created havoc in Madhya Pradesh as a result of which the lives of thousands of people are in danger. The army has been called in to help in relief and rescue operations. Helicopters have been pressed into service to evacuate people.

The worst affected is the Gwalior-Chambal region of the state. Here rivers are overflowing due to heavy rain in Shivpuri, Sheopur, Datia, Gwalior, Guna, Bhind and Morena districts. A total of 1,225 villages have been affected here. So far, about 9,500 people have been evacuated, but still a large number of people are stranded in several villages and homes. Teams of SDRF, NDRF, Army and BSF are engaged in evacuating the affected people. Helicopters have also been pressed into service.

A video of a stranded girl has gone viral on social media, in which she is describing herself as a resident of Bhind district and saying that her village has turned into an island and 300 people are stranded for the last 42 hours.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is constantly monitoring the flood situation. On Wednesday night he held a meeting with officials and took stock of the situation. He said he is in touch with the officials of the affected areas since Thursday morning. Chouhan said, "I discussed with the district administration, Chambal-



Gwalior range IG and commissioners of the flood-affected areas of the state this morning and gathered information about the rescue operation and the flood situation. Air operation is going on at three places in Shivpuri's Karera Kali Pahari and Bhind. Late night 57 people have been rescued from Kali Pahari of Shivpuri and efforts are on to save 35 more. At least 13 people have also been rescued in Tila, Shivpuri. Relief and rescue work is going on in all the flood affected areas of the state." The chief minister also spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday morning about the flood situation. Chouhan apprised the Prime Minister of the rescue operations and relief work. They also talked about the loss of infrastructure, damage to crops, power and telecom net-

work supply. Meanwhile, Chambal river has swelled menacingly due to continuous rain as a result of which areas near the banks are in danger of flooding. The administration has been instructed to be vigilant. At many places, bridges have been washed away due to floods and roads are dotted with potholes.

Congress State President Kamal Nath has questioned the government about the poor quality of construction after a bridge in Sankuan area was washed away. "This bridge was built at a cost of crores of rupees just a few years ago and it was washed away like a leaf in the swelling river, how?" he asked. The Congress has demanded a high level inquiry into the incident and said accountability must be fixed in this matter.

Will take a sigh of relief only after restoring normalcy in the affected areas: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that we will take a sigh of relief only after normalcy is restored in the areas affected by excessive rainfall and flood situation. The state government is with every flood affected in this hour of crisis. In the villages, till the situation of preparing food in the homes is not created, effective arrangement of food supply should be ensured. 50 kg wheat should be provided to each affected family immediately. Top priority should be given to restoration of power system and re-establishment of mobile networks. Providing stay facilities to the families whose houses have collapsed is the top priority of the state government. Chouhan was discussing with the minister in-charge of Gwalior-Chambal division, local minister, commissioners and collectors regarding relief from the residence through VC.

Chouhan said that Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar are continuously taking information about the situation. All



possible cooperation is being received from the Centre. Rapid help is being received in re-establishment of mobile networks and rail routes.

Chouhan said that arrangements should be made for food, drinking water, adequate medicines, testing and treatment of sick persons in relief camps. It is necessary to ensure that the disease does not spread in the relief camps.

Chouhan said that all the collectors and administrative staff should implement relief and rescue operations with full efficiency and tact. It is the testing time. Chouhan virtually obtained information about the status of Datia, Guna, Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Shivpuri and Sheopur. It was informed in the video conference that 3 teams each of NDRF are engaged in rescue and relief

works in Shivpuri, Morena and Bhind respectively. 5 helicopters of the Air Force are also operational. Rescue operations are on from the boats. In the rescue work that started at 5.30 am today, 221 people were evacuated to a safe place. NDRF, SDRF, BSF are also engaged in continuous rescue work in the districts.

Chouhan said that there has been a lot of destruction in Sheopur. People need help. Gwalior and Morena Collectors should provide all possible help in re-establishing the arrangements in Sheopur and providing food, drinking water, medicines and other necessary relief to the general public. It should be ensured to send dry food items every two hours. Chief Minister also appealed for cooperation from social organisations. Chouhan said that in the districts where the

power system has been affected, arrangements should be made with the cooperation of the neighbouring districts. Doctors and paramedical staff should also be shifted to relief camps in need. The minister-in-charge should make necessary coordination for these works.

Chouhan also inquired about the status of Kota barrage, the water being released from the dam and its possible impact on Bhind and Morena.

In the video conference, Sheopur Collector said that according to preliminary assessment, about 19 thousand people of 89 villages have been affected. So far 5 casualties have been reported. Work is on to shift 200 people to a safe place in Shivpuri. Datia Collector informed that 12 thousand families of 36 villages have been affected. There are 8 relief camps operating in the district. A total of 1165 people have been shifted to safer places. The rescue operation has been completed. In Gwalior, 46 villages have been affected and 1500 people are staying in 7 camps. There are 27 camps operating in Guna and 15 in Morena. The water level is going down.

Indian men hockey team congratulated for winning bronze medal in Olympics

Vivek Sagar and Nilkanta Sharma will get Rs 1 crore each. Both the players have made the state proud: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has congratulated the Indian men's hockey team for winning the bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics. Chief Minister Chouhan announced an award of one crore rupees each for the young players of the state, Vivek Sagar of Itarsi and Nilkanta Sharma of Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy, who were part of the team. Chouhan made this announcement in a message issued to the media

from his residence. Chouhan said that this is not only a bronze medal but it is the reawakening of Indian hockey. The Indian hockey team has won this honour by defeating the world's best teams New Zealand, Spain, Argentina, Great Britain, Germany, Japan. It is a matter of pride especially for Madhya Pradesh because the young player of Itarsi district of our state Shri Vivek Sagar has

been a part of this team. He played an important role in the Indian team's victory against many top teams by his excellent performance in the Olympic competition. Nilkanta Sharma also got selected from Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy. Chouhan said that the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Indian men's hockey team would also be honoured and welcomed by the state government.

BJP to reach out to sub-sections of SC, ST and OBC in MP to further weaken Cong

Team Absolute | New Delhi:

The Madhya Pradesh BJP, which has been in power for almost 17 years in the state, has decided to make inroads among sub-sections of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) who are still not supporting the saffron party. The BJP believes that by gaining the support of these sub-sections it will further weaken the rival Congress in the state.

The BJP has been in power in Madhya Pradesh since 2003, except for 15 months between December 2018 to March 2020 when Congress leader Kamal Nath was Chief Minister. In March 2020, Shivraj Singh Chouhan was sworn in again after the fall of the Kamal Nath government after then Congress leader and now Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and his supporters left the party and joined the BJP.

Madhya Pradesh BJP in-charge, P



Murlidhar Rao told IANS that the party has decided to reach out to the sections of SC, ST and OBC who are still not connected with the party.

"The BJP is getting support from all the communities including SC, ST and OBC but there are some sub-sections among these communities

where we don't have support. We have decided to reach out to these sub-sections of SC, ST and OBC communities who are still supporting the opposition parties," Rao said.

Rao explained that these sub-sections are supporting the Congress and by winning their confidence and

support the BJP will destroy the last bastion of the opposition party in Madhya Pradesh and also help the party to expand its base among new groups of voters. "By making inroads among these sub-sections, the BJP will not only weaken the Congress but it will also help us to win the strongholds of the rival party," Rao said. The party has started drawing up plans to win the confidence of the new groups of voters. The party strategists feel that winning the support of these groups will help the BJP to make inroads among the last few strongholds of the Congress.

"By winning the support of these groups, we will be establishing the BJP as the party of all the sections of society irrespective of caste and community," a party leader said.

The next assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh will be held at the end of 2023 and the reach out plan is part of strengthening the party ahead of the elections.

Mishra airlifted from flood-hit village in Datia

Team Absolute | Datia

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Dr Narottam Mishra was airlifted when he got stranded in his home district Datia, where he had gone to take stock of the flood situation. He was rescued by an Air Force helicopter.

Like other parts of the state, several villages in Datia are marooned in water due to heavy rain and floods.

On getting information about floods in the rural areas and some people stranded on a rooftop, Mishra left for a village called Kotra when a tree fell on his boat and it stopped moving. As a result Mishra was himself stranded in the water.

At least nine people were stuck on the rooftop of a house in Kotra village.

Mishra sent a SOS to government officials for help. An IAF helicopter was then despatched to the spot to rescue the minister and nine other stranded villagers.



A video of the rescue has now gone viral on social media in which Mishra is seen instructing the officials to rescue the villagers first. The video is receiving a lot of reaction by users. Congress state president Kamal Nath's media coordinator Narendra Saluja has praised the minister and said, "If it is the opposition's duty to blame government's mistakes, then they should also be praised for good work. Salute to the spirit and courage of Home Minister Narottam Mishra."

Samajwadi Party leader Yash Bharti however took a jibe and said, "The Home Minister was visiting the flood-affected areas. He reached the Panchayat Bhawan to help people, but himself needed rescue. See how beautifully the video has been made, like Shah Rukh Khan saving Preity Zinta in the film Veer Zara. The story looks filmy."

Work done with heart while applying mind gives good results: Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the scope of service to humanity is very vast. It is necessary that work should be done with heart while applying mind. The work done with this spirit always gives good results. He said that all the medical facilities should be available to the deprived sections in the Red Cross. It should be ensured that they do not have to go far away for treatment. Patel was reviewing the activities of the State Branch Unit of Indian Red Cross Society, Madhya Pradesh at Raj Bhavan on Thursday.

Patel said that there is no greater religion than serving the suffering humanity. In this task, work should be done with the cooperation of

everyone. He said that along with the aim of helping the poor and deprived sections, it is also necessary to have modern medical and treatment facilities. Besides, it is also necessary to keep updating them according to time. He said that work should be done with the thinking of providing better facilities to the poor backward classes. Efforts can be made for the availability of state-of-the-art resources for medical and treatment by liaising and coordinating with private and public institutions. He said that all the arrangements of Seva Sansthan are for the service of the suffering humanity. Negligence in the work of this service should not be tolerated. In case of irregularity, immediate action should be taken. In the case of apathy in taking action against the guilty, punitive

action should be taken while investigating the responsibility seriously.

Patel was informed that the Red Cross Hospital was operated as a Covid Dedicated Hospital from April 19 to May 19 2021. During this period, 119 Covid patients were treated. From June 1 onwards, Red Cross Hospital has been converted into a non-covid hospital and operated as a general hospital. OPD and check-up facilities are being provided to the citizens at concessional rates. It was informed that JP Hospital branch of State Bank of India has provided Phaco Machine, ENT Microscope, Cautery Machine, Hydraulic O.T. Table and Suction Machines under corporate responsibility. A mobile ICU ambulance has been provided by the National Headquarters of Red Cross, New Delhi.

Heavy rain alert issued for 23 districts

Rain-related incidents have claimed two lives in the state so far, officials said, adding that food packets were airdropped in the flood-ravaged areas of Gwalior and Chambal divisions.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday issued an 'orange' alert forecasting 'heavy to very heavy' rainfall in six districts of Madhya Pradesh even as Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the state had not seen such devastation in the last 70 years. The IMD on Thursday evening also issued a 'yellow alert' forecasting 'heavy' rainfall in 17 other districts.

Rain-related incidents have claimed two lives in the state so far, officials said, adding that food packets were airdropped in the flood-ravaged areas of Gwalior and



Chambal divisions. An orange alert warning of rains ranging from 64.5 to 204.4 mm in 24 hours at isolated places was issued for the districts of Rajgarh, Shajapur, Agar-Malwa, Mandsaur, Guna and Ashok Nagar. The yellow alert forecast of rainfall ranging from 64.5 to 115.5 mm at isolated places was issued for Sheopur, Morena, Bhind, Neemuch, Shivpuri, Gwalior, Datia, Vidisha, Raisen, Sehore, Hoshangabad, Dhar, Dewas, Narsinghpur, Tikamgarh, Niwari and Sagar. Both the alerts are valid till Friday morning, said P K Saha, senior meteorologist, IMD, Bhopal. Gwalior and Chambal divisions comprise the districts of Gwalior, Shivpuri, Guna, Ashok Nagar, Datia, Sheopur, Morena and Bhind in north Madhya Pradesh. A rain-related death each was reported from Shivpuri and Sheopur districts. An air operation had been started to rescue people in the flood-hit Bhind district and Karera in Shivpuri district.

"The state has not seen such devastation in the last 70 years that the rain-ravaged Gwalior-Chambal region is

facing. Bridges near the Ratangarh Mata Temple and Sankua in the area were damaged and many people got stranded in those areas," a state official said, quoting chief minister Chouhan. On Wednesday night, 57 people were rescued from Kali Pahadi in Shivpuri district while 13 people were rescued from Teela area in Shivpuri, officials said.

Chouhan also spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the morning. The prime minister assured all possible help to the state, officials said. The CM also spoke with Union Home Minister Amit Shah who said the Centre will send an advance team to assess the damage, officials said.

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu also called Chouhan to enquire about the flood situation and relief operations. Food packets were being dropped from aircraft in various inundated areas including 13 locations in Sheopur, officials said. The chief minister also chaired a meeting in the morning at his official residence to review the flood situation.



MAHA COP 'THREATENS' CBI SLEUTHS, HC ISSUES NOTICE TO STATE GOVT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Following a plea by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that its officers are allegedly being "threatened" by a police officer, the Bombay High Court on Thursday sought the Maharashtra government's response to the charge.

In its plea, the CBI said that it required certain documents in connection with the ongoing probe against former state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, but the state was not cooperating in the matter, and an Assistant Commissioner of Police was allegedly threatening them.

Taking serious note of the CBI allegations, a division bench of Justice SS Shinde and Justice NJ Jamdar issued notice to the state government and asked it to strictly follow the directions of the court, failing which the court would be compelled to take action against the state's officers. The CBI counsel, Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh said that the state police had refused to provide copies of documents connected with the case and it was a "clear vio-



lation" of the high court orders.

The state government has argued that since a Special Leave Petition is filed before the Supreme Court, they are awaiting its outcome.

The judges asked the Chief Public Prosecutor Aruna Pai to get directions on the ACP threatening the CBI officers and not to create a situation where the court would have to take harsh measures against the police. The CBI said it had written to the State Intelligence Department (SID) seeking details of a communication sent by IPS officer Rashmi Shukla on the issue of alleged corruption in police postings and transfers, but the SID refused to comply. The HC held

last month (July 22) that the CBI could probe the allegations of corruption in police transfers and postings and had dismissed a petition filed by the state government seeking deletion of a certain portion from the CBI's FIR against Deshmukh. The CBI said that the state government is refusing to share the documents as they are approaching the SC to challenge the HC order of July 22 and sought the court's directions to the government to provide it with the required documents. The judges also directed the CBI to include Additional Chief Secretary, Home, as a respondent, and posted the matter for further hearing on August 11.

A year on, what's Sushant death probe status: Maha Cong to CBI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Exactly a year after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the probe into the death of Bollywood actor the late Sushant Singh Rajput, the Maharashtra Congress on Thursday asked the federal agency to clarify the current status of its longwinded investigation.

State Congress Spokesperson Sachin Sawant said that one year has lapsed after the CBI took up the probe into Sushant's death case, "but it has not yet reached any conclusion". "It is also nearly 14 months since Sushant's death on June 14, 2020, and more than 300 days after the AIIMS panel ruled out the 'murder angle' in the case. Yet, the CBI is deliberately silent on this matter," Sawant said.

In direct posers, he asked the CBI to declare what progress has been made in the Sushant death probe of which the agency had made a big prestige issue and what is the current status of the enquiry.

"Is there any order of the Narendra Modi government to deliberately



keep such investigations in Maharashtra cases pending and inconclusive? Who is putting pressure on the CBI?" Sawant asked sharply.

He said that the CBI had taken over the case lodged by the Bihar Police, which had flouted the Criminal Procedure Code Section 177 while lodging the FIR.

Sawant pointed out that the Supreme Court had also expressed its satisfaction at the overall investiga-

tions by the Mumbai Police which was then probing the matter from all sides. "However, it was the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s political ploy to tarnish the image of the Mumbai police and destabilize the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. They used the then Bihar Director-General of Police Gupteshwar Pandey," Sawant said.

He accused the BJP of stooping to "a very low level" by openly hurling

allegations of murder and rape, and exploited the actor's unfortunate death for political gains in the Bihar elections last year.

The Congress leader recalled how certain BJP-run television channels were asked "to continuously report the murder angle" in the Sushant death case as part of its well-planned strategy to politically attack and topple the MVA government.

"The BJP leaders kept defaming Maharashtra and MVA government. The CBI and other agencies leaked false information. The BJP IT Cell created thousands of fake accounts on various social media to spread fake propaganda. The BJP must apologise to the people of Maharashtra for spoiling the state's image through this case," Sawant demanded.

He reiterated that the Centre is using various national investigation agencies like CBI, NIA, ED, NCB, etc, for furthering their own political agenda, undermining elected state governments, hounding the Opposition-ruled states and their leaders, thus making a mockery of democracy.

Want to re-open colleges for in-person classes this academic year: Samant

The Maharashtra government is trying to draw up a plan for re-opening colleges for in-person classes, state Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant said in Pune on Wednesday.

Team Absolute | Pune

As life returns to normal at a slow pace in almost all sectors affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, college students may also be able to return to classrooms soon. The state government is trying to draw up a plan for re-opening colleges for in-person classes, state Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant said in Pune on Wednesday.

Samant said he has asked senior officials from his department to conduct a meeting with district collectors, disaster management authorities and vice-chancellors, to prepare a plan for re-opening colleges in physical mode.

"I have received several requests from students and parents in this regard. We are going to try and start physical classes for this academic year. I have asked the two directors of higher education and technical education to hold meetings with district collectors, disaster management authorities and vice-chancellors. Since an university has a large area with several districts under it, and the Covid-19 situation in every district is different, we need to



chalk out a plan for reopening of colleges, depending on the situation on the ground. The report will be presented to me in a few days, after which we will take a decision... however, our efforts are to start colleges in physical mode for the current academic year," he said.

The minister acknowledged that for colleges to restart, it is important to open up hostels for students from rural areas, so that they can return to attend classes in colleges and universities. If students need to be vaccinated on a large scale, then universities have been advised to prepare plans for the same, said the minister.

Incidentally, when the administration of Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) had issued a circular on January 4 this year regarding re-opening of departments and colleges for in-person lectures, the state Higher and Technical Education Department had issued it a show-cause notice regarding the same.

According to the SPPU circular, lectures were to be started at university departments and the nearby 800-odd colleges in Pune, Nashik and Ahmednagar under the university, in a phase-wise manner. However, the state government issued the university a show-cause notice, asking it on what basis was the decision taken, since neither the state government nor the University Grants Commission had sent any instructions about starting physical lectures.

All Bombay HC judges, families, staff inoculated by BMC

The vaccination effort came even as the Bombay HC launched a hybrid system of physical and virtual hearings at the court premises from this week, which was being demanded for long and was lauded by lawyers and litigants.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation said on Thursday that it had administered the Covid-19 vaccines to all the judges



of the Bombay High Court, officers, staffers working there as well as their families.

The inoculation drive, which also included former judges, was carried out by the BMC A Ward. The BMC medical teams earned the appreciation of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta for the smooth conduct of the entire drive. Chief Justice Datta presented a letter of appreciation to the A Ward Medical Officer Prajakta Amberkar

after the drive ended.

The vaccination effort came even as the Bombay HC launched a hybrid system of physical and virtual hearings at the court premises from this week, which was being demanded for long and was lauded by lawyers and litigants. The lawyers have also been demanding further easing of restrictions on travel, especially for those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Maharashtra government to introduce policy for vacation rental homes

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra is drafting a 'vacation rental home' policy, given the changes in tourist preferences during the pandemic to stay in cozy residences in faraway places rather than hotel rooms, a senior official said.

The policy will help regulate the entire trade of vacation homes, which will be approved after visits from government officials and the police, and help curb the menace of unsuspecting tourists getting fleeced, the state's Principal Secretary (Tourism) Valsa Nair Singh, said speaking at an event organised by the IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Singh said there is a large demand for such homes in different parts of the state, where people are preferring to go stay in

already built but unused residences in faraway places rather than in hotel rooms. There are dedicated platforms that have such properties listed, she said adding that there have been instances of fleecing where bogus apps have taken payments for nonexisting properties which are discovered by the tourist only on reaching the spot. "We are in the process of drafting this policy. This will be a comprehensive policy, the place is checked, police have also checked before it is given permission," Singh said. Singh said the tourism department is planning to have a caravan parking bay at the base of the historic Raigad Fort, where the recreational vehicles can be parked by the tourists.

About a dozen entrepreneurs have come forward with plans on the caravan

front, she said adding that it will take up to two years to have a strong caravan touring culture in the state like the one seen in the west.

Maharashtra, which has a 750-km coastline, will have beach shacks by October, she said adding that there has been movement on the beach shack policy which was made public last year.

Sites have been identified and detailed plans set up, she said adding that the only missing aspect is coastal zone map compliance which will happen to open the shacks once the monsoons are over.

She said the response to the agro-tourism policy has been much better than what the government had expected and the government has also made it mandatory for educational institutions to take excursions at such properties.

No Proposal From Maharashtra For Local Train Travel Resumption: Union Minister

The suburban train services in the metropolis were suspended for general public in April this year due to the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Dave on Thursday said that local train services will be made available for common people in Mumbai once again if the state government submits a proposal to that effect.

The suburban train services in the metropolis were suspended for general public in April this year due to the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. At present, only government employees and those working in essential services are allowed to travel in local trains.

"The Ministry of Railways will approve the proposal of allowing common people to travel by local trains in Mumbai. However, we have not received any such communication from the state government so far. The railway administration is not against commencing local train serv-



ices for common people," Dave told a regional news channel in New Delhi. Several passenger associations have been saying that local trains

should be resumed for the general public. The BJP and the MNS have also been mounting pressure on the government to allow at least the fully

vaccinated passengers to travel by the suburban trains. The Maharashtra government on Monday evening announced further relaxations of coronavirus curbs in 25 districts showing a low positivity rate of the infection, extending the existing business timings of shops and allowing shopping malls to operate in these districts. However, the state government did not take any decision on allowing common people to travel by suburban trains in the state capital.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had said that day that allowing all segments of the society in Mumbai local trains would be difficult "in the first phase" as the easing of curbs is being done slowly.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, both the Central Railway and Western Railway used to ferry over 75 lakh commuters a day in over 3,000 suburban train services.

Consider "Common Card" To Fully Vaccinated For Travel: High Court To Maharashtra, Centre

The court said the state government should consider allowing people who have received both doses of the anti-COVID-19 vaccine to travel by local trains

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Thursday asked the Maharashtra government to think about identifying and separating those who have taken both doses of COVID-19 vaccine from the rest, and provide a "common card" to the fully inoculated people to allow them unrestricted travel and work.

The court said the state government should consider allowing people who have received both doses of the anti-COVID-19 vaccine to travel by local trains, and carry on with activities that were permitted before the pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni also said the state and the Union government must consider issuing a "common card" that identifies a citizen as fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and permits him or her

to travel and work unrestrained.

The bench was presiding over a bunch of public interest litigations seeking permission for lawyers, judicial clerks and staff, journalists, and other fully vaccinated people to travel in local trains in Mumbai. Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni, who appeared for the Maharashtra government, told the High Court that a letter from the State Disaster Management Authority will be issued for lawyers and registered judicial clerks, based on which the Railways will issue them passes permitting local train travel. The bench then referred to an interview with Maharashtra COVID-19 task force member Dr Shashank Joshi, published in a newspaper in the morning. Dr Joshi said in the interview that the state was yet to achieve the target of fully vaccinating at least 70 per cent of its population.

He said one-third of Maharashtra's population was still highly susceptible to getting infected by the coronavirus, and unrestricted local train travel, even for the fully vaccinated, could not be permitted yet as identifying the fully vaccinated was cumbersome, according to the High Court.

"If Dr Joshi says it can be done (train travel) subject to identification, it is for the state and the

Centre to identify the fully vaccinated (people)," the High Court said. "One-third of the population is still susceptible to the virus. Then, this one-third population should be separated from the two-third, or from the fully vaccinated. At least provide them with a card identifying them as fully vaccinated," the High Court said. The court said in some western nations, people used such cards for access to public transport.

"You can have a common card that can be used as an ID for everything allowed for the fully vaccinated, even foreign travel," the High Court said.

Kumbhakoni, and Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, who appeared for the Union government, said they will discuss the idea of a common card. The court directed the Maharashtra government to file an affidavit by August 12, submitting the proposed plan for permitting fully vaccinated citizens the use of local trains in the city.

It said it will consider all other issues raised in the above PILs on August 16.

"As we celebrate the country's independence on the 15th, let us hope on 16th we will get independence from all these issues too (restrictions on travel, trade imposed in the state in view of the pandemic)," the High Court said.

Maharashtra govt to start educational programmes for Class 1 to Class 8 on DD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Government has informed the Bombay high court that they will start dedicated educational programmes on Doordarshan (DD) for students from Class 1 to Class 8 to impart education during the pandemic.

Government pleader informed a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Girish Kulkarni which is hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) by National Association for Blind (NAB) and NGO 'Anampren' raising concerns over problems being faced by students with disabilities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The HC had suggested last week that the government should consider start-

ing dedicated television channel or radio station to impart education to children with special needs during the Covid 19 pandemic as there are many children who either do not have smart phones or network coverage. Besides the needs of these children would be different depending on their disability.

The government pleader informed the HC on Thursday that they have Gyan Ganga programme on DD's Sahayadri Channel which is for students from Class 9 to Class 12. However, the government pleader admitted that these programmes were not beneficial for children with hearing impairment. The Social Justice Department has asked DD to keep slot for one

programme for children with hearing impairment, said the government pleader.

Besides the education department is planning to start similar programme for students from Class 1 to Class 9 within a month.

Uday Warunjikar, advocate for NAB and NGO Anampren, said that so far the government doesn't have any programme for students from Class 1 to Class 8. HE said that a video bank for these students needs to be prepared. The HC has asked the petitioners to give their suggestions to the government on how the system can be improved. Rui Rodrigues, counsel for National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), said that they will look into the issue and find a solution.

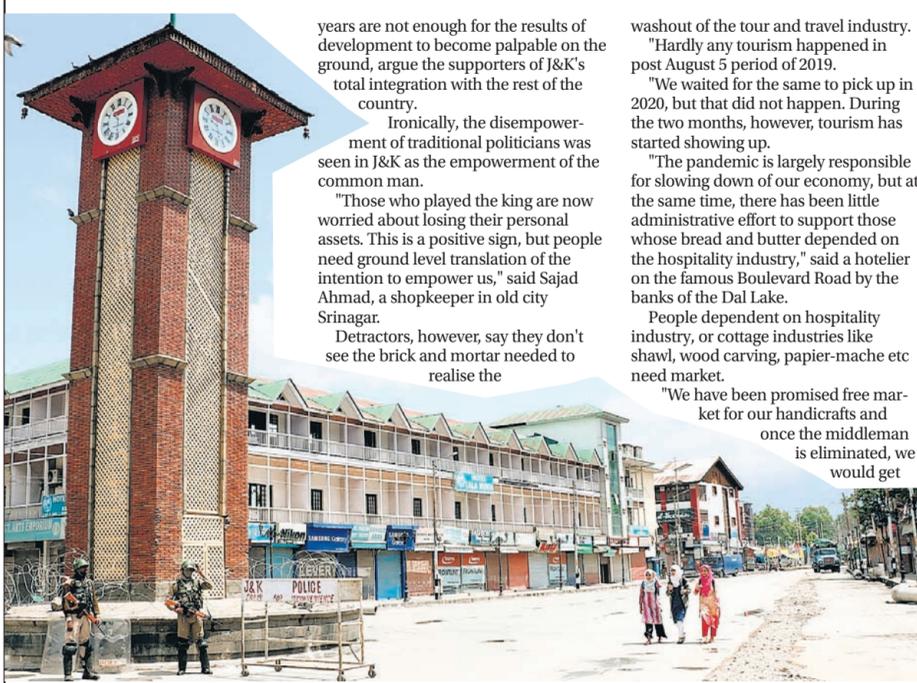


EDITOR'S SPECS

Indian firms should become responsible

Indian companies and public sector organisations that migrated workloads from on-premises data centres to cloud infrastructure could reduce their energy use and associated carbon footprint by nearly 80 per cent, a new report showed.

TWO YEARS AFTER ART 370'S ABROGATION, PEOPLE HOPEFUL OF 'NAYA KASHMIR'



Sheikh Qayoom

Two years after abrogation of Article 370, hope for a prosperous 'Naya Kashmir' is alive despite doomsday proponents calling it a 'pipe dream'.

years are not enough for the results of development to become palpable on the ground, argue the supporters of J&K's total integration with the rest of the country.

washout of the tour and travel industry. 'Hardly any tourism happened in post August 5 period of 2019.'

promised dream of making J&K the jewel in the country's crown. 'Not a single developmental milestone has been laid during the last two years.'

the full benefit of our labour," said Muhammad Raza, a papier-mache artisan in Srinagar.

MISSION 2023: RAJ BJP TO FOLLOW MODELS OF GUJARAT, K'TAKA, MP & HIMACHAL



Archana Sharma

Learning and unlearning might be the new norm of the corporate world but this corporate formula is being followed by the Rajasthan BJP now to bring in fresh waves of changes in the desert state and pave the way for victory in the assembly polls in 2023.

Pak Chief Justice takes note of mob attack on Hindu temple

Rahim Yar Khan | New Delhi

Chief Justice of Pakistan, Gulzar Ahmed, on Thursday took notice of the attack on a Hindu temple by a charged mob in Bhong village of Punjab's Rahim Yar Khan district, a statement said.

Supreme Court, the Dawn reported.

He fixed the matter for hearing before the court on August 6 (Friday) in Islamabad, and directed the Punjab Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police to appear for the hearing along with a report.

the area after Deputy Commissioner Khuram Shehzaad and District Police Officer Asad Sarfraz visited the town. On the complaint of a cleric, Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, of Darul Uloom Arabia Taleemul Quran, the Bhong police had registered a case against the boy (who was not named) under Section 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the Pakistan Penal Code on July 25, the report said.

ed the public in the town on Wednesday and got all shops closed in protest there. A video clip that went viral on social media showed charged people wielding clubs and rods storming the temple and smashing its glass doors, windows and lights, and damaging the ceiling fans and idols, the Dawn reported.

US wants Pak to keep borders open for Afghan refugees

Team Absolute | New Delhi

US State Department official has said that Washington wants Pakistan to keep its borders with Afghanistan open for Afghan refugees, the media reported on Thursday.



allow Afghans to stay in the country for up to 14 months before they are re-settled in the US. During his visit to Washington earlier this week, Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf said that arrangements should be made to keep displaced Afghans inside their country instead of pushing them into his country.

refugees." The Turkish government has also criticised the US plan to use third countries to re-settle Afghans, saying the move would cause a "great migration crisis" in the region.

Lord Vishnu idol made of black stone recovered in B'desh

Dhaka | Agencies

An idol of Lord Vishnu weighing about 12 kg has been recovered from the Daudkandi upazila of Cumilla in Bangladesh. The height of the black stone idol is about 23 inches and its width is 9.5 inches.



the house of Abu Yusuf, a teacher in Boro Goali village in Daudkandi upazila of Cumilla at 9:30 pm on Monday. Yusuf found the statue one-and-a-half months ago, but he didn't inform the police.

WILDFIRE ENGULFS POWER PLANT IN TURKEY, PROMPTS EVACUATION

Ankara: A thermal power plant in the southwestern Turkish province of Mugla was engulfed by a wildfire, prompting authorities to evacuate people in nearby towns. Gendarmerie forces ordered the residents of several neighbourhoods in the Milas district to leave the area immediately.

Iran's new president calls for extensive ties with neighbours

Tehran | Agencies

Iran's newly-elected President Ebrahim Raisi has said establishing extensive interaction with the neighbouring countries constitutes one of his government's main foreign policy principles.



Raisi said that Iran aims to develop relations with Oman "in all political, economic, social and cultural fields."

rooted relationship" between Oman and Iran has become "a model between countries in the region." The Omani envoy also expressed hope to have Raisi as a guest in Muscat "as soon as possible."

PARIS HILTON WANTS TO BE A 'SUPPORTIVE AND FUN' MOTHER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Socialite and entrepreneur Paris Hilton will be a "supportive and fun" mother when she has children. Hilton was recently falsely reported to be expecting her first child, and while she's not actually pregnant, she does have aspirations to become a parent in the future, reports femalefirst.co.uk. She said: "I want to be like my mom - like their best friend, where they feel like they can come and talk to me about anything. Very supportive and fun and playful. I can't wait just to do all the fun kid things together and have amazing birthday parties for them. Celebrate Santa Claus for Christmas and the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy and just all of those really cute, special moments a I just want my children to feel so loved and so lucky and happy." Hilton, who is engaged to beau Carter Reum, has already frozen her eggs to ensure she can have children when she's ready. She said: "I hate needles and shots and having to inject yourself several times a day. It's just painful and uncomfortable, and I hated that part.

But I'm so happy that we did it. We have tons of eggs and all of the kids ready to go." The star underwent egg extraction in order to try In vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, and admitted it was "very emotional". Speaking to Delish magazine, Hilton said: "It is a hard process and definitely is very emotional. But I'm just so lucky that I have such an amazing partner in Carter. He's like no one I've ever met in my life before, the first person that I've let into my heart that I trust completely. He's my biggest supporter and just lifts me up and makes me feel so safe. It's just amazing to finally feel what real love is. I don't think I ever experienced it before."



KOURTNEY SHARES INTIMATE SNAPS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Kourtney Kardashian continued to outdo herself with regards to intimate glimpses into her relationship with Travis Barker.

On Wednesday evening the 42-year-old reality star looked ready to disrobe as she sat crouched on the bathroom floor in an undone bathrobe.

Nothing but her newly chopped locks covering her breasts, the very racy snap naturally featured Barker, 45, who also documented the up close and personal moment.

The POOSH founder sat cross legged on the floor in front of a mirror wearing what looked to be the Blink 182 drummer's robe at his house.

She tried to cover herself with strategically placed locks of hair over her chest and also flashed a hint of her other private parts. In a second robe snap she moved the garment down to her waist exposing both of her breasts and freshly chopped hair. The rockstar - who she revealed had cut her hair - stood at the vanity in a hoodie and sweatshorts.

Ten days of quarantine, she captioned the series of images - which also included snippets of flowers, things the pair had been watching on TV and a S'more.

Barker commented on the snap '10 days with you,' as he posted an emoji of a man and woman separated by a red heart. Kourtney responded '@travisbarker no one else.'



Margot Robbie loves playing Harley

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Margo Robbie, who currently awaits the release of "The Suicide Squad", says she loves playing Harley Quinn and added that she doesn't know when she will ever get sick of playing the character. Warner Bros Pictures is all set to release "The Suicide Squad", directed by James Gunn in India in select cities on August 5, along with the US.

Talking about her role, Robbie said: "I love playing Harley. I don't know when I'll ever get sick of playing Harley, she's such a catalyst of chaos."

She added: "And every time a different director approaches the character, I think they gravitate towards certain aspects of the character that find intriguing or interesting, and then I get to explore all these different angles of Harley." Describing director James Gunn, Robbie said that he is clearly a "comic book fan".

"So reading his script I could see that the character was in the hands of someone who respects the source material and was excited about incorporating whatever he could for the comic book fans. And his humour is incredibly weird and specific, which is perfect for Harley and all of these characters, but there's also a lot of heart; everyone gets their moment," she said. The 31-year-old actress also tagged Gunn as a "visionary director".

Robbie said: "He pulls off the bizarre in such a spectacular and cinematic way. I think there's a particular tone to a James Gunn film, which was evident in the script and it felt evident on set. I think people are going to freak out when they see this film because it's huge and insane and fun and funny and weird, the music's incredible and it's emotional. It's just such an experience," she added.



Denise Van Outen may return to 'The Big Breakfast'



WHAT IS WRONG WITH 'THE ROCK'S' ABS?

Los Angeles | Agencies

He may have the most impressive physique in Hollywood. But there is one particular area if muscles that aren't quite 'perfect' enough for Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. The 48-year-old actor and his Jungle Cruise co-star Emily Blunt were left shocked when he was asked what was 'wrong' with his abs during a

fun interview. Dwayne and the 38-year-old British actress took part in a Q & A segment for Wired, in which they answered 'The Web's Most Searched Questions' about each other. Emily's jaw dropped when she read one of the prompts printed on a whiteboard as she asked: 'What is the deal with The Rock's...flabby tummy?' The question, which actually read, 'What's wrong with The Rock's abs?' seemed to surprise the pair who both burst out laughing.

The question left Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt shocked, when asked

London | Agencies

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of Channel 4's morning show, The Big Breakfast. And despite being off the air since 2002, the show's former host Denise Van Outen has teased that something's in the pipeline to mark the occasion in 2022. Speaking about the decision to revive it for a one-off special in September as part of Channel 4's Black To Front day, Denise, 47, also weighed in on the announcement that AJ Odudu will host alongside Mo Gilligan. 'AJ is a good friend of mine. I'm thrilled she's doing it, she'll be great. And it'll be so nice to watch. It's like a trip down memory lane - back into the old house. I'm not sure what it's like in there now,' Denise said. Earlier this year, Denise - who hosted then show with Johnny Vaughan - told MailOnline that they were hoping to return.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Amelia Hamlin

NATION CELEBRATES FIRST OLYMPIC HOCKEY MEDAL IN 41 YEARS



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Thursday proved to be one of the most memorable days in the history of Indian hockey. The men's team, led by Manpreet Singh, defeated Germany 5-4 to win bronze at the Tokyo Olympics. This is India's first-ever medal at the Olympics since 1980 Moscow and 12th overall in the showpiece event. Twitter has been swarmed with congratulatory wishes for the team. Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed the win as historic. Here is a look at major reactions on the social media: Prime Minister

Narendra Modi: Historic! A day that will be etched in the memory of every Indian. Congratulations to our Men's Hockey Team for bringing home the Bronze. With this feat, they have captured the imagination of the entire nation, especially our youth. India is proud of our Hockey team. President Ram Nath Kovind: Congratulations to our men's hockey team for winning an Olympic Medal in hockey after 41 years. The team showed exceptional skills, resilience & determination to win. This historic victory will start a new era in hockey and will inspire the youth to take up and excel in the sport.

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu: Heartiest Congratulations to the Indian Hockey team for winning the Bronze medal in a keenly fought contest against Germany! The team displayed excellent professionalism and the entire nation is proud of their achievement. Shahrulkh Khan: Wow!! Indian Men's Hockey Team Congratulations. Resilience and skill at its peak. What an exciting match. Actor-politician Kamal Haasan: After 41 years, our Indian men's hockey team script history by bringing home a medal. I congratulate our guys who have reignited our national sport with this victory.

Steely determination of the Olympic silver medalist a.k.a. 'Khargosh'



Chetan Sharma | New Delhi

At a time when athletes/coaches/staff members at the Chhatrasal Stadium were concerned about their image and a police inquiry following Sushil Kumar's arrest on murder charges, there was only one wrestler whose laser-sharp focus was pretty much "clear". I remember calling up Ravi Kumar Dahiya, when Sushil was evading arrest and was on the run, to know what was going on in the Akhada? I have known Ravi since 2010. He is a man of few words. You ask him a long question and he will just reply with a terse yes or no. It actually requires so much patience to make him blurt out more. However, the rising star of the Indian wrestling skyline is an altogether different person when he takes to the mat. Ravi was all of 11 years at that time. After a gap of two

years, I saw Ravi training for the first time. Mahabali Satpal was instructing a clutch of young boys. Dahiya's brush with fame came when he won a silver in the 55 kg freestyle category at the 2015 Junior World Wrestling Championships in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. In his World Championships debut in 2019, Dahiya defeated European champion Arsen Harutyunyan in the round of 16, and the 2017 world champion Yuki Takahashi in the quarterfinal, to earn one of the six available quota places for the 2020 Summer Olympics. He settled for a bronze after losing to defending champion and eventual gold medalist Zaur Uguev in the semifinal round. Everytime when I would ask Sushil who does he think can win an Olympic medal this time, the first name would be Ravi. "Yeh jitega gold," he said. When Yoga guru Ramdev visited the Chhatrasal Stadium last year, I also happened to be there when Sushil introduced Ravi to him. "Guru ji, miliye Olympic ke humare gold medallist se," he said. His close friend Deepak calls him 'Khargosh'. Deepak said that he has never seen such a simple guy in his entire life. "No party, no new clothes, nothing... just training. I call him Khargosh," Deepak said.

HARYANA ANNOUNCES RS 4 CR REWARD

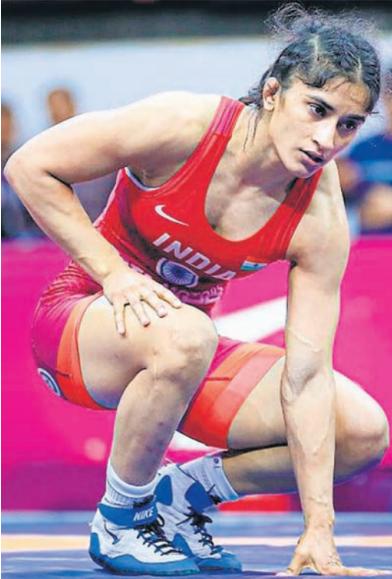
Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday congratulated wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya for bagging silver in men's 57 kg freestyle wrestling at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics. Ravi Kumar won the silver after losing 4-7 to Zaur Uguev of Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) in the final on Thursday. Khattar, who watched the match on television, announced a reward of Rs 4 crore for the wrestler along with a Class I government job, as per the state's policy.

Substitute Simranjeet stars in India's bronze medal win

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In terms of the overall impact on the team, Simranjeet Singh's entry in the Indian men's hockey team at the Tokyo Olympic Games was like that of Italians Paolo Rossi, in the 1982 World Cup, and Salvatore Schillaci, in the 1990 edition of football's biggest tournament. Simranjeet came into the squad as a reserve player and ended up becoming the central character as he scored two goals against Germany that helped India win the bronze medal in Tokyo Olympics on Thursday. Simranjeet was not in the original squad of 16

that coach Graham Reid had announced in June but was roped in as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to expand the squad and allow two reserve players to become part of the contingent. Simranjeet made the most of his opportunities with a stellar role in the match against Spain. He revitalised the forward line and with his incisive runs, helped open up the rival defence. So, when he got his chance to play, Simranjeet thought he would make the most of it and prove his worth to everyone.



Wrestler Vinesh Phogat loses in quarterfinals

Tokyo | Agencies

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat lost the quarterfinal bout of the women's freestyle 53kg category to Vanesa Kaladzinskay of Belarus by fall at the Tokyo Olympic Games on Thursday. The loss brings an end to Vinesh's hopes of clinching gold in Tokyo, though she can still win bronze through the repechage route. The 28-year-old Vanesa was the first one to go on the offensive. She started off with a two-pointer and took a 5-2 lead at the end of the first period. In the second period, Vinesh got a leg hold and tried to get the

back of her opponent. But Vanesa made a strong defence and scored two points on the counter. A successful review from Vinesh saw the score reverted from 7-2 to 5-3. Vanesa got around Vinesh again, taking two points. In her last move, Vanesa got Vinesh on the mat and pinned her shoulders down to win the match by fall. It brought the match to an end where Vinesh had no answer to Vanesa's attacks and relentless pressure. The 26-year-old Vinesh will now hope for Vanesa to reach the final so that she gets a chance at winning the bronze medal through repechage.

ODISHA CM STANDS TALL FOR HOCKEY IN INDIA

Bhubaneswar: When India won the hockey bronze in Tokyo, many praised Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who was the goalkeeper of Doon School hockey team, for singularly supporting the Indian team since 2018. When Sahara backed out from sponsoring the national men's and women's hockey teams, it was the Odisha government led by Patnaik that decided to sponsor both for the next five years. At that time, many expressed surprise over this move.



The chief minister was a hockey player during his school days. He was the goalkeeper of the Doon School team. He did not stop only with sponsoring the Indian hockey teams. He followed up the action by taking steps to promote hockey in the state. The Patnaik government has developed a world-class hockey stadium in Bhubaneswar and successfully hosted several national and international tournaments, such as the Champions Trophy (2014), Hockey World League (2017) and Odisha Men's Hockey World Cup (2018). According to a government source, the state will invest more than Rs 350 crore on the development of the Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium and practice pitch in Rourkela, and the expansion of the Kalinga Stadium. These two stadiums will host the next edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup in 2023.

1st Test: Anderson strikes twice as India end rain-hit Day 2 at 125/4

Nottingham | Agencies

India lost four wickets for 15 runs to end second day of the first Test at 125/4 and let England back in to the match after openers Rohit Sharma (36) and KL Rahul (batting 57) had given them a strong start putting on 97 runs for the first wicket on Thursday. England pace bowler James Anderson turned the clock back as he picked two crucial wickets of Cheteshwar Pujara (4) and Virat Kohli (0) to send jitters in the Indian camp before play was stopped due to rain, just 8.4

overs after lunch. India had dismissed England for 183 on Wednesday. More importantly, openers Sharma and Rahul had ensured that England bowlers couldn't exploit the new ball. They had buckled down and almost saw off the first session of the second day before Sharma played a hook shot straight into the hands of fine leg fielder at the

stroke of lunch. After lunch, it was mayhem as Anderson induced edges from No. 3 Pujara and No. 4 Kohli off successive deliveries. India were reduced to 104/3. Soon after that, India's No. 5 Ajinkya Rahane was run out for five with the team score on 112/4. At the draw of stumps, Rishabh Pant was unbeaten on seven with Rahul on 57.

Brief scores (Day 2, Stumps)
England 183 all out in 65.4 overs vs India 125/4 in 46.1 overs (KL Rahul batting 57, Rohit Sharma 36, J Anderson 2/15).

US shot putter Ryan Crouser wins men's gold

Tokyo | Agencies

World record holder Ryan Crouser of the United States claimed the men's shot put title at the Tokyo Olympics on Thursday. Crouser took the lead all the way, and threw 23.30 metres in his sixth attempt, refreshing the Olympic record. Crouser's compatriot Joe Kovacs bagged the silver with 22.65m, while Tomas Walsh of New Zealand took bronze with 22.47 metres. Pedro Pichardo of Portugal took an outright victory in men's triple jump while China took a historical silver on Thursday. Pichardo only succeeded in his first three attempts -- 17.61 metres in the first two and 17.98 in the third attempt -- but it was



enough to secure the gold medal. China improved from the bronze medal in Rio 2016 as Zhu Yaming took silver with a personal best of 17.57 metres, the best result for China at the Olympic Games. Hugues Fabrice Zango won bronze, the first-ever Olympic medal for Burkina Faso. Jamaican hurdler Hansle Parchment took a surprising victory in the men's 110m hurdles final on Thursday. Race favourite Grant Holloway of USA came out quickly but Parchment overtook him through the final hurdle and crossed the line first with 13.04 seconds. Holloway took silver with 13.09 and Ronald Levy of Jamaica won bronze with 13.10.

Will give everything to win our first Olympic medal: Rani

Tokyo | Agencies

Women's team captain Rani Rampal is confident that India will return with two medals in the hockey competition of the Olympics. The women's team takes on Great Britain in the bronze medal play-off a day after the men's team defeated Germany 5-4 to earn the third place. "We played really well against Argentina [in the 1-2 semi-final loss]. However, it was disappointing not to book a place in the Olympic final. We have performed

really well in this tournament and we still have a chance to win a medal. We are confident about our individual games and we will give everything we have to win our first Olympic medal. We have a chance to make history on Friday," said Rani on the eve of the bronze medal match. Indian women's team had qualified for the Olympic Games semi-finals for the first time in history, after defeating Australia in the quarter-finals. If they win on Friday, this will be their first ever medal. The skipper said that the team will



look to stay in the moment and not get excited by the occasion. "It'll be all about staying in the moment for us. We have to follow our processes and if we execute our plans properly, we will be able to get a good result in the bronze medal match. We defeated Great Britain in our last encounter against them in February 2020 so we will take a lot of confidence from that match," said the forward. Chief coach Sjoerd Marijne expressed that the Indian team played with the right spirit in the

semi-final against Argentina. "We were really competitive against Argentina. It was about converting the small opportunities and we converted a penalty corner into a goal. We were very close so the loss is hurting the team very much, but now it's about recovery and looking forward to the next match. We can still win a medal. I am proud of the way the girls performed against Argentina. They played an Olympic semi-final for the first time and it's not easy. We played with the right spirit and I am very happy with that," said Marijne.



Pooja Hegde: Telugu film industry takes me as their own

Yashika Mathur | Hyderabad

Actress Pooja Hegde might be working in three different film industries at the moment, but she never differentiated between them. The actress will soon be seen in Bollywood with "Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali" and "Cirkus", in Tollywood with "Radhe Shyam" and Kollywood with "Beast". In an interview with IANS, the actress, who has been working in various language industries for a while, says that a good mix of everything has worked for her. "There are pan-India films and then there is another way to do it where you become a pan-India artist and I think for me it's been a mix of both and that is what has helped me achieve that," says Pooja.

She adds: "I feel like Telugu takes me as their own and now I am doing Tamil and Hindi. I always wanted to be an Indian actor. I never wanted to differentiate between the industries and have treated them all of them like my own. There are films which are pan-India, like a 'Radhe Shyam' with Prabhas and there are other films which have been called a pan-India films but my approach has always been to do good content and earn the love of the audience in each area that you are going and that is what makes you recognisable." Pooja has enjoyed immense commercial success, especially with her Tollywood projects.



Sanjay Dutt met Army jawaans while shooting Bhuj: The Pride Of India!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sanjay Dutt is renowned for gracing every movie with his evergreen personality. His upcoming character as Ranchordas Pagi in the much anticipated Bhuj: The Pride Of India Sanjay Dutt has created quite a stir post the trailer release. The actor has not only evoked immense patriotic feelings amongst audiences but also given each dialogue an emotional depth!

We hear that Dutt had first-hand experience of warfare while shooting for the film. While shooting some of the critical war sequences in Suratgarh Army Range

in Rajasthan, the actor met an entire army battalion. The honorable Army men spent a lot of time with Sanjay Dutt talking about their war experiences and sharing each other's journey which was an inspiring conversation for Sanjay. A Select Media Holdings LLP Production. Presented by T series and Ajay Devgn Ffilms, Bhuj: The Pride of India is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Kumar Mangat Pathak, Ginny Khanuja, Vajir Singh, and Bunny Sanghavi. The film has been written by Abhishek Dudhaiya, Raman Kumar, Ritesh Shah, and Pooja Bhavoria directed by Abhishek Dudhaiya, and is all set to release on 13th August 2021 only for all subscribers of Disney+ Hotstar.



Playing Vikram Batra was challenging: Sidharth

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sidharth Malhotra was very keen to bring the story of Captain Vikram Batra, hero of the Kargil War, to life. He says playing the Param Vir Chakra recipient on the silver screen was not only a huge responsibility but also very challenging.

Sidharth not only met Vikram Batra's family to discuss the idea of the film titled 'Shershaah', but he also brought the story to Bollywood to showcase the journey of the personality to the masses.

Talking about the role, Sidharth said: "When I heard about Vikram Batra's life, I knew his story needed to be shown to the world and hopefully inspire everyone. I think I am very fortunate to have spent time with his family and friends learning about him and it has played a major role in prepping for my role." The actor said that the uniform and the name tag on it would change Sidharth every single time he would face the camera.

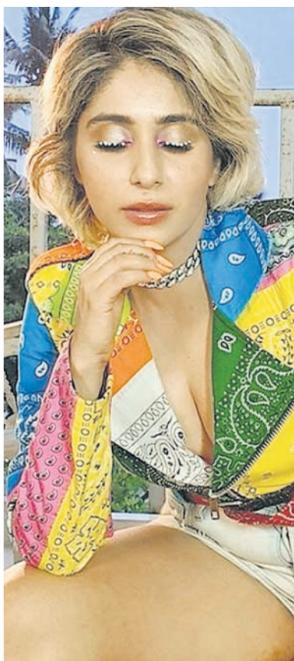
He said: "Every time I used to go in front of the camera wearing an Army uniform with Vikram Batra's name on it, it used to change me. I think playing him on the silver screen was not only a huge responsibility but also very challenging as an actor."

Why Neha Bhasin wanted to do 'Bigg Boss OTT'?

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Known for belting out hits such as 'Jag ghoomeya', 'Swag se swagat' and 'Dhunki' among many others, singer Neha Bhasin, who is the first confirmed contestant of 'Bigg Boss OTT', has talked about why she has taken part in the 15th season of the controversial reality show. Talking about what made her say yes to Bigg Boss OTT, Neha quipped: "Insanity."

"That's half joking and half not. Bigg Boss has been trying to contact me for the past 4 to 5 years. At that time I did not connect with the platform," she told reporter. The 38-year-old revealed that she has never seen an episode of the show, hosted by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan on television. "I have never watched a single episode though I have seen a lot of clips on Instagram in the past one year. Being a singer I did not see the connect at that point. Having said that, when I took a meeting with the team, something struck me about the theme. I liked it," added the 'Bajre Da Sitta' hit-maker. She added: "I think that makes a huge difference when you talk to the people who are making a show...that caught me thinking." Tagging herself as a "fearless person", Neha wanted to experiment this time.



Shalini Pandey opens up on her transformation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shalini Pandey, who is all set to make her Bollywood debut in the Ranveer Singh starrer 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar', says she has always been confident of her physique and never paid attention to what people were saying about it.

Shalini, who shot to fame with her performance in "Arjun Reddy", says that she has never felt the pressure to look a certain way for the industry.

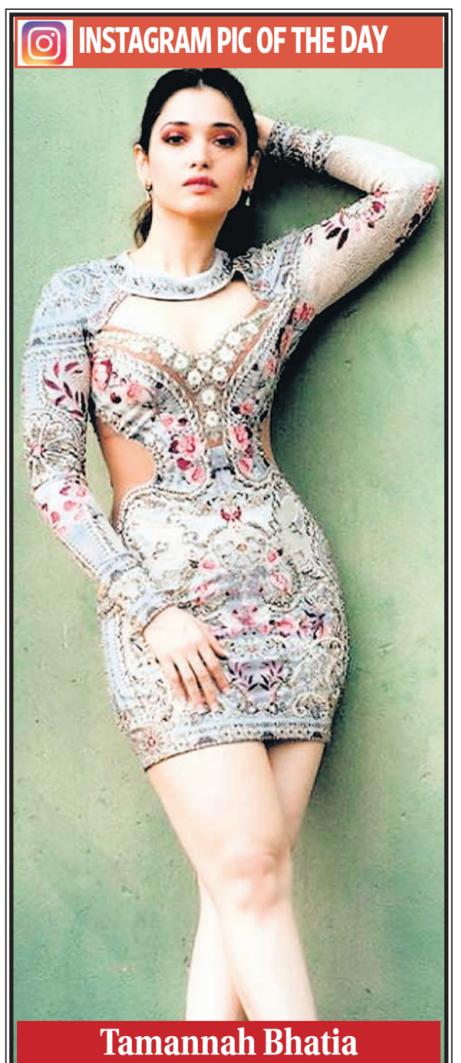
She said: "I have always been confident of my physique and I never really paid attention to what people were saying about it. I loved whichever phase I was in physically and never really put pressure on myself to be a certain body type."

She admits that women are unnecessarily scrutinised for how they look.

"I feel women are subjected to a lot of pressure to be a certain way physically and that's not right. So, I don't really look at this as a transformation. I look at it as a phase that has been achieved for how I needed to be seen on screen for my role. However, I'm happy about how I'm looking right now and feeling good in my head too," Shalini said. She shared that she has been health conscious all her life.

The actress said: "I have mostly been a healthy eater almost all my life. I was always into sports and I started swimming since the 5th standard. I was into a lot of sports actually like badminton, volleyball and others. I was quite an outdoor kind of a kid. So yes, I have been a fitness freak ever since."

Shalini is excited for her film "Jayeshbhai Jordaar" releasing on the big screen.



Tamannah Bhatia

AAMIR & RAJU HIRANI IN KASHMIR, TO LAUNCH POLICY FOR SHOOTING FRIENDLY J&K

Mumbai: Aamir Khan, Rajkumar Hirani and producer Mahaveer Jain will join Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha in Srinagar on Thursday to launch a new film policy to make the union territory a favourite shooting-friendly destination.

Earlier, a delegation of leading filmmakers like Imtiaz Ali, Nitesh Tiwari, Dinesh Vijan, Ekta Kapoor, Ashwiny Iyer, Ssanjay Tripathy, led by Jain met Sinha and Principle Secretary to the LG Nitishwar Kumar in Mumbai and shared their suggestions to draft this new film policy to encourage film-shooting in Jammu and Kashmir. The development comes few days after Aamir was shooting in Ladakh for his upcoming film "Laal Singh Chaddha".

