

# absolute india

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**Notice**  
On the occasion of Independence Day, Absolute India office will remain closed on 15th August 2021. Next issue will be published on 17th August 2021. Happy Independence Day.  
Editor

**Honorary Captain rank awarded to PVC awardee**

New Delhi: Param Vir Chakra awardee Subedar Major (Honorary Lieutenant) Yogendra Singh Yadav, has been awarded with Honorary Captain rank on Saturday, on the eve of 75th Independence Day. Yadav was just 19 when he was awarded the country's highest military award for his bravery during Kargil conflict. As many as 337 serving non-commissioned Indian Army personnel were awarded with Honorary Captain and 1,358 were awarded with Honorary Lieutenant ranks. The Indian Army's Honorary Commission (Honorary Captain and Honorary Lieutenant) is granted to serving Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) on Independence Day and Republic Day in their last year of service as recognition of their exemplary service and contribution.



## TECH STARTUPS COME OF AGE AS INDIA TURNS 75

Taking the success story further, India is going through a tech IPO (initial public offering) boom as it commemorates the 75 years of Independence.

- While the pandemic-hit 2020 saw the emergence of 11 new unicorns (Unacademy, Pine Labs, FirstCry, Zenoti, Nykaa, Postman, Zerodha, Razorpay, Cars24, Dailyhunt and Gance), the year 2021 has already witnessed a whopping 21 startups which are now valued at more than \$1 billion.
- The 21 startups have raised over \$20 billion to date. This month, BharatPe, Mindtickle, upGrad and CoinDCX entered the unicorn club, scripting a never-seen-before rally in the country.

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

While the country witnessed several key industries bearing the brunt of the Covid onslaught, the Indian tech startup ecosystem grew by leaps and bounds owing to a strong smartphone-based app economy and an ever-evolving digital landscape in the 75th year of Independence.

From Zomato and Paytm to online insurance marketplace Policybazaar, from logistics services company Delhivery to fashion platform Nykaa and Car Trade Tech, it is raining IPOs from the startup and unicorn club in the country.

According to a Nasscom-Zinnov report, India is on track to have a 50-plus strong unicorn club this year, after adding over 1,600 tech startups in 2020.

"Covid-19 has accelerated digital

adoption and the shift to online in the country. This has created new opportunities for tech start-ups that are capitalising on this opportunity with rapid digital acceleration and a shift to software-as-a-service (SaaS)-based solutions," according to the report.

According to Prabhu Ram, Head, Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), at Gurgaon-based CyberMedia Research (CMR), the golden age of Indian startups is here -- from consumer apps to spacetech, from edtech to mobility -- originating not just in the traditional startup hotspots, but in the small towns of 'Aspirational India' as well.

Another glory lies in the fact that the Indian tech startups have begun to shun Chinese investments as desi corporates and wealthy individuals, along with investors from



other countries, have come onboard to fund the homegrown firms. The new-age consumer tech-driven startups, which touched the daily lives of millions during the pandemic, have joined the investment bandwagon and are raking in the moolah.



## Olympians, corona warriors to be part of I-Day celebration at Red Fort

**Team Absolute** | New Delhi

Olympians and corona warriors, who played a vital role in fighting the invisible enemy -- Covid 19, would be part of the 75th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort in the national Capital on Sunday. For the first time ever, this year two Mi-17 IV helicopters will shower flower petals during the flag hoisting.

The Ministry of Defence said Olympians, including Gold medalist Neeraj Chopra, have been invited at the flag hoisting ceremony.

In Tokyo, India recorded its best-ever medal haul at the Olympics by bagging a total of seven medals - one Gold, two Silver and four Bronze.

To honour the corona warriors, who played a vital role in fighting Covid-19 infec-

tions, a separate block on the southern side of the rampart has been created.

For the first time ever this year, as soon as the National Flag is hoisted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, flower petals will be showered at the venue by two Mi-17 IV helicopters of the Indian Air Force in 'Amrut Formation'.

Meanwhile, security across the national capital has been beefed up. Anti-drone systems and snipers on high-rise buildings have been deployed. The Delhi Police have deployed nearly 5,000 police personnel across the Red Fort. All the entry and exit points in Delhi will be regulated and closed the moment the Prime Minister leaves his residence for Red Fort. Delhi will be a no-fly zone till the time celebrations are over.



## India shines in energy transition with strong renewable path

India has taken several initiatives, including setting up of the International Solar Alliance, for raising the domestic renewable energy target to 450 GW by 2030 and putting in place an ambitious National Hydrogen Mission and continuing efforts to decouple its emissions from economic growth.

With the total installed renewable energy capacity reaching 100 GW, India now stands fourth in the world in terms of installed renewable capacity, fifth in solar and fourth in wind in terms of installed capacity.

According to Central Electricity Authority (CEA) projections, instead of 40 per cent, India will have 63 per cent of installed capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2029-30.

**Vishal Gulati** | New Delhi

India is shining in energy transition by treading a strong renewable energy path post-2015 Paris Agreement as it witnesses a step-up in investments in solar energy. Additionally, there is a significant slowdown in investments in thermal power plants.

Energy capacity in India, excluding large hydropower, has crossed the milestone of 100 GW or 100,000 MW, about 26 per cent of the total capacity, a turning point in the history of renewables as India is celebrating 75th Independence Day.

Coincidentally, this milestone came at a time when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report was launched citing the need for urgent climate actions collectively to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees. The global surface temperature is already about 1.1 degrees higher today than in the period 1850-1900.

India, which accounts for nine per cent of emerging market electricity demand and 20 per cent of

expected demand growth, illustrates the speed and scale of change, says the latest report by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and the financial think tank Carbon Tracker.

From less than 20GW of solar in 2010 it has grown to 96GW of solar, wind biomass and small hydro in May 2021. Including large hydropower and renewables now provide 142GW or 37 per cent of India's power capacity.

It says the demand for fossil fuel generation reached a plateau in 2018, and fell in 2019 and 2020. While fossil fuel demand might again increase in the near-term to meet latent electricity demand, India has demonstrated how a double leapfrog -- connecting nearly all households to electricity and its renewable energy rollout -- can be driven with policy priorities and market design. Now India has a target of installing 175 GW of wind and solar energy by 2022. If achieved, that would be close to 50 per cent of India's current total installed power capacity.

## 'End gender-based pay disparities, nurture creative freedom'

**Arundhuti Banerjee** | Mumbai

If the BAFTA-nominated young Bollywood actor Adarsh Gaurav gets an opportunity to change anything about India, it is the persistence of pay disparities based on gender. Gaurav started acting from a young age and has appeared in films such as 'My Name Is Khan', 'Mom' and the short film 'Rukh' alongside Manoj Bajpayee, but he was acclaimed for his character 'Balram Halwai' in the Oscar-nominated film, 'The White Tiger'. It was this role that got Gaurav the BAFTA nomination for Leading Actor.

Continuing on the subject of gender-based pay disparities, he said, "If I only talk about the principal actors of a film, whether male or female, both of them are

working for an equal number of days and putting in an equal amount of work based on the demands of the characters they play. "Then why just because one is a man and the other is a woman, there should be a pay disparity? I know pay disparities exist everywhere but being an actor I can only talk about our industry. Pay disparities based on gender exists and I think we should put an end to that." Gaurav also spoke up in favour of "the freedom of creative expression". As an artiste, he said, he felt strongly about industry practice of making remake films.



"If we wish to build a better society, we need to stop gender-based pay disparities," Gaurav said. "We're constantly talking about gender equality and there are many areas that are needed to be worked on, including changing our mindset, but I would like to stress on the issue of pay disparities. It exists even in the film industry."

## TALLEST BUILDING IN US TO BE LIT IN INDIAN TRICOLOUR TODAY

WASHINGTON | Agencies

The iconic One World Trade Center, the tallest building in the US standing on the site of the 9/11 terror attacks, will be lit up in the Indian flags tri colours to commemorate the 75th Independence Day on August 15. As part of the celebrations, other installations of the Durst Organization in New York at One Bryant Park and One Five One, will also be lit up with the tricolours.

The lighting would turn on at sunset (New York City time) on August 15 on the spire of the One World Trade Center, One Bryant Park and One Five One and remain lit until 2 a.m. the next day.

Additionally, the Indian tricolour would be visible on the podium of the World Trade Center. The SAEF has encouraged the Indian diaspora community to visit the podium.



## 'We can give world a glimpse of Golden India with ancient technologies'

**Archana Sharma** | Jaipur

Ruma Devi, a fashion designer from Rajasthan's Barmer district who has made around 22,000 women self-dependent by giving them decent jobs despite studying till just the eighth standard, feels that the Indians have abundant knowledge which needs to be put in practice to get a glimpse of Golden India.

"Our Indian roots had abundant knowledge and technologies which are forgotten in the present era. There is a need to put the ancient technologies into practice in order to give the world a glimpse of Golden India," she said.

Ruma's client list includes eminent designers from across the world who have been visiting Barmer to work with her.

Her exquisite hand embroidery has attracted many clients, including fashion designers Anita Dongre, Bibi Russell, Abraham Thakore, Rohit Kamra, Manish Saksena and many others, both from India and overseas.

Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan had hosted her in the popular show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', following which her story has

become widely popular.

Ruma had won the 'Designer of the year' title at the Textiles Fair India 2019 besides receiving the Nari Shakti National Award in 2018 from President Ram Nath Kovind for transforming the lives of thousands of women in and around Barmer district.

This fashionista who emerged from the rustic rural lanes of Rajasthan has scripted a success story of her own by carving a path, which has all the ingredients of a Bollywood script.

She was born in a financially weak family and had lost her mother when she was just five. Her father then re-married after which her real struggle began. Her family members got her name dropped from school when she reached class VIII and engaged her in household chores.

Each day, she travelled for around 10 km to fetch water. At 17, she was married but poverty continued to chase her. Fed up, she formed a group of around 10 women and collected Rs 100 from each of them to purchase raw materials to make bags with hand embroidery on them. The bags were sold in the villages and soon their demand grew.



## Parents proud that son's death saved four lives

Chandigarh: For a father, it was a tough call to save the lives of four persons by donating the organs of his 35-year-old son, but he felt it was the right call. Ram Bachan, the grief-stricken father of Ajayesh Kumar, said on Friday that he consented for organ donation when his son was declared brain dead by the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) here. Incidentally, the World Organ Donation Day is observed across the globe on August 13 (Friday). "In fact, the organ donation affirmed for us that saying 'no' would mean denying other people the chance to live, making their families undergo the same unbearable pain which we are confronted with after losing our son in his prime. "Who would know more than us what it means and how it hurts. So we had to say 'yes' to organ donation," Bachan said with moist eyes. Ajayesh Kumar, 35, a resident of Ropar in Punjab, was admitted to the PGIMER following a fatal road accident on July 23.

Since then, it has been a battle between life and death for Kumar though neither the family nor the attending medical team left any stone unturned to save him. With the deceased's wife Sushma and his father Ram Bachan consenting to the proposal of organ donation, the departments concerned started reaching out to the matching recipients.

Finally, the cross-match of several potential recipients led to the identification of matching recipients for kidneys and pancreas in the PGIMER. Sushma, the courageous wife of the donor, said, "My husband was very caring and sacrifice was virtually his second nature. Compassion and helping others was the core of his being. So organ donation has been the extension of his generous spirit only. With this final act, the good has come full circle."



# BOMBAY HC STAYS CODE OF ETHICS CLAUSE IN NEW IT RULES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Provisions of the government's new Information Technology Rules for news publishers that deal with a code of ethics have been put on hold by the Bombay High Court which said the requirements violated freedom of speech. The rules had been challenged by news publishers in several courts in the country.

The high court stayed on Saturday stayed Clauses 9 (1) and 9 (3) of the Information Technology Rules, 2021 for digital media which pertain to adherence to code of ethics, according to report.

It found "prima facie" (on the face of it) that these sub-clauses violated the petitioners' constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19, the high court said.

Provisions of Clause 9 also went beyond the scope of the substantive law (the Information Technology Act of 2000), it said.

The order came on petitions filed by legal news portal The Leaflet and journalist Nikhil Wagle which challenged several provisions of the new IT Rules claiming that they were vague and likely to have a "chilling effect" on a citizen's right to free speech guaranteed by the Constitution. Last month, in a setback to the government, the Supreme



Court had refused to stop different courts from hearing challenges to the new rules, which were introduced by the centre in February.

News publishers allege the new rules infringe upon basic constitutional rights including freedom of the press, and are designed to enable the government a far tighter grip over online news content. More regulation of this large and growing space is needed, the government has countered.

The IT Rules were extensively defended by former Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and former Minister for

Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar; both men were removed from the cabinet in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's humongous overhaul of his council of ministers last month.

The new IT Rules, the government says, are required to regulate content on social media and to ensure that all online news complies with the law. Included in the new requirements is that companies like WhatsApp break end-to-end encryption to identify who was the first sender (or who first forwarded a message) of any content that threatens national security. The government says that this

demand will be made only sparingly; WhatsApp has challenged this part of the new laws in court, arguing that it would mean an invasion of privacy of its users and that a law like this needs the approval of parliament.

The IT Rules controversially also say that a committee of ministers will have final veto rights over content deemed problematic for law and order or security, and can order its removal.

News publishers have argued that existing laws already provide for criminal prosecution if they break rules on posting child pornography, or running content that incites communal hatred or violence, etc.

They say that they are governed sufficiently by self-regulatory bodies which are headed by former Supreme Court judges; giving final decision-making rights for penalties or removal of content to the government encroaches on judicial, impartial oversight.

The IT rules were challenged in the Kerala High Court by the News Broadcasters Association which comprises of some of the country's biggest news networks last month. The court gave a temporary order in favour of the publishers, asking that no coercive action be taken against them if they do not comply for now with the IT Rules. Other news industry and media associations have filed similar appeals in other courts.

# Terror module busted in Jammu, 4 JeM terrorists arrested

Team Absolute | Jammu

Ahead of Independence Day a major tragedy was averted after a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) module was busted and four terrorists were arrested in Jammu, officials said on Saturday. Police said JeM terrorists and their associates have been arrested by Jammu Police in a drive to root out presence of terrorists in Jammu.

"They were planning collection of arms dropped by drones and supply to active terrorists of Jaish-e-Mohammed in Kashmir valley; planting a vehicle based IED in Jammu before 15th August and reconnaissance of important targets in other parts of the country," police said. Sharing details, police said Muntazir Manzoor alias Saifulla, resident of Prichoo Pulwama, a member of terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed was the first to be arrested in this chain and from him one pistol, one magazine, eight live rounds and two Chinese hand grenades were recovered. His truck used for transporting weapons to the Kashmir valley was also seized.

Subsequently three more Jaish terrorists were arrested. They have been identified as Jahar Khan alias Sonu Khan,



resident of Mirdan Mohalla Kandala Shamli (UP).

"He disclosed that the Jaish commander in Pakistan by the name of Munazir alias Shahid had asked him to collect weapons from near Amritsar which would be dropped by a drone. He was also asked by Jaish to do reconnaissance of Panipat oil refinery which he did and sent videos to Pakistan. He was then tasked to do the reconnaissance of Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi but was arrested before he could accomplish this task," police said.

Police said Touseef Ahmed Shah alias Showket and Adnan, resident of Jeff, Shopian was tasked by Jaish commander Shahid and another Jaish terrorist by the name Abrar in Pakistan to

take up an accommodation in Jammu which he did. He was then asked to procure a second hand motorcycle for causing an IED blast at Jammu. The IED for this purpose would be dropped by a drone. Touseef was arrested before he could complete this task.

According to police, Jahangir Ahmed Bhat, resident of Bandzoo Pulwama has been arrested in the case. He was the fruit merchant from Kashmir who was constantly in touch with Shahid of Jaish in Pakistan and had introduced Ijahgar Khan to him. He was further doing recruitment for Jaish in Kashmir Valley and in the rest of the country.

Police said further investigation on the remaining module is in progress.

# BIHAR GOVT CAN CONDUCT CASTE BASED CENSUS ON ITS OWN, SAYS BY CM

PATNA | Agencies

Amid the rift between the BJP and the JD(U) over caste based census, the former seems to have softened its stand on the issue. Bihar's deputy chief minister Renu Devi on Saturday said that the state government can conduct a caste based census on its own. Renu Devi, during the Sahyog program on Saturday said: "The Karnataka and Odisha governments have conducted caste based census at their own expense. The Bihar government is also independent on opting for the same. Though, the central government has a clear stand of not to conduct caste based census in the country." Earlier, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar while advocating a caste based census, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to consider the same. Some JD(U) ministers have openly said that if the Centre would not conduct a caste based census, the Bihar government is capable of doing that at its own expense.

Besides Renu Devi, Ram Surat Rai, another



minister in the Nitish Kumar government under the BJP quota, advocated a caste based census in Bihar. The Bihar legislature has twice passed a resolution for a caste based census unanimously -- on February 18, 2019 and February 27, 2020. The JD(U) has support from the opposition RJD and another ally of the NDA -- the Hindustan Awami Morcha (HAM) -- on the issue. The BJP has however supported caste-based census only for SC/ST, which constitute only 15 per cent of the total population.

# 1,380 police personnel awarded medals, announces MHA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 1,380 police personnel have been awarded medals on the occasion of the Independence Day, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced on Saturday.

Amongst 628 Gallantry Awards, one President's Police Medal for Gallantry (PPMG) has been given to the Jammu and Kashmir Police (J&K Police) and one to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) posthumously.

Meanwhile, according to the MHA, 398 police personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in Jammu and Kashmir region, 155 personnel for their gallant action in Left Wing Extremism affected areas and 27 personnel in the North-East Region.

The Gallantry medals' awardee, include 256 from J&K Police, 151 from CRPF, 23 from Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), 67 from Odisha Police, 25 from Maharashtra Police, 20 from Chhattisgarh and the remaining from the other states, Union Territories and other Central Armed Police Forces.

Also, 88 medals have been awarded under the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service (PPM) whereas 662 personnel have been awarded with the Police Medal for Meritorious Service (PM).



J&K Police Sub-Inspector Amar Deep has been awarded with the highest gallantry award- PPMG, while the Head Constable late Kale Sunil Dattatraya of CRPF has been given PPMG posthumously.

The President's Police Medal is a decoration awarded to the Police personnel in India. Established on March 1, 1951, the medal was origi-

nally called the President's Police and Fire Service Medal.

The medal is awarded for either gallantry or distinguished service, with the gallantry version of the medal being accorded a higher precedence. The medal is awarded annually on Republic Day and Independence Day.

# Blast in school triggers fresh tension along Assam-Mizoram border

Silchar (Assam): There was fresh tension along the disputed Assam-Mizoram border after some unidentified miscreants detonated a moderate intensity bomb in a government school in Assam on Friday night, police said on Saturday.

Police said that the explosion damaged the floor and wall of the Sahabmaria Punjee Lower Primary school in Gutguti area in Hailakandi district adjoining Kolasib district of Mizoram.

The government run school is located in the remote bordering area and has been shut due to Covid-19 restrictions.

As the blast took place on Friday midnight no one was hurt in the detonation.



Hailakandi district Superintendent of Police Gaurav Upadhyay, who visited the explo-

sion site, said that they are now probing who are behind the explosion.

Three months back, miscreants carried out powerful blasts damaging Muliwala Lower Primary school located in Katlicherra Block in the same Hailakandi district and in a June explosion, damaged Dholakhal Lower Primary school in Cachar district. Both are government run schools and the blasts occurred in the night time.

Friday night's incident happened after an over two-week standoff between the two neighbouring states on the inter-state border following the worst-ever violence on the Cachar (Assam)-Kolasib (Mizoram) border on July 26 leaving six Assam Police personnel dead and around 100 civilians and security personnel of the two neighbouring states injured.

# Six arrested for prostitution racket in Bihar's Kaimur

PATNA | Agencies

A prostitution racket was busted in Bihar's Kaimur, and five women and a male customer arrested, police said on Friday.

The arrests came after police raided a house in ward number 6 under Bhabhua police station after a number of tip-offs. Two of the arrested women are sisters and allegedly the kingpins.

Contraceptives pills, condoms and sexual power enhancement tablets were also seized from their possession.

The house was located in a residential area and residents are pleased with the police action, claiming immoral activities were going there for the past few months round the clock.

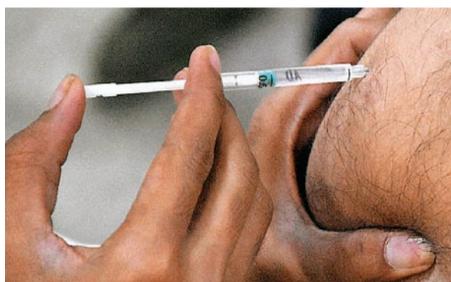
"We have been receiving tip-offs about immoral activities for the past few days. Subsequently, we constituted a dedicated team comprising female constables and raided the house," Kaimur's Superintendent of



Police Rakesh Kumar said. "There were two male customers at the time of the raid. One of them, seeing police approaching, jumped off the rooftop and escaped. The other one was nabbed red-handed," he said.

"The accused were booked under relevant IPC sections related to prostitution, besides under the PITA (Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act)," he said.

# ON I-DAY EVE, MAHA NOTCHES RECORD 9.36L DAILY JOBS



Team Absolute | Mumbai

On the eve of Independence Day, Maharashtra set a new record by administering over 9.36 lakh Covid-19 jabs in a

single day across the state, officials said here on Saturday.

The day's data till 7 pm surpassed the previous record of 8.11 lakh jabs achieved on July 3.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Health Minister Rajesh Tope expressed their appreciation for the efforts that went into achieving this feat, at a time when the state is in full preparedness for a possible third wave of the pandemic.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Pradeep Vyas has reiterated that the state is fully geared to administer over one million doses daily, provided sufficient quantity of the vaccine doses are made available on time.

The state is at the forefront in the vaccination drive with over 4.90 crore doses being administered so far, including first and second jabs.

# CRPF bags 154 Gallantry medals, highest among all CAPFs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has bagged 154 Gallantry medals on the eve of the 75th Independence Day on Saturday, its highest ever tally and the most among all the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Of the 154 Gallantry medals, 108 are for operations that took place in Jammu and Kashmir, 39 for acts of gallantry in Left Wing Extremism areas, and seven



for operations in the Northeast. "The force has bagged three Shaurya Chakras (announced by the

Defence Ministry), one President's Police Medal for Gallantry and 150 Police Medal for Gallantry. This is

not just the largest number of medals received among any CAPFs, but is also the highest that CRPF has received on one occasion. The force takes pride in its total number of medals, which have now reached a tally of 2,267," an official said. CRPF Head Constable Kale Sunil Dattatraya has been awarded the President's Police Medal For gallantry posthumously. Dattatraya was killed while fighting terrorists in Pulwama on June 23 last year. CRPF Deputy

Commandant Chitesh Kumar, Sub Inspector Manjinder Singh and Constable Sunil Choudhary were awarded Shaurya Chakra for their brave operation against Maoists in March 2019, when they neutralised four dreaded Maoists belonging to the PLGA cadre, who were carrying Rs 8 lakh reward on their heads.

The CRPF is the largest peacekeeping force among all the CAPFs under the administrative control of the Union Home Ministry.

All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations.



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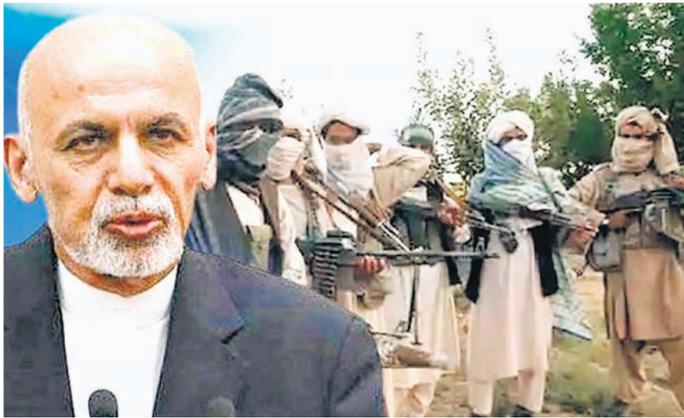
PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

## AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI LIKELY TO RESIGN, SOURCES SAID

# KABUL IS FALLING

The Afghanistan president on Saturday said that 'remobilization of armed forces is the top priority' for the country, and 'fast consultations' are ongoing to end war. "We are going to prevent displacement of people, I'm not going to allow imposed war to lead to more bloodshed," he said.

Fighters of Taliban are now camped just 50 kilometres (30 miles) away, with US and other countries fearing an all-out assault on their nationals in Kabul.



around Kabul with the country's second- and third-largest cities having fallen into the insurgents' hands. Sources had told News18 that the president was mulling to quit as a part of an 'urgent ceasefire' plan that the government had tried to strike with the Taliban, in lieu of bringing deadly strikes to a halt.

Ghani was said to resign during the speech, sources said, adding that the president may leave for some "third country" along with all his family members after quitting. Amrullah Saleh, the first vice president of Afghanistan, however is not keen on the move.

Heaving fighting was also reported around Mazar-i-

Sharif, an isolated holdout in the north where warlord and former vice president Abdul

Rashid Dostum had gathered his virulently anti-Taliban militia.

### TALIBAN WARNS INDIA AGAINST MILITARY MOVES IN AFGHANISTAN

New Delhi: The Taliban has warned India against military moves in Afghanistan, pointing to the fate of other military powers. "If they (India) come to Afghanistan militarily and have their presence, I think that will not be good for them. They've seen the fate of military presence in Afghanistan of other countries, so it is an open book for them," Taliban spokesperson Muhammed Suhail Shaheen said as per media reports. He also denied that the Taliban has ties with other terror groups based in Pakistan. The Taliban has assured embassies and staff that there is no danger from their side.

### US EMBASSY IN KABUL DESTROYS SENSITIVE MATERIALS

New Delhi: The US Embassy in Kabul is instructing personnel to destroy sensitive materials as well as items "which could be misused in propaganda efforts", according to a management notice sent to the staff. The notice about "Emergency Destruction Services" underscores the dire situation on the ground in Afghanistan as cities continue to fall to the Taliban, a CNN news report said. The report said that one intelligence assessment indicated that Kabul could be isolated by the Taliban within the week, possibly in the next 72 hours, but stressed that does not mean the militant group would enter the capital. The situation on the ground is incredibly challenging for US diplomats, who say that plans are changing by the minute.

## Don't let the guard down against Covid: President Kovind



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Addressing the nation on the eve of 75th Independence Day, President Ram Nath Kovind said that the coronavirus is still here and has not gone away and one must not let the guard down.

Noting that the vaccine is the best possible protection, he said, "We are yet to come out of the devastating effects of its recurrence this year. Last year, with exceptional efforts from all, we had succeeded in bringing the spread of infections under control. Our scientists had succeeded in developing vaccines in a very short time." He also said that at the beginning of this year, the largest vaccination exercise in the history of the world was launched, urging the people to get vaccinated. Talking about the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics, he made references to the stellar performances of Indian sportspersons. India has won the

highest number of medals in the 121 years of its participation in the Olympics. He said, "Our daughters have achieved world class excellence in playgrounds overcoming many adversities. Along with sports, epoch-making changes are taking place in the participation and success of women in all walks of life. From higher educational institutions to armed forces, from laboratories to playgrounds, our daughters are making their mark. In this success of our daughters, I see a glimpse of a developed India of the future", Kovind said.

"Independence Day is a festival of freedom for us. This was made possible by generations of freedom fighters; some known, many unknown. They made great sacrifices. Today, you and I breathe under free skies thanks to their heroic deeds. I bow in respect to the pious memory of those brave martyrs", he further said.

## 7.2 Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Haiti; Tsunami Alert Issued

Port-au-Prince, Haiti | Agencies

A 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti on Saturday, the United States Geological Survey said, prompting a tsunami alert and damaging buildings in the west of the disaster-plagued Caribbean nation. The epicenter of the quake was about 100 miles (160 kilometers) by road from central Port-au-Prince, the densely populated capital. The long shock was felt in neighboring countries.

The quake damaged schools as well as homes on Haiti's southwestern peninsula, according to images from witnesses. Residents shared images on social media of the ruins of concrete buildings, including a church in which a ceremony was apparently underway on Saturday in the southwestern town of Les Anglais. The USGS said waves of up to three meters (nearly 10 feet) were possible along the coastline of Haiti. More than a million and a half Haitians were made homeless, leaving island authorities and the international humanitarian community with a colossal challenge in a country lacking either a land registry or building codes.

## Twitter unlocks account of Congress, Rahul Gandhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

day after former Congress President

Rahul Gandhi slammed social media site Twitter alleging it of taking sides in the politics of the country, the US based company said that the accounts have been unlocked after the Congress leader submitted a copy of the formal consent letter to use the referenced image via its India Grievance Channel. Besides Rahul Gandhi, Twitter on Saturday also unlocked the accounts of the Congress and several other party leaders after temporarily blocking sides in the politics of the country, the US based company said that the accounts have been unlocked after the Congress leader submitted a copy of the formal consent letter to use the referenced image via its India Grievance Channel. Besides Rahul Gandhi, Twitter on Saturday also unlocked the accounts of the Congress and several other party leaders after temporarily blocking sides in the politics of the country, the US based company said that the accounts have been unlocked after the Congress leader submitted a copy of the formal consent letter to use the referenced image via its India Grievance Channel.



the behest of the government. In a statement, a Twitter spokesperson said, "As part of the appeal process,

Rahul Gandhi has submitted a copy of the formal consent letter to use the referenced image via our India Grievance Channel." The US based company spokesperson said, "we have followed the necessary due diligence process to review the appeal in order to protect the safety and privacy of the affected individuals". "We have updated our enforcement action based on the consent provided by the people depicted in the image. The Tweet is now withheld in India and the account access has been restored," the spokesperson said.

## Aug 14 to be observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day': PM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that in memory of the struggles and sacrifices of "our people", August 14 will be observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' or 'Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas'. The Prime Minister hoped that the "observance will not only inspire us to eliminate the poison of discrimination, animosity and ill-will, but it will also strengthen unity, social harmony and human sensibilities".

Taking to Twitter, he said: "Partition's pains can never be forgotten. Millions of our sisters and brothers were displaced and many lost their lives due to mindless hate and violence. In memory of the struggles and sac-



rifices of our people, 14th August will be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day. "May the Partition Horror

Remembrance Day keep reminding us of the need to remove the poison of social divisions, disharmony and further strengthen the spirit

of oneness, social harmony and human empowerment." It is estimated that between one to two million people died during the partition of the country in 1947. The most violent clashes were centred around Punjab, where the Muslim population of East Punjab was forcibly expelled.

The partition displaced between 10 and 20 million people along religious lines, creating overwhelming refugee crises in the newly constituted dominions. Some 15 million people crossed into the newly-created borders during the violent partition.

At times, mobs targeted and killed passengers travelling in either direction; the trains carrying their corpses became known as "ghost trains".

LET US PLEDGE TO BE FREE FROM COVID

75 Happy Independence Day!

Shri. Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray  
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Shri. Ajit Pawar  
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister

Shri. Balasaheb Thorat  
Hon'ble Minister, Revenue

Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Government of Maharashtra





# GOVERNOR, CHIEF MINISTER EXTENDS GREETING ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has extended his greetings and warm wishes to the countrymen on the auspicious occasion of the 75th Amrit Mahotsav of Independence Day. While saluting the freedom fighters, he wished for the prosperity and progress of the country and the state.

Governor Patel has said that Independence Day is a day for the youth to feel the pride of freedom. It is a day to remember with gratitude those innumerable freedom fighters and revolutionaries who presented great ideals of struggle, sacrifice and valour to get us freedom. It is on the strength of their sacrifices that we are all residents of a free country today. We are proud that modern India is being built on the foundation of the ideals of our freedom struggle.

Patel has told the people of the state that in making a country of dreams of freedom fighters, we have to work for development unitedly with the spirit of surrendering everything like the freedom fighters. We have to live for the country, work for the country, small efforts made with this spirit can bring big results. He has said that we can build the nation even while doing our day to day work. By being vocal for the local, by using the products of the local entrepreneurs, artists, craftsmen, weavers of the country, we can build a strong self-reliant nation.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended heartfelt greetings to the citizens of the state on Independence Day. Chouhan said that



we have completed 74 years of independence. It is the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom. In the 75th year of Independence, we have to resolve to continue our utmost efforts to make our nation happy.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is the heart state of the country. The state government has taken important steps in every field for the welfare of the citizens. Efforts have been made in Madhya Pradesh in irrigation, agriculture, education, health, technical skills and for conserving the heritage of the state. In the last one and a half decades, these efforts gained momentum, as a result of which Madhya Pradesh got rid of the tag of BIMARU state. Chouhan said that despite the

crisis of Corona epidemic, Madhya Pradesh is moving ahead with sincere efforts for development in every field. The government is running many projects with public cooperation. Chouhan expressed hope that Madhya Pradesh will be included in the most prosperous and developing states of the country. Every citizen has to take a pledge to participate in the journey of progress on Independence Day.

Chouhan has wished the success of these programmes with the expectation of citizens to participate in all the programmes being organised at the government and non-government level, considering public participation as necessary even on the occasion of Independence Day.

## Relief, rehab and reconstruction work should be completed on war footing: CM



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the work of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the flood affected areas should be completed on a war footing. The work of installation of power system, supply of edible items, restoration of infrastructure, assessment of damaged crops and survey of collapsed houses should be taken up on top priority. The villages which are affected by floods every year will be shifted to higher places. New houses will be approved at high places for the families whose houses have been damaged by floods. Chouhan said that he himself would visit the region and contact the affected families. He was virtually reviewing the district-wise relief and rehabilitation works in the flood affected areas from his residence.

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar and Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia also attended the meeting. Members of the task force constituted for floods in the state, ministers in-charge of districts and members of crisis management committees also attended the meeting virtually.

Chouhan was apprised in the meeting that Rs 6 thousand each was being given to the flood affected people as relief. So far Rs 6 crore 50 lakh has been distributed. So far Rs 3 crore 25 lakh has been distributed to 6 thousand 500 families in Sheopur district. Relief distribution work is in progress.

Chouhan said that relief should be provided to each of those who have suffered losses. At the same time, it is also necessary that the name of any ineligible should not be included in the relief and rehabilitation work. There should be transparency in the entire process. Those involved in any irregularity will not be

spared. Joint team of Revenue, Panchayat and Agriculture Department and members of Crisis Management Committee should survey the flood affected people. The list should be finalized and displayed in public places and the claims and objections coming in should be heard.

Chouhan said that the works of relief distribution and rehabilitation should be implemented with public participation. Village-level Crisis Management Committees, public representatives and MLAs should be associated with these works. This will help in ensuring transparency and relief to the eligible persons at the earliest.

Chouhan directed that the villages which are still affected and freshly cooked food through self-help group wherever necessary. District collectors must ensure adequate food arrangements.

Tomar said that the officers, employees must visit the affected villages and assure them of assistance and rehabilitation. People need consolation at this time. Gas cylinders of Ujjwala scheme of many families have been washed away in the floods. Efforts will be made at the central level to make gas cylinders available again to such families.

Scindia stated the need to formulate a policy to provide permanent housing to the people who were rendered homeless due to floods. Scindia said that the administration and police did everything possible to provide rescue and relief in the districts affected by heavy rain and floods. The rescue of 125 people trapped in village Saundha of Guna district is highly commendable. Scindia said that a three-year-old child was also rescued. Sensitive handling of the situation has enhanced the prestige of the administration and people realize that the state government stands with them in this hour of crisis.

### State Government Sounds Alert Ahead Of Independence Day

Bhopal: The Madhya Pradesh government has sounded an alert ahead of Independence Day as per the Centre's guidelines, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Saturday. Speaking to reporters, he also said strict action will be taken immediately if any suspicious activity is noticed. Meanwhile, the state government has allocated different districts to ministers for hoisting the tricolour on August 15. Accordingly, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will hoist the flag in the state capital and ministers will participate in similar functions in 30 other districts and read out the CM's message, an official order said. In 20 districts, respective district collectors will hoist the national flag. Assembly Speaker Girish Gautam will participate in the Independence Day function in Rewa, it said.

### Interim relief for house destroyed by flood

Bhopal: Due to heavy rains, floods and excessive rainfall in the districts of Gwalior-Chambal division and Vidisha district, residential houses have been damaged to a great extent. Orders have been issued by the state government to provide one-time financial assistance of Rs.6 thousand to the affected families for interim arrangement of housing. Revenue Secretary Gyaneshwar B Patil has issued an order in this regard. It has been mentioned in the order sent to the district collectors that for the interim arrangement of alternative housing for the completely destroyed kachcha, pakka houses of the flood-affected, which are not repairable, a lump sum financial assistance at the rate of Rs. 6 thousand per house be provided. This assistance amount will be in addition to the relief amount payable in the Revenue Book Circular for damage to the house.

### CM plants Neem sapling

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

### CM expresses grief

## 3 Killed As Trolley Of Crane Breaks While Installing National Flag In Gwalior

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three employees of the municipal corporation in Gwalior died while another was seriously injured after the platform of the vehicle they were using broke open while installing the national flag on a post office building this morning. The staff members were installing the flag for the Independence Day celebrations tomorrow.

The incident happened when the workers were trying to put up the flag on the post office building while sitting in the trolley of the hydraulic fire brigade of the municipal corporation. The historical buildings built on the Maharaj

Bada are decorated every year on the occasion of Independence Day.

The driver operating the crane machine was also seriously injured.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed his condolences over their deaths on Twitter.

"Sad news was received about the death of 3 employees and injuries to 3 people in an accident that occurred while unloading the machine at Maharaj Bada Post Office in Gwalior. I pray to God for peace to the departed souls, strength to the families and speedy recovery of the injured. Peace," Chauhan tweeted.

Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of 3 employees and injuries to 3 people in an accident

that took place while unloading the machine at Maharaj Bada Post Office in Gwalior. Chouhan has prayed to God for peace to the departed souls, strength to the families and speedy recovery of the injured. Chouhan has said that compassionate appointment will be given to the kin of the three people who died in Gwalior accident and financial assistance of Rs. 4 lakh each will be provided to the family. Gwalior Collector has instructed the ADM to investigate the accident.

Former Chief Minister and Congress leader Kamal Nath, meanwhile, has urged the government to order an investigation into the incident.

## Twitter doing politics: Nath

He said time will come when this micro-blogging site has to give explanation for its act.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid a row over the temporary suspension of Rahul Gandhi's Twitter account, Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath on Saturday accused the micro-blogging site of indulging in politics.

"Twitter has entered into politics. Shutting down the Twitter account this way is grossly illegal and unjust," Nath told reporters at Chhindwara when asked about the suspension of Twitter accounts of Congress leaders.

He said time will come when this micro-blogging site has to give explanation for its act.

Earlier in the day, Twitter restored Rahul Gandhi's account, a week after temporarily suspending it. Gandhi's Twitter handle was sus-



pending after he posted pictures of the family of a nine-year-old victim of alleged rape and murder in northwest Delhi. Twitter deemed it a violation of its rules.

Home Minister Narottam Mishra said turning the suspension of his account on Twitter into a political issue shows the "baal hath" (childish obstinacy) of Rahul Gandhi.

"Gandhi revealed the identity of a rape victim. This is illegal. Instead of making it a political issue, he should have rather apologised on this issue by accepting the mistake," Mishra told reporters while responding to a query.

The state unit of the Congress is running a campaign on Twitter, accusing the micro blogging site of suppressing the voice of dissent at the behest of BJP.

## Monsoon rain to revive over MP

Weather of most parts of Madhya Pradesh has remained dry since last two to three days. However on and off rain was going on over eastern districts of the state particularly North Eastern parts. Monsoon rains are expected to revive once again as a low pressure area is likely to develop over Westcentral Bay of Bengal by August 16 or 17.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Western districts of Madhya Pradesh have received surplus rainfall of 20%. Madhya Pradesh is deficient by 9%. Successive low pressure areas developed over Bay of Bengal travelled in westerly direction towards southwest and West Madhya Pradesh leading to flooding rain over Western districts of the state. Heavy downpour occurred over Western parts of Madhya



Pradesh during last week of July and continued until initial period of August.

Weather of most parts of Madhya Pradesh has remained dry since last two to three days. However on and off rain was going on over eastern districts of the state particularly North Eastern parts. Monsoon rains are expected to revive once again as a low pressure area is likely to develop over Westcentral Bay of Bengal by August 16 or 17.

The system will move in western direction of across south Chhattisgarh and Southeast Madhya Pradesh. Rains

will increase over eastern parts and South Eastern parts of the state by August 15 and 16. Thereafter it will cover entire state of between August 17 and 21 therefore, we can say monsoon is going to revive once again over entire Madhya Pradesh. Northern districts like Gwalior, Morena, Datya, Tikamgarh may receive scattered light rains but other parts will get widespread rain and thundershowers. Chances of mild flooding cannot be ruled out. Madhya Pradesh is going to be the rainiest state in Central part of the country during this monsoon.

## Government failed to provide relief to flood victims: Digvijaya

Singh also claimed that the electricity supply to the flood-ravaged areas has not been restored yet and the victims are not getting food.

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Congress' Rajya Sabha MP and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh on Saturday alleged the Madhya Pradesh government has failed to provide relief to victims of flood in the Gwalior and Chambal divisions as it was more focussed on "business" rather than governance.

He also claimed that the electricity supply to the flood-ravaged areas has not been restored



yet and the victims are not getting food.

Twenty four people were killed in rain-related incidents during floods in the first week of August in North MP.

"Bridges and culverts were washed away in recent floods. This was the government's failure because the BJP does not run the government but it does business. Due to commissions and

cuts, sub-standard constructions are done," Singh told reporters at Bhitwar here.

The Rajya Sabha MP said victims of floods were given food by social workers, "which is the failure of the state government".

He also said the state government has not yet surveyed to assess the loss and damage caused by floods.

"Officers and the government were sleeping when the India Meteorological Department warned of rains due to which kuccha houses were washed away completely. Pucca houses were destroyed in Sheopur and Shivpuri districts (due to floods)," he said.

Referring to the alleged mobbing of Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in Sheopur, Singh said officers were shunted out of the district instead of being suspended.

## Man Fires At "Enemy" Neighbours Visiting To Mourn His Grandson's Death

The accused has escaped after the incident and a search has been launched to arrest him, police said.

Team Absolute | Gwalior

Six persons were injured after a 60-year-old man allegedly fired at them when they went to his place at a village in Gwalior district to mourn the death of his grandson, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred on Friday at Bandholi village, around 30 km from the district headquarters, police said, adding that the injured persons are the neighbours of accused Parmal Singh Parihar, with whom he was not getting along well. Parihar has escaped after the incident and a search has been launched to arrest him, they said.

"Parihar's grandson Sahil drowned in a lake on Friday. After his body was brought home, people

living in the neighbourhood visited Parihar's house to mourn his death. Some of them included those with whom he was not getting along well," Utila police station inspector Surjit Singh Parmar said.

"Angry at seeing his enemies at his doorstep, Parihar went into his room and brought his licensed gun and opened fire to chase them away," he said. Ajmer Singh, Kallu Singh, Rajendra, Ashok, Devendra, and Virendra Singh were injured in the firing and they were admitted to a hospital in Gwalior on Friday night, the police officer said, adding they were out of danger. A case has been registered against Parihar, he said. According to Parmar, the body of Parihar's grandson was sent for post-mortem.

## TWO PRISON GUARDS ARRESTED FOR RAPING INMATE'S WIFE

Rajgarh: Two prison guards have been arrested for allegedly raping and threatening the wife of an inmate of Narsingharh sub jail in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district, police said on Saturday. The two were held on Friday after the wife of the inmate, a resident of Hoshangabad who has been lodged in the sub jail for the past four years in a fake Indian currency note (FICN) case, filed a complaint, said Narsingharh police station in charge Ravindra Chavaria. The woman has said the incident took place on May 1 when she went to meet her husband, the official added.



# Koshiyari Meets Shah Hours After High Court Ruling On Him

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**M**aharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari held a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi, hours after the Bombay High Court ruled that the Maharashtra Governor was duty-bound to decide on the Member of Legislative Council or MLC nominations within "reasonable time." The Raj Bhavan, however, termed the meeting that took place on Friday evening as a "courtesy call." The delay by Koshiyari in taking a decision on the proposal sent by the Maharashtra cabinet to nominate 12 persons as Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs) from his quota has become a major bone of contention between him and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress in the state.



The Bombay High Court, while hearing a petition filed by a Nashik resident seeking a direction to the Governor to decide on the nominations, had said on Friday that the Governor has a "constitutional obligation" to either accept or reject "within reasonable time" the proposal sent by the state cabinet to nominate 12 persons as MLCs. Eight months had passed since the state cabinet sent the list of persons for nomination to the Upper House to Governor Koshiyari and this was "reasonable time", a di-

sion bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni had said. The cabinet headed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had recommended 12 names to be nominated to the council from the governor's quota in November 2020. The term of the legislators from the his quota had ended in June last year. The government had argued that the governor should have accepted its proposal on nominations and he cannot keep his decision pending.

# DELTA PLUS VARIANT TOLL REACHES FIVE, TOTAL 66 CASES IN MAHARASHTRA

**Two deaths were reported from Ratnagiri while Mumbai, Beed and Raigad have reported one death each due to the Delta Plus variant. Two of the patients had been fully vaccinated with Covishield while two others had not been administered any vaccine.**



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**T**hree men and two women have succumbed to Delta Plus variant of SARS-CoV2 virus, a state health department report said on Friday. All five, including a 63-year-old woman from Mumbai who died in July, were senior citizens and suffered from comorbidities. While two deaths were

reported from Ratnagiri, Mumbai, Beed and Raigad reported one death each due to the Delta Plus variant. Two persons, including the Mumbai-based woman, had been fully vaccinated with Covishield. Two others had not been administered any vaccine. "Details of the vaccination status of one more person who has died is not available," said Dr Pradeep Awate, state surveillance officer. On Friday,

one new case of Delta Plus variant was detected in Thane, taking the total count of such cases in the state to 66. The Thane resident, a 50-year-old woman, had mild symptoms and has recovered, health officials said. As of now, 13 cases of Delta Plus variant have been reported from Jalgaon, followed by Ratnagiri (12), Mumbai (11), Pune and Thane (6 each), Palghar and

Raigad (3 each), Gondia and Nanded (2 each) and one case each in Chandrapur, Akola, Sindhudurg, Sangli, Nandurbar, Aurangabad, Kolhapur and Beed districts. Of the 66 infected people, 33 are men while the remaining women. Maximum number of cases have been reported in the 19-45 age group (33), followed by 46-60 age group (18), above 60 years (8) and below 18 years (7). At least 31 people had very mild symptoms. Of the 66 infected, 61 have recovered, said officials. Genomic sequencing has been actively taken up by Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortium with a network of 28 laboratories. In Maharashtra, every district sends 100 random samples for genome sequencing as part of a collaboration between CSIR-Institute of Genomics and

Integrative Biology and the state government. State health authorities said they have ramped up efforts to trace Delta plus variant patients. Dr Avinash Supe, who heads the state death reduction committee, said, "We have 66 cases of Delta Plus variant in the state. We are keeping an eye on the spread of variant and related deaths." The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), meanwhile, has started a contact tracing drive to locate the close contacts of the Ghatkopar-based woman who had succumbed to the variant last month, said N ward Assistant Commissioner Sanjay Sonawane. A contact tracing drive has also been launched at Kamraj Nagar in Ghatkopar where the helper of the deceased, who had also tested positive, lives.

## LOCAL TRAINS, GYMS AND MALLS:

# Maharashtra relaxations coming into effect from Aug 15

**The Maharashtra government has been giving relaxation in Covid-19 curbs in phases. The state has been the worst affected by the coronavirus disease, and the situation deteriorated during the second wave when the curbs were imposed.**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**T**he Covid-19 relaxations announced by the Maharashtra government will come into effect from Sunday. The state government has been easing curbs, announced during the second wave of the coronavirus disease in May, in phases. The most important change to come into effect from Independence Day will be that the local trains will be thrown open to all those who have received both the doses of Covid-19 vaccines. This has been a key demand of the people of Maharashtra; currently, only government employees and essential services staffers are allowed to travel in local trains. The Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra has come under control in recent weeks. From a peak of over 60,000 cases, the daily numbers have come down to a little over 6,000. On Friday, Maharashtra



reported 6,686 new coronavirus infections and 158 fatalities. Here follows the relaxations coming into effect on the state from Sunday: The local trains in Mumbai will be open for fully vaccinated people from Sunday (August 15). Holders of the final vaccination certificate approved by the designated authority will be given a railway pass to travel in local trains in Mumbai, the Maharashtra government said in its order released earlier this month. It has also made gap of 14 days from the second dose of Covid-19 mandatory to travel in the locals, considered lifeline of Mumbai. Railway ticket-checkers have been

authorised to demand the verified copy of the final vaccination certificate and identity card from passengers. From August 15, shopping malls and other establishments will be allowed to operate till 10pm, provided the entire staff is fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Those visiting the shopping malls will also have to carry the final vaccination certificate, according to Maharashtra government order. Employees in shops, establishments and offices, however, will have to be fully vaccinated. Private offices whose employees are fully vaccinated have been allowed to keep their offices functional 24\*7, but

they have to stagger the work hours and keep 25 per cent strength at one time. The timings of these places have been extended to 10pm, from the current deadline of 4pm. However, the restaurants have been asked to reopen with 50 per cent capacity, and ensuring that the entire staff is fully vaccinated against the coronavirus disease. According to revised guidelines issued by Maharashtra government, gyms, parlours and salons in the state will be allowed to open with 50 per cent capacity from August 15. The spas and gymnasiums will be allowed to function till 10pm, the government order said. However, the entire staff of these establishments will have to be fully vaccinated. The government has allowed weddings in open place with a cap of 200 people. In case the venue is a closed hall, the number has been limited to 100 or 50 per cent capacity of the venue, whichever is less. Indoor games have been allowed till 10pm provided everyone is fully vaccinated. Cinema halls, theatres, multiplexes, auditoriums and places of worship will continue to remain shut in Maharashtra, state health minister Rajesh Tope said.

## CM's secretary gets threat warning him of probe by central agencies



**In the complaint, Narvekar has said that he received a WhatsApp message from the number of an unidentified person, in which the latter threatened him about the action by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), National Investigation Agency (NIA) and other central agencies if he did not fulfil certain demands**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

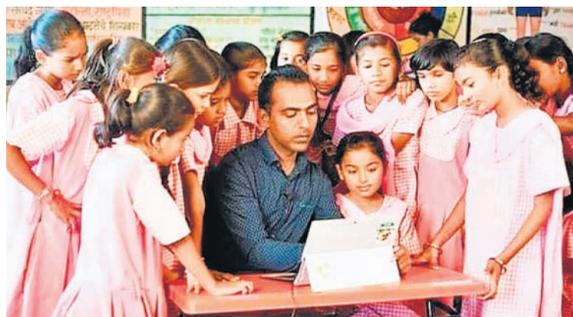
**M**aharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's personal secretary Milind Narvekar has complained of receiving a message, threatening him with central agency investigation, if he did not fulfil certain demands. Narvekar has submitted a written complaint to Commissioner Hemant Nagrale about it, he said. Based on it, the crime branch has

launched an investigation into the matter and a search is on to nab the suspect," the police official said. In the complaint, Narvekar has said that he received a WhatsApp message from the number of an unidentified person, in which the latter threatened him about the action by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), National Investigation Agency (NIA) and other central agencies if he did not fulfil certain demands, he added.

# India needs 21st century teachers for enlightened GenZ students: Disale

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**I**t took an invisible Covid-19 virus to suddenly expose how the Indian education system was throttled by the pandemic and apparently lacked in effectively rising to changing needs and challenges of the modern AI-driven era, says globally-acclaimed Maharashtra teacher, Ranjitsinh Disale. As India takes the first step from its Platinum to the Centennial year of Independence in (2047), Disale feels that education must form the "strongest foundation" for the country to confront the upcoming new challenges effectively. "Currently we have students of the '21st Century' being taught by teachers of the '20th Century', relying on a '19th Century' curriculum with '18th Century' teaching techniques... All this must change, if India has to not simply march, but race ahead of all other nations," Disale, 33, told IANS.



and frustrated. "Having learnt this lesson, we must now start preparing our teachers for the 21st Century... The students of today are probably 'more aware' than at any point in the past 75 years of Independent India largely due to television, mobiles, computers, Internet, etc.," Disale pointed out. While lauding the objective of the landmark 'Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009', he said now, the law can be amended to incorporate 'Right Education' and 'Right Way of Education' for the benefit of the students, the teachers and the country at large. Disale said the new breed of teachers must be adequately trained, equipped and empowered to cater to and handle not only the well-informed modern students but also nurture the eager gen-next, especially if encountered by a LFH-like situation ever again... "These very teachers and students will help build a New India... They will have more confidence, ability to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the world

as humanity hurtles to the mysterious but fascinating tech-driven future, where only Sky's the Limit," smiled Disale. To realize this, he urged the corporates to invest more in the technological aspects of education like computers, mobiles, Internet connectivity, smart classrooms, etc, alongside the government efforts, to catapult Indian education at par with the international standards. A humble teacher for 11 years at the Paritewadi Zilla Parishad School in Solapur, Disale is credited with transforming education by using QR codes, audio-poems, video-lectures and other innovations to impart lessons which helped drastically reduce dropout rates, especially among the girl students, and other benefits, grabbing the world's attention. Earlier, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella had recognised Disale's work in his book, 'Hit Refresh', while the Indian government had honoured him with the 'Innovative Researcher of the Year-2016' and the National Innovation Foundation's 'Innovator of the Year-2018' awards.

## BPCL LAUNCHES DOOR-TO-DOOR DELIVERY OF DIESEL

The initiative of door-to-door delivery through mobile dispensers has resulted in commissioning of 1588 FuelKarts and 129 FuelEnts within a span of about two years across the industry.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**harat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has launched door-to-door delivery of 'High Speed Diesel' to meet the growing demand. Celebrating the 'spirit of nationalism', the company on the eve of Independence Day also dedicated 15 mobile

browsers and 9 jerry can facilities in different corners of the Eastern Region. The initiative of door-to-door delivery through mobile dispensers has resulted in commissioning of 1588 FuelKarts and 129 FuelEnts within a span of about two years across the industry. "With just in time delivery, complete assurance of quali-

ty and quantity, safe and secure product handling and a host of other benefits, FuelKart helps enhance operational efficiency for our customers consistent with the overall philosophy of furthering the cause of ease of doing business," said PS Ravi, Executive Director Retail In-charge, BPCL. "I'm delighted that on the auspicious occa-

sion of the nation's 75th Independence Day, 15 FuelKarts and 9 BPCL fuel stations with jerry can fuel delivery are being dedicated to our customers across the states in eastern region," he added. BPCL has already launched 63 mobile dispensers in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and the North-East states.

## BJP plans rallies ahead of civic polls

Union ministers Narayan Rane, Kapil Patil, Bhagwat Karad and Bharati Pawar will cover 2,200 km through their rallies across Maharashtra next week.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**head of the upcoming local body elections in Maharashtra, the BJP has planned an extensive public outreach programme to popularise the four newly-inducted Union ministers from Maharashtra as "representatives" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For the elections, which have been dubbed as a 'mini assembly poll', the four ministers Narayan Rane, Kapil Patil, Bhagwat Karad and Bharati Pawar will go on a 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' next week. The 2,200-km yatra will cover Mumbai, Thane, Konkan, Marathwada and North Maharashtra regions of the state. The party has also appointed one local party leader for each minister's rally to take care of the micro-management and mobilise karyakartas at different locations.



"The ministers will meet locals from different constituencies as representatives of Modiji, of the Union government. They will meet beneficiaries of different schemes, understand their problems and issues," Sanjay Kelkar, BJP MLA from Thane, who is in charge of planning the yatra, told reporters Friday. "We will not only mobilise lakhs of karyakartas through these yatra, but also reach out to a large number of people from different sections of the society." The ground canvassing is significant as over a dozen municipal corporations, including the civic bodies of Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai, as well as multiple municipal councils and zilla parishads are set to go to polls in the next 18 months. The polls are likely to set the tone for the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi compris-

ing the Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress as well as the opposition BJP before the 2024 Lok Sabha and state assembly election. In preparation for the elections, the BJP has also started strengthening its nearly 90,000 booths across Maharashtra, which are the smallest local units in any party's election campaign. Rane, Patil, Bhagwat and Pawar were inducted into PM Modi's Council of Ministers in July after a massive reshuffle. While Rane was inducted as a Cabinet minister and given the micro, small and medium enterprises portfolio, the other three were sworn in as junior ministers - Karad as minister of state in the finance ministry, Patil is with the Ministry of Panchayat Raj and Pawar is minister of state, health.



**'Fast and Furious 9' set to hit Indian theaters**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Vin Diesel-starrer 'Fast and Furious 9' hits the big screen on September 3 and will be released in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. In the upcoming film, Diesel's Dominic Toretto and Michelle Rodriguez's Letty are content with a quiet family life completely off the grid with young Brian.

Until, they get drawn back into a world filled with danger and action. 'Fast and Furious 9' is directed by Justin Lin, who also co-wrote the screenplay with Daniel Casey. It is the sequel to 'The Fate of the Furious', the ninth instalment. Vin

Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Jordana Brewster, Ludacris, Nathalie Emmanuel, Helen Mirren and Charlize Theron will reprise their roles. New names that have joined the film include John Cena, Cardi B and Ozuna.



**Emma Stone returns for 'Cruella 2'**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar winning-actress Emma Stone has signed a deal to star in the second instalment of 'Cruella'. The news of 'Cruella 2' development came out in early June, just weeks after the live-action prequel to the Disney animated classic '101 Dalmatians' opened in theaters, reports variety.com. Talking about the new deal, Patrick Whitesell, Executive Chairman of Endeavor said: "While the media landscape has been disrupted in a meaningful way for all distributors, their creative partners cannot be left on the sidelines to carry a disproportionate amount of the downside without the potential for upside." Stone starred in and executive produced the film. Right after the release, 'Cruella' was also made available on Disney Plus. The new agreement comes amid actress Scarlett Johansson's breach of contract suit against Disney over the company's decision to release 'Black Widow' simultaneously on Disney Plus and in theatres.

**BEBE REXHA ENJOYS GARDENING, COOKING ITALIAN DISHES**

London | Agencies

American pop singer Bebe Rexha says that gardening is one of her favourite hobbies and she also loves cooking Italian delicacies. Rexha, who is known for belting out hits such as "Say my name" and "I'm a mess", said, "I have a huge tomato garden in my backyard. My father grew up on a farm in Macedonia and taught me a little bit about gardening." The 31-year-old uses the tomatoes from her garden in the meals that she cooks, reports femalefirst.co.uk. "I enjoy cooking Italian dishes. Penne alla vodka is my speciality," she told US Weekly magazine. Bebe also has a sweet tooth. She said, "I love baking banana bread."



**Iggy Azalea not comfortable in spotlight any more**

London | Agencies

Rapper Iggy Azalea says she no longer feels comfortable being in the public eye since giving birth to her son 15 months ago. The rapper says she wants to have a "safe space" to bring him up away from the spotlight, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Azalea told Entertainment Tonight: "My decision to not make any more music is ultimately, really at this point, truly 95 per cent of it is about the fact that I just don't feel that I am comfortable being that level open to the public." The "Fancy" hitmaker also said that she doesn't want to tour anymore because she doesn't want to spend any time away from her son, whom she shares with rapper Playboi Carti. The rapper said public scrutiny of her life is also what prompted her to stop sharing pictures of her son on social media.

**Billie Eilish learns she can't control everything**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Billie Eilish says she used to want to handle every part of her career by herself, but now has realised it's not always a bad thing to let other people help her out. Eilish specifically referenced the animation work on her upcoming film, titled 'Happier than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles' as she said she would have loved to get stuck in on the project herself, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I think the thing that we should all be able to do is say, you know, 'I'm going to be honest with you, this isn't my thing'. You know, even though I want to do this because I want to be able to say that I'm capable of this, but I'm still learning. I want to just watch for a little longer," Eilish said on the 'Spout' podcast.

She added: "I'm the same, like, I want everything to be very, very specific, edited wise, and like, you know, just shots and colour and everything, and I kind of for this one, I was like, you know what? It's okay, I'm handing it over to you. I trust you."

The 'Bad Guy' hitmaker is also coming to terms with being on her



**ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY**



Molly Smith



**Miley Cyrus: Grooming my horses makes me happy**

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop singer Miley Cyrus shared that she is happiest when she is back at her family home in Tennessee caring for her horses.

"People see me doing glamorous things on stage, wearing bedazzled clothes and being kind of over the top, but I really like going back home (to Tennessee)," Cyrus said, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She added: I go wash my horses, which seems like something that's a

chore, but I'm out in the city so much that actually being able to get down and dirty and be on the farm the way that I grew up makes me super happy."

The daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus has learnt to understand that she is many different people at once.

The 'Midnight Sky' hitmaker said: "I need to accept and love all the different versions of myself, even when I can be contradictory. There's, like, cycles of my identity, you know, some days I'm stronger, some days I'm weaker."





## 2ND TEST:

# ENGLAND ALL OUT FOR 391, ROOT SCORES UNBEATEN 180

London | Agencies

**S**kipper Joe Root led from the front, scoring 180 not out as England were bowled out for 391 on the last ball of third day's play in the second Test against India here at Lord's on Saturday. England have taken a 27-run lead in first innings over visitors who scored 364. Mohammed Siraj was the pick of the Indian bowlers, taking four wickets for 94 runs while Ishant Sharma chipped in with 3/69, including two off successive deliveries. Mohammed Shami, who took the last wicket, finished with two for 95. England started strongly from overnight 119/3 and did not lose a



single wicket in the first session as both Root and Jonny Bairstow (57) brought up their century partnership,

adding 97 in the first session. Though Bairstow and Jos Buttler (23) were dismissed in the second

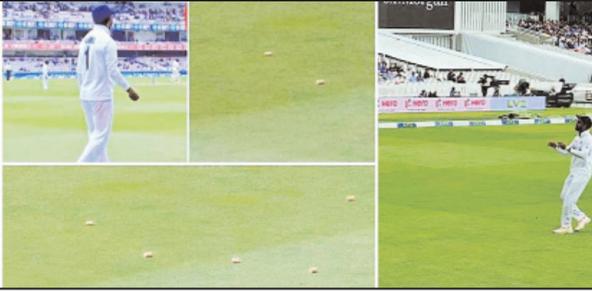
session, England scored 98 in the second session to get near India's total. Ishant then removed Moeen Ali (27) and Sam Curran (0) off successive deliveries with the score at 341. However skipper Root added 50 runs with the last three wickets, including 20 with James Anderson (0) to take England to their eventual total.

### Brief scores

India 364 in 126.1 overs vs England 391 all out in 128 overs (Joe Root 180 not out, Jonny Bairstow 57, Rory Burns 49, Mohammad Siraj 4/94, Ishant Sharma 3/69, Mohammed Shami 2/95).

## Fans throw bottle corks at K.L. Rahul

Fans threw bottle corks at India opener K.L. Rahul during the first sessions play on the third day of the second Test here at Lord's on Saturday. Pictures of Rahul standing close to the boundary line and surrounded by bottle corks on the field emerged on social media as the first session drew to a close. According to reports coming in from Lord's, the Indian players have complained to the umpires about the crowd's behavior. Rahul, who is opening the innings alongside Rohit Sharma after regular openers Shubman Gill and Mayank Agarwal were ruled out due to concussion, had scored 129 in the first innings of the ongoing Test to help India post 364. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is, however, yet to confirm the incident.



## Chhetri-led Bengaluru FC to play Maldives' Club Eagles

Male (Maldives) | Agencies

also banking on new signings

**I**ndia's Bengaluru FC and Club Eagles of Maldives will clash at the National Stadium in Male on Sunday for the sole remaining ticket to the 2021 AFC Cup group stage.

The playoff, initially scheduled to be played in May, was postponed due to the COVID-19 with Sunday's winners advancing to Group D of the 2021 AFC Cup. Both teams have already seen action in the 2021 AFC Cup with Club Eagles advancing to the playoff by virtue of a 2-0 win over Bhutan's Thimphu FC in the preliminary round while Indian Super League (ISL) side Bengaluru FC scored an emphatic 5-0 victory over Nepal's Tribhuvan Army in April.

Club Eagles will go into the tie without Ahmed Rizwan with head coach Mohamed Shazly confirming that the striker is still recovering from an injury.

Bengaluru FC will be led by the Sunil Chhetri with head coach Marco Pezzoli



Rohit Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh, Bidyashagar Singh, Jayesh Rane, Danish Farooq, and Sarthak Golui to deliver in a do-or-die encounter.

Bengaluru have excelled in the AFC Cup, having finished runners-up in 2016 and making the Inter-Zonal final in 2017 and semifinals a year later.

The playoff winners will join India's ATK Mohun Bagan, Bashundhara Kings of Bangladesh and Maiziya Sports & Recreation of Maldives in Group D which kicks off in Male on Wednesday.

The Group D winners will advance to the Inter-Zone semifinals against either FC Nasaf of Uzbekistan or FC Ahal of Turkmenistan from the Central Zone.

## World Athletics showcases Neeraj Chopra on front page

Tokyo | Agencies

**W**orld Athletics (WA), the global governing body for the sport, has featured Indian gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympic Games, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, on its front page, saying that, "With a mark of 87.58m at the Games, the 23-year-old had launched himself to sporting superstardom as he became India's first ever Olympic champion in athletics."

Chopra hurled the javelin to a distance of 87.58 metres in a field that had the likes of Germany's Johannes Vetter -- the top javelin exponent in the world -- to become the first track



& field athlete from India to win gold at the quadrennial showpiece.

Tracing the 23-year-old's journey from the IAAF World Under-20 Championships in 2016 -- where he achieved a world U-20 record throw of 86.48 metres, till the Tokyo Olympics --, WA wrote, "The final throw was taken (in Tokyo) and only then could Neeraj Chopra breathe a sigh of relief. It was a moment so monumental that 7 August will now be celebrated as National Javelin Day in his home country."

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has decided to celebrate August 7 each year as "National Javelin Throw Day" and all states and union territories will hold events to mark the occasion.



9 Camila Giorgi in semis with win over Coco Gauff

Montreal: Camila Giorgi avenged a recent loss to American teenager Coco Gauff as the Italian upset the 15th seed to enter the semifinals of the National Bank Open here on Saturday (IST).

In the last-four, she will face Jessica Pegula of the US, who won a tight contest against No.13 seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia.

Camila defeated the No.15 seed Coco, 6-4, 7-6(2), in their quarterfinal clash.

"I think it was a great match," Camila was quoted as saying by wtatennis.com. "I think I was very consistent. It was a great level, I think."

It took an hour and 39 minutes for former top-30 player Camila to oust the American teenager, extending her career-best performance in Canada. Camila had never reached the round of 16 at this event prior to this season.

World No.71 Camila has now eliminated three top-25 players from the Montreal event this week. The Italian upset No. 9 seed Elise Mertens of Belgium in the first round and No.7 seed Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic in the round of 16.

## Restore the funds taken away from Khelo India budget: Vijender Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**S**ports in India is badly administered. This no-nonsense statement from a medal-winning Olympian might raise eyebrows in the Sports Authority of India, or in the many federations that govern sports, for they are busy celebrating the country's historic Olympic medal haul.

But the questions Vijender Singh asks is going to haunt them. Why has a nation of 1.32 billion people been able to manage just one gold, two silver and four bronze medals after sending a record number of athletes to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics? Why did

it take 75 years after India got freedom for the country to reach this 'record' mark? What needs to be done?

"A lot," according to the 2008 Beijing Olympics bronze medal-winning pugilist who does not believe in pulling back his punches.

The professional boxer slammed the central government for slashing down Khelo India budget.

"Funding is important," Vijender said.

"The government slashed the Khelo India budget before the Olympics. This was something strange. There is a need for physios, psychologists, medical teams, dieti-

cians, masseurs and others. "Someone will say that everything is there, but the ground reality is so different. Only the cream gets these benefits, but not at the state or district level. Athletes are still struggling for the basic needs there. Our athletes were, are and will always be good, but how real are the facilities on offer? This must be probed," he added. "On the one hand you talk about sports promotions and on the other you cut the Khelo India budget. What is this? Khelo India is a good platform for athletes, but it needs to be run properly," the Olympian said.

Vijender also came out in support of the struggling wrestler Vinesh



Phogat, who got suspended from the Wrestling Federation of India. "WFI says Vinesh wore a Nike jersey. We must understand that Nike was her sponsor and that is the only place where we athletes get a chance to display our sponsors."

He signed off by asking a telling question: "What if Vinesh had won a medal? Would the WFI have suspended her?"

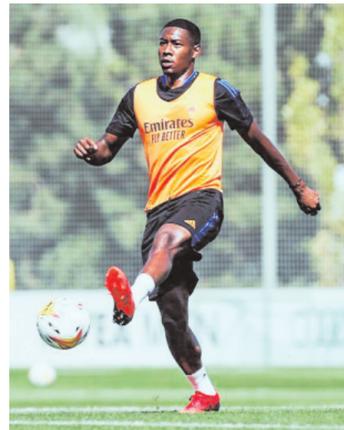
## La Liga: Real Madrid kick off new season

Madrid | Agencies

**R**eal Madrid set to begin campaign with visit to Alaves on Saturday evening with several players out injured and others pondering their future at the club. It has been a quiet pre-season by Real Madrid's standards and although the club still harbours dreams of signing Kylian Mbappe from Paris Saint Germain, the only arrival so far this summer is defender David Alaba, who helps cover for the departure of central defenders Sergio Ramos and Raphael Varane.

Alaba will go straight into Carlo Ancelotti's side as the Italian begins his second spell in Madrid, with Eder Militao his likely partner.

Questions over the fitness of Ferland Mendy and Dani Carvajal will probably see Marcelo and Lucas Vazquez begin as full backs, while in midfield Casemiro and Luka Modric will probably be partnered by Fede Valverde or Isco, with Toni Kroos out for an



indeterminate period with a groin injury, Xinhua reports. Karim Benzema is likely to lead the attack, despite lacking match fitness after a bout of Covid-19 saw him miss the start of pre-season training and the interest will revolve around whether Ancelotti will give a start to Gareth Bale, who is back in the fold after his loan to Tottenham, or if he puts his faith in the Brazilian duo of Vinicius Jr and Rodrigo.

Eden Hazard has trained with the squad this week, but the Belgian's fitness history implies he will have to settle for a place on the bench.

Alaves will be looking for a positive start to their campaign after their struggles of last season before the arrival of Javier Calleja as coach saw them escape relegation. They will base their survival of the connection between strikers Joselu and Lucas Perez, while young winger Facundo Pallistri will add further guile and pace up front.

## UNMUKT CHAND SIGNS MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT WITH MINOR LEAGUE CRICKET

Washington DC | Agencies

**U**nmukt Chand, the winning captain of the 2012 U-19 World Cup, has signed a multi-year contract with Silicon Valley Strikers for the 2021 season of the Minor League Cricket (MLC) in USA.

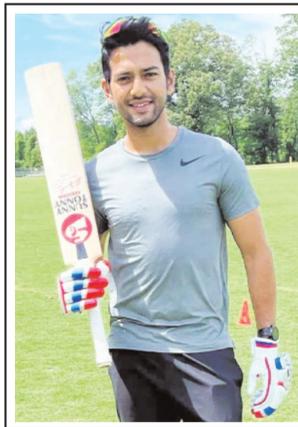
The announcement comes a day after 28-year-old Chand, who was in USA since April, announced his retirement from all forms of cricket

in India on Friday. In a statement posted on his social media accounts, Chand said that he is now 'ready to take the leap of faith and enter into a new territory and contribute my best'.

After re-locating to the San Francisco Bay Area, Chand will now make his MLC debut for the Strikers against the Social Lashings at the Morgan Hill Outdoor Sports Complex in a Minor League Cricket Championship match on Saturday.

"I'm delighted to take the next step in my cricket career by being part of the long-term growth of American cricket and the launch of Major League Cricket," said Chand in a statement.

Patel, who announced his retirement from Indian cricket this year, is now representing Manhattan Yorkers in the MLC. He is a member of Barbados Tridents in the upcoming edition of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL).



## MEDVEDEV, TSITSIPAS, ISNER IN TORONTO SEMIFINALS

Toronto | Agencies

**T**op seed Daniil Medvedev was two points from defeat against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz, but he held his nerve to produce a fine 2-6, 7-6(6), 7-6(5) comeback to reach the National Bank Open semifinals here on Friday evening.

The Russian will take on John Isner of the US, who extended his win streak to nine matches after he halted Frenchman Gael

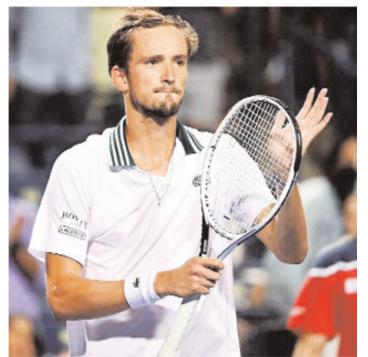
Monfils 7-6(5), 6-4 to reach the last-four.

Medvedev is seeking his fourth ATP Masters 1000 title, and a 12th tour-level title overall.

Medvedev, whose Wimbledon campaign was cut short in the fourth round by the seventh-seeded Hurkacz just over a month ago, was out for revenge as they faced off for the second time on the ATP tour. The Russian fired 38 winners, including 23 aces, to find a way to victory against Hurkacz,

who did not drop serve once in the contest. Third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas' season continued to go from strength to strength as the Greek recorded a 45th tour-leading victory of the year to defeat Casper Ruud of Norway 6-1, 6-4 to reach the semifinals.

Tsitsipas will next face Reilly Opelka after the American defeated Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut as the Greek tries to advance to the championship match in Canada again.



# Celebs share what 'Independence' means to them



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**head of Independence Day On August 15, celebrities have shared what being independent means to them. Here's what they said:

**Jasmin Bhasin:** True independence lies in living life with a lot of responsibilities. India is a progressive nation and we need to value all that we have. We should focus on what we can be. We, as a nation, have huge potential.

**Himanshu Malhotra:** For me Independence is following your heart and standing for what is right. We all must value our independence. My favourite freedom fighter is Subhash Chandra Bose. He was a man of principles who set an example and as a child too his story fascinated me.

**Delnaaz Irani:** Independence is all about being responsible and also being able to follow your heart at the same time. We are part of the progressive nation and we must respect our

freedom fighters, who got us freedom after a lot of struggle and blood on August 15, 1947.

**Hasan Zaidi:** Not in the context of the nation, independence should ideally mean free expression, free speech, the freedom to practice one's religion freely. The freedom to be able to meet, express and be all inclusive with each other. That to me is Independence.

**Parull Chaudhry:** Independence means everything to me. Freedom is actually everything. I think it's most important for human survival. I have always admired freedom fighter is Mangal Pandey.

We've known his story, what he has done and also after watching the film on him, I think he kind of stayed in my head.

**Sharad Malhotra:** I believe in living life on my own terms that's why Independence, for me, means doing what you love and loving what you do. The feeling of patriotism is always heart-touching. Pandemic has made us value life more.



## PRAJAKTA KOLI JOINS SHAKIRA, NAOMI OSAKA ON GOOGLE CHARITY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

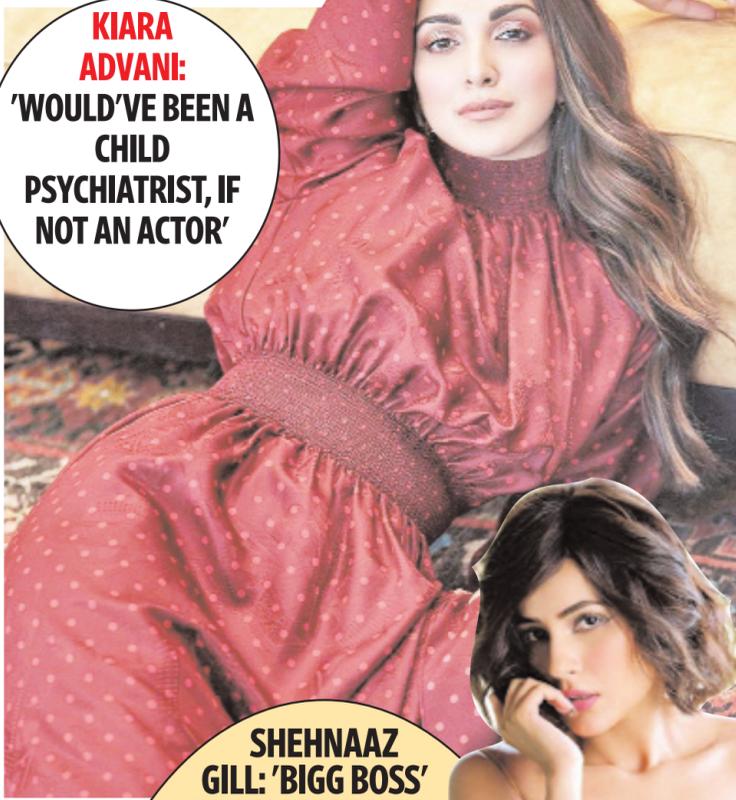
**A**ctor and YouTuber Prajakta Koli popularly known as 'MostlySane' will be representing India at Google.org, the charitable arm of Google.

The organisation is committing \$25 million in grants to non-profits addressing economic inequities faced by women and girls, as its next 'Impact Challenge'.

Prajakta will be joined by 28 other women leaders from diverse sectors and geographies such as artist Shakira, first US National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman, athlete Naomi Osaka, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu Tum, among others.

Having recently won an Emmy Award for the 'Creators For Change' documentary, Prajakta said: "Google has always been such a cheerleader for creators like me. This is another such occasion where they have included me in a conversation that affects so many of us." Prajakta will be one of the expert panelists who will screen the applicants and help Google.org make the most informed funding decision.

## KIARA ADVANI: 'WOULD'VE BEEN A CHILD PSYCHIATRIST, IF NOT AN ACTOR'



Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Kiara Advani is known for her roles in 'Kabir Singh' and 'Good Newz'. Her latest film 'Shershaah' is also receiving rave reviews from the audience.

Kiara, 29, made her debut with 'Fugly', but her role of the real-life character of Sakshi Rawat, a hotel manager, and cricketer M.S. Dhoni's wife, in sports biopic 'M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story' was the turning point of her career.

Interestingly, Kiara had an interest in psychiatry besides acting. She said, "If not an actor, I would have been a child psychiatrist." Kiara shared an insight into her life during a chat with IMDb.

## Arshi Khan's next song 'Hang Kardi' with Shok E

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**rshi Khan of Big Boss fame will be seen in the upcoming song 'Hang Kardi' with Shok E. Arshi has featured in several music videos in the past like 'Gaddi meri Ferrari', 'Bandi', 'Nain Nasheele', 'Suit Patiyala', to name a few. She was a contestant in 'Big Boss 11' and a challenger in 'Big Boss 14'.

Talking about her upcoming song, Arshi said: "As an actress, I feel lucky that people are loving my work and are offering me more projects. My upcoming song will be another hit sung by Shok E. I'm looking ahead for more love from my audience." The actress has also acted in television shows like 'Savitri Devi College & Hospital', 'Vish' and 'Ishq Mein Marjawan', and will soon start shooting for her upcoming television reality show titled 'Ayenge Tere Sajna'. Her web series 'The Devil Inside' was released recently. 'Hang Kardi' will release on August 16.



## SHEHNAAZ GILL: 'BIGG BOSS' HAS GIVEN ME NEW IDENTITY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**F**ormer Bigg Boss 13 contestant Shehnaaz Gill has credited the controversial reality show for everything that she has today. The Punjabi singer and actress said that Bigg Boss has given her a new identity and emotional bonds.

Shehnaaz, who is fondly called as the 'Katrina Kaif of Punjab', says the reality show also gave her a person who she can go to as a friend -- actor Siddharth Shukla. "Bigg Boss has given me a lot... a new identity, emotional bonds and a person who I can go to as a friend. It gives me great joy to visit the Bigg Boss OTT house with Siddharth Shukla," Shehnaaz said. Shehnaaz is overwhelmed with all the love that she and Siddharth have received. She added: "It's overwhelming to witness the love and support that Sidnaaz fans have been showering on us. I'm over the top excited to be part of my favourite show yet again and it will be fun to be with the other 'jodis' and to meet KJo as well."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Neha Malik