

absolute india

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Sensational Sindhu won Bronze in Olympic

Tokyo: Indian shuttler PV Sindhu won the bronze medal in women's singles badminton at the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday. She became only the second Indian and the country's first woman to win two Olympic medals, securing a bronze after a straight-game win over world no.9

Wrestler Sushil Kumar is the first and only other Indian to win two Olympic medals, following up his silver at 2008 Beijing with a silver at the 2012 London edition.

Sindhu defeated China's He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 at the Musashino Forest Sports Plaza to add a second medal to India's tally at the Olympics.

It is Sindhu's second medal at the Olympics after she won a silver medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics. She also becomes the first Indian woman to win two Olympic medals. With Sindhu's bronze, India has now equalled its tally of 2016 Rio Olympics.



Hockey: Men in Blue entered in semifinals

Tokyo: India defeated Great Britain 3-1 in the Men's Hockey quarterfinal to earn a spot in the semifinals at the Tokyo Olympics. The Manpreet Singh-led side will face off against the 2018 World Champions Belgium in the semifinals on Tuesday. This will be the first Olympics semifinal that India will play in 49 years, since the 1972 Munich Olympics, in which the eight-time champions India had lost to arch-rivals Pakistan in the semis. While India had won the gold medal defeating Spain in the final in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, there were no semifinals at that time and the top two teams from the round-robin stage had competed in the final.

TENSION IN ASSAM-MIZORAM BORDER, SECURITY FORCES ON ALERT

Wearing bullet proof jackets, Cachar district SP Ramandeep Kaur and Deputy Commissioner Kirti Jalli, accompanied by a huge contingent of security forces, moved along the trouble-torn bordering areas in bullet proof vehicles.

SILCHAR|AIZAWL | Agencies

Five days after a bloody border clash between Assam and Mizoram police, the inter-state borders of the two northeastern states remained quiet but tensed with security personnel remaining on extra alert to prevent any fresh eventuality, officials said on Saturday.

Due to the border troubles, responding to the Mizoram government's request, the Indian Oil Corporation has started supplying transport fuel to Mizoram by road through the alternate roads in Manipur, avoiding the trouble-ridden Cachar-Kolasib routes.

The Mizoram government has also taken steps to ferry various other essentials from neighbouring Tripura and Manipur. Mizoram shares 95 km inter-state borders with Manipur and 109 km with Tripura. Meanwhile, cutting across political lines, a 10-member all-party



MLA team of Assam Assembly led by Speaker Biswajit Daimary visited the bordering areas and strongly protested against the firing from

Satellite imaging to demarcate borders

The Union government has decided to demarcate boundaries of the Northeastern states through satellite imaging to settle inter-state border disputes that are often becoming a cause of concern and sometimes even leading to violence. The inter-state border disputes have come under fresh focus recently after five Assam Police personnel and a civilian were killed in clashes along the Assam-Mizoram border. The idea for demarcation of inter-state boundaries through satellite imaging was mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah a few months ago.

Mizoram, which killed six Assam policemen besides injuring many. Daimary said: "Just as all parties in Mizoram are united in protecting the borders of Mizoram, all parties in our state (Assam) must also be united. If the current policy and law do not allow for settlements in the reserve forest area of the border, then there is a need to formulate new policies or enact laws in the interest of border protection." In Aizawl, the Mizoram Chemists and Druggists Association (MCDA) in a letter to the state Chief Secretary said: "The Assam government in the guise of security concern has verbally given instructions to all trans-

porters in Guwahati not to carry any goods, even medicine, destined for Mizoram."

"Even private courier services have been barred from booking items and materials for Mizoram. In this Covid pandemic situation, life-saving drugs are being stopped by Assam leading to a dire situation in our state with far-reaching ramifications and consequences," MCDA President and General Secretary told the Chief Secretary. Violent clashes along the Assam-Mizoram border took place on July 26 that left six Assam Police personnel dead and around 100 civilians and security personnel injured.

Assam-Mizoram border row: Shah speaks to chief ministers

Guwahati/Aizawl: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday spoke to the Chief Ministers of Assam and Mizoram and requested them to resolve the inter-state border issue amicably through meaningful dialogue. Following the Home Minister's call, the two Chief Ministers agreed to resolve the border crisis through discussions. After holding the telephonic conversation with Shah, Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga tweeted: "As per the telephonic discussion with Union Home Minister and Assam Chief Minister, we agreed to resolve the Mizoram-Assam Border issue amicably through meaningful dialogue."

Congress slams Centre over vaccine shortage

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Sunday questioned the shortage of vaccines in the country amid claims by the government that 47 crore people have been vaccinated so far in the country.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a tweet on Sunday said, "July has also gone but vaccine shortage has not gone."

Echoing Rahul Gandhi's views, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh too attacked the government and said, "To vaccinate fully all adults by year end, at least 85 lakh doses/day must be administered. Highest we've achieved



for a 30 day period so far is 45 lakh doses/day. Capacity to ramp up vaccination exists in many states. The only problem is vaccine supply." The Congress has been targeting the government over the vaccination supply shortage, while the government has been blaming vaccine hesitancy in the country.

NO DEARTH OF VACCINE: HEALTH MINISTER MANDAVIYA

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday advised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi "to feel proud at the tireless efforts" of health workers who have administered over 13 crore vaccine doses in July.



To this, Mandaviya responded: "India has administered over 13 crore vaccines in July. The vaccination drive against corona will be expedited from this month. We are proud of our health workers for this achievement. I have heard that you are one in those 13 crores people who were vaccinated in July. But you did not speak a word for our scientists, did not appeal to the public to vaccinate. It means you are doing petty politics in the name of vaccination. Actually there is no lack of vaccines, you lack maturity," he claimed.

Taliban targeting critics with revenge killings

NEW DELHI/NEW YORK | Agencies

Taliban forces in Afghanistan are targeting known critics for attack despite claiming that they have ordered their fighters to act with restraint, Human Rights Watch said.

The International Criminal Court is currently investigating allegations of war crimes and serious human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, including the Taliban. Taliban commanders who knew or should have known about abuses by forces under their control and took no action to prevent or stop them are culpable as a matter of command responsibility, Human Rights Watch said. In Kandahar, the Taliban have been detaining and executing suspected



members of the provincial government and security forces, and in some cases their relatives. Activists in Kandahar said that in villages surrounding the provincial capital, Taliban commanders have detained scores of people associated with the government or police.

Delhi saw 141% above normal rainfall in July

Despite a heat wave condition in the initial days of July and the number of days it rained was only 16, Delhi's Safdarjung Observatory recorded 507.1 mm rainfall, nearly 141 per cent above normal in July.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The normal rainfall during July is 210.6 mm at Safdarjung Observatory. There were three days (in meteorological parlance, 24-hour duration from 8.30 a.m. on day one to 8.30 a.m. the next day) that witnessed heavy rainfall, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday.

The three days were July 18-19, 26-27 and 29-30. For the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on July 19, the rainfall recorded at Safdarjung was 69.6 mm, Palam 99.3 mm, Lodi Road 62 mm, Ridge 58 mm and Aya



Nagar recorded 51.6 mm rainfall. The total rainfall was nearly 141 per cent above normal compared to the long period average (comparable

average of rainfall during last 30 years).

Covid virus, vaccines does not enter human DNA, says Study

► The claims have led to "scaremongering" and people should not hesitate to be vaccinated, said researchers from University of Queensland.

► The research confirmed there was no unusual viral activity and the Covid-19 behaviour was in line with what was expected from a coronavirus.

SYDNEY | Agencies

Covid-19 cannot enter a person's DNA, say Australian researchers refuting claims of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that caused the infectious disease, integrating its genetic material into the human genome.

The study, published in the journal Cell Reports, showed there was no evidence of Covid-19 -- or the Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccines -- entering DNA.

"The evidence refutes this concept being used to fuel vac-



cine hesitancy," said Geoff Faulkner, Professor at the varsity's Queensland Brain Institute.

"We find no evidence of SARS-CoV-2 integration suggests such events are, at most, extremely rare in vivo, and therefore

are unlikely to drive oncogenesis or explain post-recovery detection of the virus. From a public health point of view, we would say that there are no concerns that the virus or vaccines can be incorporated into human DNA," Faulkner said.

In his previous research, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Faulkner suggested that positive Covid-19 tests long after recovery are due to the virus being incorporated into DNA.

"We looked into their claims that the human cells and machinery turned Covid-19 RNA into DNA, causing permanent mutations.

"We assessed the claims in cells grown in the laboratory, conducted DNA sequencing and found no evidence of Covid-19 in DNA," he added.

In May, researchers from the Purdue University in Indiana, US, showed that although throughout human history there have been viruses capable of integrating their genetic material into human genes, the Covid virus lacks the molecular machinery to integrate its RNA into human DNA.

10-year-old Krishna passes Class 10 exam in UP

LUCKNOW | Agencies

A ten-year-old boy has passed the Class 10 examination in Uttar Pradesh Board, securing 79 per cent marks.

The child prodigy, Rashtram Aditya Sri Krishna, secured special permission to appear in the Class 10 examination.

Aditya, who will turn 11 on October 17 this year, scored 82 marks in Hindi, 83 in English, 64 in mathematics, 76 in science, 84 in social science and 86 in Arts.

District inspector of schools, Mukesh Kumar Singh, said, "He is an exceptionally bright student

and is an inspiration to many of his age and even to senior students." Seeing his extraordinary talent, the UP Secondary Education Board (UPSEB), in 2019, had given him special permission after which he was enrolled in Class 9 at the MD Shukla Inter College in Lucknow.

This is the second time when UPSEB has allowed a comparatively younger child to appear for Class 10 board examinations. Earlier, child prodigy Sushma Verma had enrolled in Class 9 at the tender age of five. She became the country's youngest matriculate in 2007 when she passed the UP Board examination.



ALL STRANDED PEOPLE RESCUED IN HIMACHAL, CM DEPLOYS NEW CHOPPER

Team Absolute | Shimla

All 194 people, including women and children, stranded in the Himalayan heights of Himachal Pradesh for five days after roads closed down due to flash floods were rescued on Sunday, both by air and road, officials said.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur deployed his newly-acquired 16-seater chopper for ferrying people, comprising tourists, stranded in Udaipur subdivision in Lahaul-Spiti district.

As the weather cleared on Sunday after days, he directed authorities to make the chopper's maiden flight for the evacuation. Nineteen people were airlifted and the remaining 175 were evacuated by road with restoration of traffic.

Thakur, who reached Keylong, the district headquarters of Lahaul-Spiti, on Saturday to oversee the ongoing relief and rescue operations, also decided to return to the capital on Sunday in his old four-seater chopper so that the new one can be deployed to ferry the stranded people.

The evacuation was carried out from Udaipur, Fuda, Trilokinath, and Jahilm and the people were transported to Manali in public transport.

A total of 178 people, comprising tourists from New Delhi, Punjab, Odisha and Maharashtra, were rescued by road from various places on Saturday.

Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the local administration were deployed for the rescue operation.

The stranded people could not be airlifted earlier owing to bad climatic conditions, a government official told reporter.



The newly-hired chopper had been stationed in Kullu town since its arrival on the direction of the Chief Minister so that it could be deployed in airlifting people as the weather got cleared, he added. Seven people were washed away in a

flash flood in the Tozing rivulet in Udaipur subdivision, some 15 km from district headquarters Keylong, after a cloudburst on July 27. Three people are still missing.

The strategic Manali-Sarchu road was closed for traffic at

various places due to multiple landslides, said the BRO's Project Deepak.

It dispatched its trained Engineering Task Force with personnel and equipment to undertake the rescue and road clearing operations.

On July 29, on one such stretch near Sarchu ahead of Baralacha Pass on Manali-Leh road, a number of civilians, including women and children, were stranded and facing problems due to lack of oxygen in inclement high-altitude conditions. The BRO team cleared the landslide, amid a series of other landslides, near Kenlung Sarai located at an altitude of 14,480 ft and rescued the people.

However, Naik Reetesh Kumar Pal of Project Deepak, who was part of the rescue efforts, lost his life. The road was, later, opened for traffic.

In another incident on July 27, a separate Engineer Task Force of the BRO was deployed for clearance of Kiler-Tandi road which was blocked due to heavy landslides. Two passenger vehicles were stranded in the area.

The team, which had already cleared two landslides en route, carried out a late-night clearance operation to save lives of civilians stranded in the slide zone.

During the operation, some members of the team, six civilians and a vehicle were washed away by a sudden flash flood. Junior Engineer Rahul Kumar lost his life in the incident, while others were rescued by the BRO personnel.

The BRO personnel, later, cleared the landslide, rescued the stranded passengers and moved them to safer locations.

The climatic conditions in those areas during winter are harsh as the temperature plummets to as low as minus 25 degrees Celsius.

BJP will return to power in UP with massive majority: Shah

Team Absolute | Lucknow

Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that the BJP would return to power with a massive majority in the next assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and asked the opposition leaders to prepare for their defeat.

Speaking at the 'bhumi pujan' ceremony of the Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science (UFSIS) that is coming up in Sarojini Nagar locality in Lucknow, Shah said that under the leadership of chief minister Yogi Adityanath, the state has emerged as a leader. "Yogi Adityanath has turned Uttar Pradesh into a number one state in implementation of 44 welfare schemes. He has improved the law-and-order situation that is now inviting investments and has also checked corruption. During the Covid pandemic, Yogi ji and his team did excellent work. Opposition leaders will now come out because elections are approaching but people must not be misled by them. Where



BJD MPs seeks GI tag for Odisha's sweet dish 'Rasabali'



BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

Three Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs from Odisha on Sunday demanded Geographical Indication (GI) tag for 'Kendrapara Rasabali', a sweet dish claimed to have originated from the 400-year-old Baladevji temple in the state's Kendrapara district.

BJD MPs -- Subash Chandra Singh, Munna Khan and Mamata Mohanta, met Union Commerce and

BSF DETECTS LANDMINE ALONG LOC IN J&K'S POONCH



Jammu: Border Security Force (BSF) troopers on Sunday recovered a landmine along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

BSF sources said a team of BSF along with specially trained sniffer dog 'Juliet' was on area domination patrol near the LoC when the sniffer dog sat over a piece of land, which created suspicion about the presence of explosive material at the site in the Mendhar area of Poonch district. "The site was immediately cordoned off and searches were launched at the suspected piece of land where a landmine was detected. "Disposal of the landmine was done as per the standard operating procedures," sources said, adding that the investigation is going on to ascertain how this landmine reached the area. "Involvement of militant outfit to carry out an explosion to target LoC guarding troops cannot be ruled out", sources said.

TAMIL NADU ATM THEFT CASES TO BE HANDED OVER TO CBI

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Crime branch special police team which is probing the series of thefts in the state targeting SBI ATMs is preparing a final report to be submitted to the DGP.

Tamil Nadu home department sources told IANS that the state police would soon be handing over the case in which around Rs 5 crore was swindled by the ATM thieves, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The CBI is the nodal agency in the country to probe banking frauds especially in nationalized banks and hence the police will hand the case over to the premier investigative agency. The Tamil Nadu police have already arrested 4 key suspects in the case but 6 others are still at large. The probe by the CBI will be much effective in getting the other accused also apprehended and thus preventing further ATM thefts in other states. According to the Tamil Nadu Crime branch special team which had probed the case, the thieves targeted 19 ATMs of the SBI in Chennai, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore and Kancheepuram over a period of seven days starting June 17. The arrested are Amir Arsh Alimuddi (37), Virend Rawat (23), Najim Hussain (32) and Sowcat Ali (37). All four belong to Ballabgarh in Faridabad District of Haryana. The police probe has revealed that the robbers first took cash from the machines and then prevented the lid from getting closed for a while by using their hands.

Parliament logjam: Both Houses worked for 18 hours in 2 weeks

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the stalemate between the opposition and the government continued for two weeks, both Houses of parliament have witnessed little business except the government passing bills amid din without any proper discussion.

The flashpoint is the Pegasus project snooping controversy on which the opposition demands discussion but the government says that after IT Minister's statement only clarification can be sought. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi termed it a "non issue".

Amid the blame game, sources have said that both Houses of parliament could function for only 18 hours in 105 hours of scheduled sitting.

In the upper house, a proper debate was witnessed only on



Covid while the Lok Sabha could not see any debate, though the government passed important legislations in both Houses of the

Congress to sort out Rajasthan issue in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After taking feedback from Rajasthan leaders and MLAs, Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken has returned to Delhi and will meet top party leaders in a few days to discuss the issue and adjustments to be made in the state unit and the government.

The Congress top brass is keen to resolve the issue of Rajasthan after the changes in Punjab where Navjot Singh Sidhu has been made state chief.

Congress sources say that there will be major rejig in the Ashok Gehlot government and the state organisation. Sources say that after Maken submits his report, a final call will be taken by



interim party chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and the General Secretary entrusted to implement the decisions. Former Deputy Chief Minister and state chief Sachin Pilot is in New Delhi and has been meeting party leaders to push for Cabinet expansion and appointments in boards and corporation in the state to adjust his loyalists, a year after he revolted.

Maken, before returning to Delhi, had one-on-one interaction with all 115 Congress MLAs, and senior party leaders.

UP woman clings to wooden log, remains afloat for 16 hours

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 50-year-old woman fell into a nullah here and kept herself afloat for 16 hours before she was finally rescued.

The woman, identified as Jai Devi, clung on to a piece of wooden log that came her way in the strong currents even as she was swept away into the flooded Yamuna on Friday.

She was rescued about 25 kilometres away in Hamirpur by some boatmen, who heard her cries for help and pulled her out of the river.

She was later reunited with her family by the police.

According to reports, Jai Devi had gone to her fields when she accidentally fell into the swollen Kilendar nullah in Jalana that empties into the river Yamuna.

After falling into the stream on Friday evening, she was swept away following a strong current that took her to the Yamuna River. She caught on to a wooden log and remained afloat for more than 16 hours.



When the boatmen in the Manki village in Hamirpur district saw her drifting in the river, they alerted the police and brought her out.

She was admitted to a hospital and her son Rahul and daughter Vinita were informed

and they rushed to her side.

The police later handed the woman to her family members. Hararajpur police outpost in-charge Bharat Yadav said, "It was nothing but God's miracle."

2 LUCKNOW TEMPLES GET THREAT LETTERS

Lucknow: Security has been beefed up at the famous Mankameshwar Temple in Lucknow after the temple trust received a letter threatening to blow up the city's prominent temples and the office of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Lucknow police Commissioner D.K. Thakur said the police were investigating the letter. "Security arrangements have been beefed up in view of the threat. Police teams are working with the agencies having expertise in such crimes. Our teams are also scanning the mobile number of some suspects. I have spoken to the head of the temple and other staff members and apprised them about the police preparedness," he said.

Earlier on Friday, the Aliganj Hanuman temple staff had also received a similar letter with the demand that the terror accused, recently arrested by the ATS, be freed. Security around the temple has also been tightened in view of the threat.

"SUBSTANDARD, DOCTOR-LESS HOSPITALS": STATE GOVT CANCELS 60 LICENCES

Of the 60 private hospitals' and nursing homes' licences cancelled by Madhya Pradesh Government, most were in Gwalior (24) followed by capital Bhopal (10).

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has initiated a major clean-up of the state's medical system that had sprouted scores of substandard facilities amid the Covid pandemic that had also set off a boom in malpractices among doctors.

It has cancelled the licences of 60 private hospitals and nursing homes across the state for operating in sub-par conditions, many even without regular doctors. Of these, the most were in Gwalior (24), followed by capital Bhopal (10).

The move came a little a month-and-a-half after media reports exposed the deep malaise of 'empty shell' hospitals plaguing the sector.

The report showed how doctor-less hospitals and nursing homes had mushroomed in the state, taking advantage of the severe shortage of health facilities during the pandemic.

It exposed how many physicians held 'permanent resident doctor' status in multiple facilities, while it was practically impossible for them to have served all their roles.



Bhopal alone accounted for 104 such nursing homes and hospitals. Indore had 48, Jabalpur 34, and Gwalior 116 during the first and second waves of the pandemic.

This is besides the lack of other basic facilities even as the state's government hospitals have more

than 5,000 vacancies for doctors and 16,000 for nursing staff.

Of the 692 hospitals now being investigated by the government, 301 private facilities have been handed show-cause notices for "deficiencies." Officials found gross violations and noncompliance with

rules, too. "There is no such case, but if any such case comes to me, we will take action. Ideally, they (permanent resident doctors) should work in one hospital only," the state Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang had said.

4 members of family killed in house collapse

The mud house collapsed in the morning following which a 35-year-old man, his 60-year-old mother and two minor daughters, aged 7 and 8, died after being trapped under the debris, police officials said.

Team Absolute | Rewa

Four members of a family, including two minors, were killed and another girl was injured after their mud house collapsed

due to heavy rains in Rewa district on Sunday, an official said.

The incident took place in Ghuchiyari Bahera Village under Garhi police station area, about 50km from the district headquarters, collector Ilayaraja T said.

The mud house collapsed in the morning following which a 35-year-old man, his 60-year-old mother and two minor daughters, aged 7 and 8, died after being trapped under the debris, police officials said.

Another minor daughter of the man received injuries and she was admitted to

Gangev Hospital, the collector said.

Eyewitnesses claimed the administration team could not reach the spot in time due to the lack of a proper road connecting the village.

A motorable road is about three km away from the village, they said. Mangawa sub-divisional magistrate KP Pandey was monitoring the relief and rescue work, the collector said.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state Congress chief Kamal Nath condoled the loss of lives and expressed grief over the incident.

CM PLANTS KARANJ SAPLING IN SMART UDYAN



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday planted Karanj sapling, which is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. On this occasion, Member of Parliament VD Sharma was also present. Karanj plant is also used for religious purposes. Its oil is anthelmintic. Karanj is also used in diabetes, dental diseases. Its wood is also used as a Datun (natural cleaning brush for teeth). Its species include karanj, kat karanj and chirbilva.

State govt suppressing number of hooch deaths, says Kamal Nath

"Neither is the chief minister's dream city safe nor is the excise minister's constituency secure. After the incident in Ujjain, the state government was engaged in a cover-up while claiming to conduct a probe," the senior Congress leader said

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee chief Kamal Nath on Saturday alleged that a network of illicit liquor is spreading across Madhya Pradesh.

"After the Mandsaur tragedy, five persons have died in Indore while deaths in Khandwa and Khargone have also been reported due to the consumption of hooch," Nath said in a statement.

"Neither is the chief minister's dream city safe nor is the excise minister's constituency secure. After the incident in Ujjain, the state govern-

ment was engaged in a cover-up while claiming to conduct a probe," the senior Congress leader said. "I want to ask chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan about the Ujjain incident report. Where has he hidden the report that was submitted by the investigation team?" Nath asked. "The report has to be made public. How many suggestions from the report has the government implemented? It needs to tell the people," Nath added. The former chief minister pointed out that had the government taken steps after the inquiry into the Ujjain hooch tragedy, many other incidents could have been averted. "But the govern-



ment is only busy in cover-ups," he alleged. "In the chief minister's dream city of Indore, there are firing incidents over supply of illicit liquor. Poisons liquor is being sold in residential areas. It seems as though the state has been handed over to the liquor mafia," Nath said. Nath claimed that illicit liquor trade is flourishing under the protection of the excise department and police. He said the government has no control over the illicit liquor mafia.

GOVERNOR OFFERED TO WEAR SCARF AS CHIEF PATRON OF BSG



Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel was felicitated on the occasion of World Scarf Day by offering to wear a badge and scarf as the Chief Patron of Bharat Scouts and Guides. The Governor administered the pledge to the State Secretary of Bharat Scouts and Guides Madhya Pradesh Ashok Janwade and other officials. The State Secretary gave brief information about the Bharat Scouts and Guides organisation to the Governor ubhai Patel and presented a copy of the magazine Balchar Ravi, published by Bharat Scout and Guide. Anita Ankulnerkar, Joint Secretary, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Madhya Pradesh and State Training Commissioner BL Sharma were also present on the occasion.

COPS THRASHED AFTER THEY REFUSE TO PAY PARKING FEE



Ratlam: Chaotic scenes were witnessed outside a railway station at Ratlam after a fight between two officers of Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and a parking contractor. The tiff, that broke out after the officers refused to pay the parking fee, soon escalated into a physical fight, show CCTV footage of the incident.

In the video, the officers are seen entering the railway station after the situation calmed down a bit, however, as soon as they come out of the building, Ravi Meena - the parking contractor - and two of his aides attack them. The men don't back off even when one of the officers takes out his pistol and points it at them. In the next frame, one of the officers is seen entering the station again. This time, he comes back with two police officers. After the intervention by cops, both parties went to a police station to lodge their complaints. No report, however, has been filed so far. Meena is said to be a habitual offender. A few months ago, the police had received information about betting in the parking area of the Ratlam railway station which then sent a team there to investigate. When the team reached the spot, the contractor entered into a tiff with a sub-inspector which resulted into a case against him.

Online plea kicks off for justice to Satna twins

Team Absolute | Satna

Locals have now started a campaign on social media demanding justice for the twins who were abducted on gunpoint from a school bus and later murdered in Chitrakoot of Satna district.

A page has been created on social media site Facebook where several pictures of people holding placards and demanding justice for the twins is posted.

On July 26, court had sentenced five accused with life imprisonment, while one accused had committed sui-

cide while being in jail. "My only objective is to ensure justice for my kids. And the accused in such crimes get such capital punishment that would set an example before others and will deter people from committing such crime. We are also requesting the

government for review and at the same time we are taking all measures on our behalf to file an appeal of the judgement," father of the deceased twins, Brajesh Rawat said. "In the meantime, civil society volunteers started an online campaign demanding justice for the kids," he added.

Twins, Priyansh and Shreyansh Rawat, were kidnapped at gunpoint from their school bus in Chitrakoot on February 12. Later, police found their bodies on the Yamuna riverbank near Baberu in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district late on February 23. The boys were alive for nine days after their abduction, including two days in Chitrakoot itself, but a task force comprising 500 police personnel, including the STF of both MP and UP that worked in close coordination, failed to find them in time.

CM pays floral tributes to Lokmanya Tilak

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday garlanded the photograph of India's brave freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak on his death anniversary at his residence, BJP Organization General Secretary Suhas Bhagat and MP VD Sharma, who were also present on the occasion also paid tributes floral tributes to the late leader.

Lokmanya Tilak, the first popular leader of the Indian freedom struggle, was born on July 23, 1857 in Chikhli village in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Shri Lokmanya Tilak was an Indian nationalist, teacher, social reformer, lawyer and freedom fighter. Lokmanya Tilak started celebrating Ganesh Utsav and Shivaji Utsav throughout the week to complete the programme of public awareness. Through

these festivals, the feeling of patriotism was instilled in people and got the courage to fight against the injustice of the British.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was called the "Father of Indian Unrest" by the British colonial authority, gained much fame during the Home Rule Movement, due to which he was given the title of Lokmanya. Lokmanya Tilak passed away on August 1, 1920 in Mumbai.

BUS OVERTURNS; 13 INJURED, 3 OF THEM CRITICAL

Vidisha: At least 13 people were injured, including three critically, when a sleeper coach bus overturned on the Bhopal-Sagar highway near Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha city on Sunday morning, police said. The accident took place at around 5.40 am near Hirnai village on the highway, located about 50 km from the state capital Bhopal. Civil Lines police station in-charge Kamlesh Soni said. The bus, carrying 22 passengers, was heading towards Sagar from Bhopal, he said. Thirteen passengers were injured and the condition of three of them was critical, the official said.

The three critically injured persons were referred to Bhopal for treatment, he said. A case was registered in connection with the incident, he added.

Panchayat new Central Vista-like office; higher-ups say 'no'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The panchayat in the village of Hirankheda, Seoni Malwa block, in Hoshangabad district, has found itself at odds with the Janpad and Zila Panchayat offices after their revamped plan for the new Panchayat Bhawan in the village was ignored.

With their current panchayat office being too small, the gram sabha in Hirankheda decided to improve it and had passed a resolution on June 15 to build their new panchayat office in the image of Central Vista, the new Parliament complex under construction in New Delhi.

However, officials in the Panchayat and Rural Development Department in the state have refused to approve the design, citing a constraint of time. With the intent of providing more work during the pandemic at the village level, the department had ordered the construction of panchayat offices where needed.

The department had shared a standard architectural plan, which the panchayat said doesn't meet their needs. The panchayat officials even tried to reach out to the Principal Secretary of the department, Umakant Umarao, but haven't received a response. 101Reporters too made repeated attempts to reach him but he did not respond to the phone calls and messages sent to him. Hirankheda is the biggest village in the area



with a population of 3,800. Sarpanch Mahesh Parihar said, "To pass any resolution at the gram sabha, a minimum quorum of 10% is required. So the panchayat office should have the capacity to accommodate at least 380 people in the meeting hall," he said. The government-sanctioned design is too small to accommodate that many people. Moreover, given the pandemic, there should be enough space to maintain social distancing norms during the meetings, Parihar added.

The young panchayat, whose members are mostly in their early to mid-30s, is racing to change the face of the village, said Panch Ashutosh Litoria (28). Part of this effort is a modern and eye-catching panchayat bhawan with facilities that can cater to all the needs of the residents. Apart from being used a few times a year to hold gram sabha meetings, which is the primary function, they would also like the new

building to serve as a community space that can host official and social events.

Durgesh Kumar Bhumarkar, CEO Janpad Panchayat, Seoni Malwa, said, "We have a design that is approved by the Zila Panchayat office and other higher authorities. However, the Sarpanch and Panchs submitted their drawings a few days ago which I have sent to the Zila Panchayat office. "However, the CEO of the Hoshangabad Zila Panchayat, Manoj Sariyam, was unequivocal about the matter. He said that the people of Hirankheda were indulging in 'netagiri' (political tactics). "If government funds are being used to construct the panchayat bhawan then it will be built according to the design given by the government and not of the gram sabha. Let them build their panchayat bhawan with their own money if they want to go by their own design," he said. But the village is determined to not allow the bureaucracy to force its design on the gram sabha. Activist and a resident of Hirankheda, Rakesh Malviya defends it as the fundamental right given to the village panchayat. "The Gram Sabha is the basic unit of democracy. Any decision taken by the village panchayat is binding on all higher officials. In this case, the village panchayat has taken the decision unanimously. It is beyond comprehension as to why higher officials want to impose their plans on us."

FIRST ZIKA VIRUS CASE FOUND IN PUNE; WOMAN PATIENT RECOVERS

In a jolt to the Maharashtra health authorities grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic, the first-ever case of Zika virus has been detected in a woman from Belsar in Pune district, officials said here late on Saturday.

Team Absolute |Pune

The health department assured that the 50-year-old patient has fully recovered from the Zika virus infection and nobody in her family of three have displayed any symptoms.

The woman, who had shown symptoms since July 15, was diagnosed positive with Zika virus and also Chikungunya on Friday, spread through mosquitoes.

As the alarm bells set ringing, a health team comprising state surveillance officer Pradeep Awate, assistant director Kamalapurkar, state entomologist Mahendra Jagtap and others rushed to the village and studied the situation on Saturday.

They held emergency meetings with the Belsar sarpanch and gram panchayat members, the local health authorities, health workers and other stakeholders and apprised them about the precautions to be taken if any other Zika patients are detected.

Around 40 samples were collected from the village with a population of around 3,500, of which 25 tested positive for Chikungunya and 3 for dengue, and the sole woman's sample was positive for Zika



virus.

The Zika virus is caused by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito, and 80 per cent of the patients do not get any symptoms, while the rest may suffer from fever, body-ache, itching eyes, acne and joint pains, and pregnant women could suffer miscarriage if they contract it.

The health department has now directed all the concerned officials to take adequate precautionary measures while surveying for Covid-19, Zika and other insect-borne diseases and not to neglect any cases.

PIL seeks permission for journalists to travel on Mumbai local trains

The PIL filed by Mumbai Marathi Patrakar Sangh states that while as many as 12 states have declared journalists and media personnel as frontline workers, Maharashtra has not done so.

Team Absolute |Mumbai

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed before the Bombay High Court seeks to declare journalists and other staff in the media industry as essential or frontline workers and allow them to travel on the Mumbai local.

The PIL filed by Mumbai Marathi Patrakar Sangh states that while as many as 12 states have declared journalists and media personnel as frontline workers, Maharashtra has not done so.

The PIL further states that during the Covid-19 pandemic, gathering news and making it reach people has



become even more important and necessary. The plea says that the media has played a key role in giving accurate information on the policies

related to the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccination, functioning centres. It says that despite making representation before the Chief Minister on May

Will Fully Vaccinated People be Allowed to Travel on Mumbai Local Trains? CM Thackeray Likely to Take Final Decision Today

Team Absolute |Mumbai

A s coronavirus cases continued to drop in Maharashtra, at least 25 districts in the state, including state capital Mumbai may get some relaxation in COVID-19 induced curbs from Monday, claimed reports. Notably, Rajesh Tope, state Health Minister, a couple of days ago had indicated that the Uddhav Thackeray-led government is mulling over a plan and some important decisions regarding easing in restrictions at some places could be taken.

"Of the 36 districts, 25 have come to the third level and have a good recovery

rate and hence they can be given a bit of relaxation, and in 11 other districts - Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Ahmednagar, Solapur, Beed, Raigad, Pune, and Osmanabad that have no or very less recovery rate, no relaxation will be given to them," Tope told reporters on Thursday, soon after CM Thackeray chaired a meeting to review the Covid-19 situation in the state.

Besides, a decision over allowing fully vaccinated people to commute on Mumbai local trains might be taken today. Suburban services in the financial capital have been

suspended for the general public since April 15. To avoid crowding, the local train services, at present, are allowed only for those engaged in medical and essential services.

Earlier, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray had urged the Chief Minister to resume the local train services for the general public, particularly for those who have completed their vaccination. He also asked the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra to provide relaxations in coronavirus-induced restrictions in a bid to provide relief to the general public.

Ex-Maoist teenage girl, who hunted cops, now aspires to be one!

Team Absolute |Gondia

I n a strange twist of fate, cops who once hunted this dreaded girl are now her jealous and zealous guardian angels -- and that same gun-wielding 19-year-old girl, who used to target cops and the security forces once, now aspires to be one of them.

The teenaged tribal girl is Rajula Hidami, barely 13, and studying in Class VII in the village school, when she was unwittingly forced into bloody Maoist activities as a Dalam Member, in 2016. However, in 2018, while on 'lookout duty', she escaped their clutches to officially surrender before the then Superintendent of Gondia, Harish Baijal, and Additional SP, Sandeep Atole, as part of the policy to bring the waywards into the societal mainstream.

Then, she expressed a desire to resume her interrupted studies from Class VIII onwards, which the police wholeheartedly facilitated, and this year, she cleared her SSC exams with 50.80 per cent through the Manoharbai Patel High School &



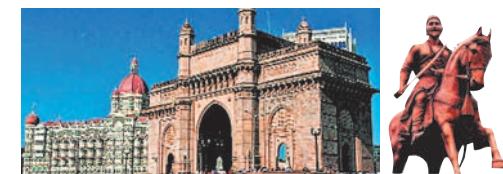
Junior College, ably guided by the principal K. C. Sahare. Buoyed by her academic success, Rajula now aspires to be a police-woman to serve the society, said her local guardian (LG), a serving policeman who declined to be identified in view of security concerns for his ward (Rajula).

Hailing from the Gond tribal community in Lavhari village of the Maoist-infested Gadchiroli district, the LG said Rajula's story of being coerced into the Maoist hellhole and then emerging unscathed is an inspiration. "One day, when she was barely 13-14, she grabbed her basic mobile phone and went to the jungles to graze her herd of sheep-goats... That afternoon, some killer

Maoists lurking there espied her and suddenly confronted her," the LG said. Unwilling to take risks -- in case she was a police informer -- the Maoists coaxed her to show them some spot in the jungle, but when she refused, they grabbed her mobile. Reluctantly, she guided them for at least 4-5 km into the deep forests, and then demanded her phone back to return home. However, the rebels gently explained that it would be dark soon, she could be attacked

by wild animals and coaxed her to spend the night in their hidden camp. That was Rajula's error, she slept in the camp and the next morning, they practically made her captive, deaf to all her cries and pleas for release over the next three years. "Rajula was studying in Class

maharashtra



Fadnavis seeks all-party meet to discuss measures for flood management

Fadnavis, who toured flood-ravaged areas of the Konkan region and western Maharashtra over the last few days, in a letter to the chief minister said all previous reports pertaining to floods should be studied and their recommendations be implemented

Team Absolute |Mumbai

Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to convene an all-party meeting to discuss long-term measures for tackling floods, in the wake of some parts of the state facing deluge after heavy rains last month.

Fadnavis, who toured flood-ravaged areas of the Konkan region and western Maharashtra over the last few days, in a letter to the chief minister said all previous reports pertaining to floods should be studied and their recommendations be implemented.

He also sought a separate disaster management authority for districts in Konkan, considering the frequency of natural calamities in the region.

"For deliberating on long-term measures, an all-party meeting should be convened," the former CM said in the letter while listing 26 demands.

He sought a separate fund to provide immediate financial assistance to the kin of the flood victims and the affected people.



Cleanliness of the flood-hit areas should also be taken up on priority, Fadnavis said.

He demanded that the administration take steps to provide food, clothing, medicines and temporary shelter to the flood affected people.

Fadnavis said around 700 Covid-19 patients and

25 deaths are reported every day in Kolhapur, and demanded special safety precautions against the viral infection.

Notably, Kolhapur in western Maharashtra was severely affected by floods last month.

Fadnavis said the financial aid for crop losses and cleaning of agriculture land should be deposited in the bank accounts of farmers immediately. He also demanded financial assistance for fishermen in the Konkan region and for shopkeepers in flood-hit areas. The BJP leader further sought relief for handcart pullers and street vendors. He also demanded an allowance for those whose houses have been damaged, till they are rehabilitated.

Special loan scheme at concessional interest rates should be formulated for different sections of society to resurrect their lives, he said.

The government should help banks to implement such a scheme, he added.

Fadnavis also said a scheme initiated during his government's tenure about the construction of diversion canals to channelise flood waters to drought-hit areas should be expedited.

Over one lakh vaccinated in a day in Mumbai; twice in last one week

Over 17.71 lakh people have been inoculated in Mumbai to date.



Team Absolute |Mumbai

M umbai on Saturday vaccinated 1,01,903 people on Saturday - twice in a week and thrice in two months that the city has been able to inoculate over 1 lakh people in a day.

Over 17.71 lakh people have been inoculated in Mumbai to date. On Friday, 1,01,944 people were vaccinated across 426 centres.

Of Saturday's figures, 70,213 people were vaccinated

doses were administered in a day - the highest number of jabs given in a day to date. Currently, the number of citizens who have received their first dose stands at 54,52,457. According to the health ministry's data, over 16.19 lakh citizens aged above 60 have been fully vaccinated.

Besides, 21.99 lakh in the 45-plus age group and 26.61 lakh in the 18-44 age bracket have got at least one shot of a Covid-19 vaccine.

viral disease. The Maharashtra government had last year issued guidelines for Ganesh pandals and set the height for all idols at four feet.

This year too, the state government has issued guidelines to restrict the height of Ganesh idols to up to four feet. The height of the idols in public celebrations has been restricted to four feet while those in homes have been limited to two feet. It has appealed to residents to carry out all festivities in line with Covid appropriate behaviour and also avoid crowding. Ganeshotsav Mandals have also been directed by the government to seek permission from the local administration.

Maharashtra has so far recorded 6,303,715 cases, 132,791 deaths and 6,090,786 recoveries due to the coronavirus disease. On Saturday, nearly 7,000 people were detected Covid-19 positive while 225 succumbed and 7,467 recovered from the viral disease. The ongoing Covid-19 restrictions in 25 districts, including Mumbai, may see more relaxations today as they have a lower Covid-19 positivity and growth rate than the state's average.

Lalbaugcha Raja Mandal to celebrate Ganesh Charturthi in traditional way

In 2020, the Lalbaugcha Raja Ganeshotsav Mandal, for the first time in 86 years of its existence, did not celebrate Ganesh Charturthi owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and instead held an 11-day blood and plasma donation drive which assisted health workers in Mumbai in their fight against the viral disease.

Team Absolute |Mumbai

A s Maharashtra continues to battle the ongoing second wave of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, the Lalbaugcha Raja Ganeshotsav Mandal said it would celebrate Ganesh Charturthi in traditional way this year in adherence to virus norms necessitated to contain the spread of the virus, news agency ANI reported on Sunday. The 11-day festival, which is celebrated with much enthusiasm in Mumbai and the rest of



Maharashtra, will begin from September 10.

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'Use of technology is key in fighting the next Covid wave'

Waste water testing systems, multiple forecasting models help to prepare for upcoming waves, says Shiv Kumar, co-founder of Catalyst group which is the founding partner of COVIDActionCollab.

Team Absolute |Pune

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world early last year, it was technology that came to the rescue by easing millions into remote working scenarios, providing entertainment and aiding in tackling the virus itself.

Technology is also crucial in preventing a third wave, according to Shiv Kumar, co-



help us prepare for upcoming waves of the pandemic," Kumar said. One such initiative is the Precision Pandemic Public Health Surveillance system, a waste water testing platform developed by the collaborative in partnership with the Karnataka government. The first-of-its-kind platform in Asia detects the presence of the virus in waste water, serving as an early warning indicator of an outbreak in a new area, particularly in densely populated urban areas. This helps to identify an affected community in the early stages even with asymptomatic carriers. Siddhant Sawhney, technology lead of the collaborative, said advances in technology also enable diagnosis and treatment in low-resource environments remotely or through point-of-care devices.



EDITOR'S SPECS

'Boost' for Rahul

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's arrival in Delhi seems to have galvanised Congress leader

Rahul Gandhi, who attended the meeting of 14 opposition parties, and attacked the government over the Pegasus scandal, farmers' agitation and even inflation, asking why no discussion is being held on the floor of the House on these issues. After the opposition meeting, where the Trinamool Congress MPs were not present, Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "Sitting with the entire opposition is extremely humbling. Amazing experience, wisdom and insight in everyone present." Later addressing the media, he said: "The entire opposition is here... our voice is being curtailed in the Parliament." He said that they were only asking whether the Pegasus software was bought and if it was used against certain persons in India. Banerjee is also rallying support for opposition unity. She is meeting Congress as well as other opposition leaders in Delhi, but the absence of her party MPs from the opposition meet indicates that the Trinamool leader is testing waters in Delhi prior to the big leap ahead of the Lok Sabha polls scheduled in 2024. There have been opposition meetings minus the Congress, called by Trinamool leader Yashwant Sinha at NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's residence.

However, the Congress has stressed that there cannot be opposition unity without the Congress as it has a pan-India presence. But Rahul Gandhi, leading the charge in the opposition meet, indicated that Congress is a bit wary of Banerjee's presence in Delhi and doesn't want to leave a vacuum in opposition leadership. 14 opposition parties met to devise a common strategy to corner the Centre on issues like the Pegasus snooping row and the Assam-Mizoram border violence. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which has so far not been part of any joint opposition strategy, was also present in the meeting.

Deal to end tension in Syria's Daraa reached under Russian mediation



Damascus | Agencies

A deal to end the recent tension in Syria's southern province of Daraa has been reached under a Russian mediation, a war monitor reported. The deal, reached on Saturday, will see an end to the military showdown in Daraa, where the army and local armed men have been engaged in heavy battles over the past few days, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights in a statement.

The UK-based watchdog group said 130 wanted armed men will depart to rebel-held areas in the northwestern province of Idlib

The deal, reached on Saturday, will see an end to the military showdown in Daraa, where the army and local armed men have been engaged in heavy battles over the past few days, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights in a statement.

under the deal, reports Xinhua news agency. Also, the Eighth Corps, which is backed by Russia, will enter areas in Idlib and assume military positions. Meanwhile, civilians who fled their homes as a result of the violence, returned and exams were resumed. The observatory said the recent showdown killed 12 civilians, 11 armed men, and nine government forces. Tension in Daraa has been brewing for a month, resulting in a blockade imposed by the Syrian army. On Sunday, a deal was supposed to end the tension but it failed as clashes flared up. The Syrian army entered Daraa in 2018 after the rebels there were dislodged to rebel-held areas in Idlib.

However, the tension continued in Daraa and security incidents and attacks continued to take place every now and then.

NZ PM APOLOGISES TO PACIFIC COMMUNITIES FOR 'DAWN RAIDS'

Wellington | Agencies

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Sunday formally apologised to Pacific communities affected by the Dawn Raids in the 1970s.

Between 1974 and 1976, a series of rigorous immigration policies were carried out that resulted in targeted raids on the homes of Pacific families, reports Xinhua news agency.

The raids to find, convict and deport overstayers often took place very early in the morning or late at night.

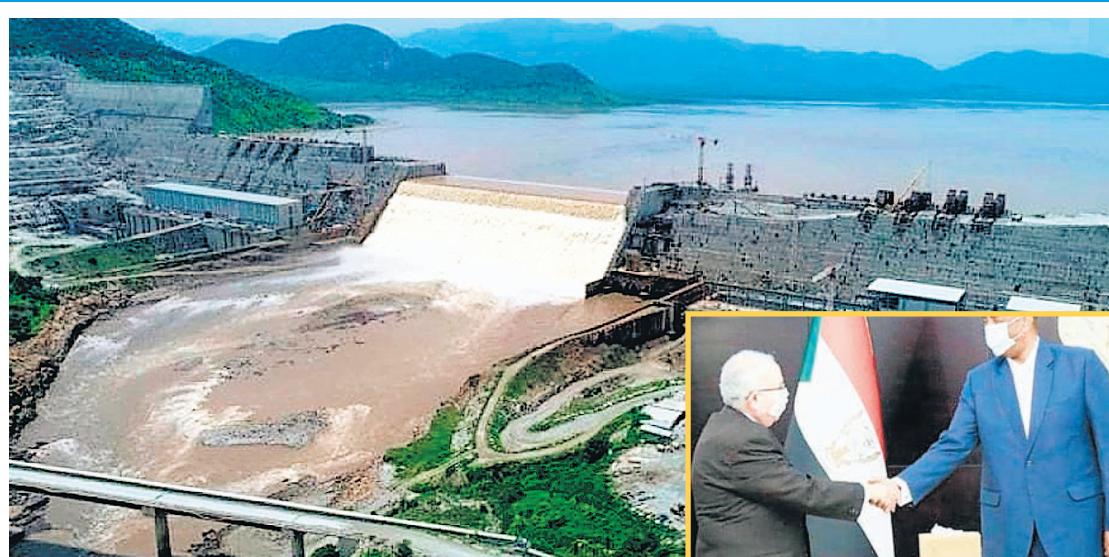
"Today I offered, on behalf of the government, a formal and unreserved apology to Pacific communities for the discriminatory implementation of immigration laws that led to the Dawn Raids," Ardern said at Auckland's Town Hall.

"Expressing our sorrow, regret and remorse for past actions is the right thing to do and provides an opportunity for closure and reconciliation," she said.

Minister for Pacific Peoples Aupito William Sio said looking back it was clear that the immigration laws were discriminatory. "Pacific peoples, Maori and other ethnic communities were specifically targeted and racially profiled, which was wrong and should have never happened," William Sio said. "In 1986 the Race Relations Conciliator found that between 1985 and 1986, while Pacific peoples comprised roughly a third overstayers, they represented 86 per cent of all prosecutions for overstaying. Racially targeting Pacific communities created a decades long false impression of the status of Pacific New Zealanders."

"During the same period overstayers from the US and Britain who also comprised roughly a third of overstayers made up only 5 per cent of prosecutions," William Sio said.

Sudan welcomes Algerian initiative to hold Nile dam meeting



Khartoum | Agencies

Sudan has welcomed an Algerian initiative calling for holding a direct meeting between leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia to reach a solution for the differences over the disputed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile river.

Chairman of Sudan's Sovereign Council Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan here on Saturday met the visiting Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The leadership in Sudan has welcomed the Algerian initiative calling for holding a direct meeting between the leaders of the three countries to resolve their differences over the GERD," Mariam Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, Sudan's Foreign Minister, said after the meeting.

She said the meeting also reviewed the Libyan file and the role of the neighbouring countries and their cooperation in ensuring peace, security and stability in Libya.

Ramtane Lamamra, for his part, said his meetings with the Chairman of Sudan's sovereign council, the

prime minister and foreign minister reviewed bilateral relations with the focus on the current challenges and the contribution of the two countries in facing them.

Despite countless tripartite negotiations among experts, ministers and leaders of the three African countries,

they are yet to reach a trilateral agreement regarding the dam.

Ethiopia reiterates that the dam will power its development aspirations, and boost its aspirations to attain the middle-income status by 2025.

Meanwhile, Egypt and Sudan fre-

quently express their concern that the dam would affect their share of the river waters.

Rising from Lake Tana some 570-km north of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, the Blue Nile or Abay River is one of the two principal headwaters of the world's longest river.

Trump's 'Muslim ban' harmed health of Muslim-Americans: Study

New York | Agencies

When former US President Donald Trump issued an executive order in 2017 banning Muslims from select countries from travelling to the US, the sweeping decree quickly rippled down to affect health outcomes for Muslim-Americans, say researchers, including one of Indian-origin.

The researchers, including Pooja Agrawal from Yale University, indicated that a significant number of people in the Muslim community in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area skipped their primary care appointments after the ban.

There was also an increase in their visits to the emergency department, found the study published in the journal JAMA Network Open.

"This offers support to the thesis that the Islamophobia fostered by former President Trump affected the health of Muslim-Americans in the US and that immigration policies can have indirect and unexpected consequences for those targeted by such actions," said researcher Gregg Gonsalves from the varsity.

Before the ban, primary care visits and diagnoses of stress for individuals from Muslim-majority nations were on the rise, the researchers said.

In the year following the ban, however, there were approximately 101 missed primary care appointments beyond what would have been expected among people from Muslim-majority countries not named in the ban.

Trump had issued

Executive Order 13769, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the US," shortly after his inauguration to limit the travel of refugees from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan and Yemen.

The ban was upheld by the US Supreme Court in 2018, only to be revoked by incumbent President Joe Biden in January 2021.

For the new study, the researchers examined more than 250,000 adult patients treated at a Minneapolis-St. Paul HealthPartners primary care clinic or in emergency departments in 2016 and 2017.

These patients belonged to one of the following three groups -- born in a Muslim nation targeted by the ban, born in a Muslim-majority nation not listed in the ban and non-Hispanic and born in the US.

Effective policing is the foundation of internal security

An important lesson drawn by India from the ongoing pandemic is that strict crime control and maintenance of law and order are needed to protect the nation from many of the newly emerging threats to internal stability and security.

At least five such points of concern can be identified and they all can be said to be creating vulnerabilities that facilitated the work of enemy agents and adversarial forces.

First, digital frauds that entrapped innocent citizens and could possibly be used for the nefarious plans of the enemy in some cases, have multiplied in this period and deprived a very large number of ordinary people doing digital banking -- believing it to be safe and convenient -- of their meagre resources. Secondly, anti-social elements among the youth who have become active across the country for the twin reasons of economic downturn and a reduced police presence, are providing fodder to the agencies of our adversaries for 'talent spotting' and diversion towards anti-national pursuits. This is a matter of particular concern in the area of internal security.

Third, foreign based lobbies have tried to merge into the opposition voices on such current issues as breakdown of medical care system, shortages of vaccines and other medical supplies as also the alleged neglect of the poor during the pandemic, to build a narrative against the government of the day. This has since developed into a political war 'by proxy'. Further, a distinct trend is the rise of agitational politics that aimed at projecting the Modi government as a violator of freedom to protest and human rights and as an 'intolerant' regime that could not bear with criticism -- it did not matter to the critics that this charge was not well-founded and that the narrative went beyond the normal political critique to create an environment of instability about the country's governance itself.

And finally, a highly uneven situation of law and order prevailed in the country primarily because of the subservience of the administrative machinery concerned to the political pressures of the state rulers, leading to a serious erosion of what

was the sovereign duty of the police in a democratic state to serve the law abiding and deter the potential offenders. The entire gamut of these dangers needs to be examined quickly for remedial measures. The Centre has to find a way of providing a strong democratic governance to the people of this large nation within the federal structure of the country -- but without letting centrifugal tendencies come in the way.

It became clear during the Covid months that cases of hacking of phones, credit-debit cards and other vital data for committing financial frauds were booming and targeting even ordinary people with limited resources who relied on online transactions because of the pandemic restrictions. The situation calls for a national drive to identify and neutralise illicit SIM cards which are being used by criminals as weapons. The menace has become large and draws a parallel with the situation in some freedom loving developed countries where control on sale of automatic firearms was now being actively considered.

The issue of SIM cards freely may be an indicator of socio-economic progress but in the Indian context it is greatly helping criminals and anti-national elements too -- because of which there is a spurt in digital crimes against the common man. Telecom companies would better verify the identity of the purchaser beyond Aadhaar card by recording his or her double thumb impression so that in the event of a fraudulent transaction, reported through an unknown number, the owner of that SIM can be reached by the cyber police investigating the matter.

Gangs of criminals have acquired thousands of SIM cards to operate through the length and breadth of the country. This can overwhelm our legal machinery unless a deep biometric identity of SIM customer was made mandatory. The Centre must also respond quickly to evaluate the working of cyber police sta-

tions and pool the feedback given by them to make the system more effective. These police stations must be already having seamless communication with their counterparts across the country and the legal action initiated by them to locate a suspect number should not be allowed to be hampered by the issue of state jurisdiction that restrictively defines law and order responsibility in this country.

India for a variety of reasons is becoming overladen by youth who did not add to 'demographic dividend' -- being neither educated nor skilled -- and who were becoming prone to 'coming on the road' specifically because of the destruction of jobs that had occurred at the lower lines of the economic pyramid on account of the pandemic. This has happened across urban and rural India and accounts at least partly for the ongoing rise in local crimes like snatching, ATM robbery, sexual assaults on minors of the vicinity, thefts and public brawls. Indian law emphasised on the need for the police station to keep in touch with the 'localities' and have a fairly good idea of the 'idle and loiterers' who inflicted themselves on public spaces at odd hours and indulged in lawlessness on the slightest pretext. In suitable cases they could be put on bond for good behaviour.

It is not easy to exercise this type of control on the crime situation but India has to quickly move towards an effective local presence of the police and a closer monitoring of the villages and urban neighbourhoods to provide confidence and safety to the law-abiding citizens. The strategic approach to the problem of course would be to provide the youth with skill training free of cost and create avenues of employment for them for sustenance. This is a huge challenge for the Centre-state combine -- it has been made more daunting because of the pandemic. The Modi government at the Centre has adopted a perceptive

policy of economic revival by giving the call -- 'vocal for local' -- that suits India's genius and helps to build the base of our economic pyramid. The return of BJP regime at the Centre with a much larger majority in 2019 and the splintering of other parties led to the trend of opposition taking to campaigning against the government outside of the Parliament and that too not on policies so much as on the persona of the Prime Minister and his allegedly 'authoritarian' style of governance. Lobbies at home and abroad including left liberals, human rights activists and advocates of secularism focusing on minority-majority divisions, have got into the domestic politics and started promoting street agitations and disruptive narratives as an expression of 'freedom'. The response of the Modi regime has to be a calibrated one -- putting the facts of policy execution before the people and not letting anybody cross the line of violation of public order incitement, public violence and erosion of the public sentiment on national integrity.

There is little doubt that the people of India give credit to Prime Minister Modi for being upfront and bold about taking decisions to deal with the pandemic -- a disaster that had come unannounced. He was himself leading the effort to contain the breakdown of health infrastructure and organise vaccine production. It is necessary that the administration at the centre and in the states came on the same page in interpreting what was part of democratic rights and what amounted to taking on the 'politics of the street'. We are passing through times when the leadership of the civil administration and the police ought to realise the importance of their crucial apolitical role in sustaining democracy and safeguarding internal stability and security without coming in the way of the sovereign right

of the elected political executive to frame policies and adopt legislative measures. Hopefully, India's judiciary can maintain the constitutional balance of power amongst the known 'pillars of democracy'.

The multiplicity of political parties, all wanting to mop up followers wherever they came from, does complicate the problem of governance but there is no getting away from the fact that states cannot be allowed to weaken the law-and-order situation in the country which can, among other things, spoil the prospects of investment and economic growth. The centre has to find within the federal system a method of monitoring the performance of the state administration and police on the maintenance of law and order -- tracking the performance of IAS and IPS officers on this front can be a good initial move. These All India Civil Services were created to take care of the law-abiding people and in particular improve the working of police stations which are the first place of call for a distressed citizen.

Modern India cannot be run with a flawed administrative and police set-up. Corruption at the lower echelons only puts ordinary citizens in difficulty about running their life peacefully. Effective governance cannot be there unless the administrative and police machinery at the local level is freed of corruption -- this unfortunately is not happening because of the lack of attention of the state governments towards the all-important issue of law and order. This is all the more a reason why the centre must acquire a firmer grip on the working of the IAS and IPS officers who are a major instrument of the nation for providing clean and firm governance in the country as a whole. Internal security is linked with that at the strategic level.

international

Myanmar likely to hold general elections in 2nd half of 2023

Nay Pyi Taw | Agencies

Myanmar is likely to hold new general elections in the second half of 2023, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Sen-Gen Min Aung Hlaing, chair of the newly-formed State Administration Council, said on Sunday. "The constitution states the limitation for the duration of the state of emergency. According to subsection (b) of Section 42I, if one cannot accomplish the duties within one year of the emergency period, it permits only two extensions of the prescribed duration for a term of six months for each extension," Xinhua news agency quoted min as saying in a televised address to the nation. "In the meantime, we have to do the things that should be done. Then, we will take six months by August 2023 to prepare for the election according to the law," he added.

Min's announcement came after the Myanmar junta on July 27 announced the cancellation of the results of the 2020 general elections which were won by ousted de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party. According to the announcement, the results were cancelled as the polls were not held in line with laws and were not fair, the very reasons of the February 1 coup. Since then, Min has held the state power. In his address on Sunday, he also pledged to hold the multi-party general elections without fail, stressing the need to create conditions to hold free and fair polls.

"We will hold briefings on findings of the previous general elections to international delegations in the near future."

He also pledged to work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In a related development also on Sunday, the country formed a Republic of the Union of Myanmar Caretaker Government, according to an order by the State Administration Council. Under the order, the new caretaker government will be led Min as Prime Minister and Vice Sen-Gen Soe Win as his Deputy.

The caretaker government body comprises union ministers, union attorney-general and permanent secretary of office.

Trump's 'Muslim ban' harmed health of Muslim-Americans: Study

New York | Agencies

"This offers support to the thesis that the Islamophobia fostered by former President Trump affected the health of Muslim-Americans in the US and that immigration policies can have indirect and unexpected consequences for those targeted by such actions," said researcher Gregg Gonsalves from the varsity.

Before the ban, primary care visits and diagnoses of stress for individuals from Muslim-majority nations were on the rise, the researchers said.

In the year following the ban, however, there were approximately 101 missed primary care appointments beyond what would have been expected among people from Muslim-majority countries not named in the ban.

These patients belonged to one of the following three groups -- born in a Muslim nation targeted by the ban, born in a Muslim-majority nation not listed in the ban and non-Hispanic and born in the US.



hollywood

Heidi, Emily, Vanessa bring glamour to the Unicef gala

Los Angeles | Agencies

Heidi Klum exudes style in a glittering silver gown as she joins leggy Emily Ratajkowski and Vanessa Hudgens at a star-studded Unicef fundraiser in Capri on Saturday.

Heidi looked every inch the supermodel as she led the stars at the glamorous LuisaViaRoma for Unicef event. The German-American beauty exuded style in a glittering silver gown which perfectly highlighted her sizzling figure and flaunted her toned pins through a thigh-high split.

Also putting on a leggy display was stunning model Emily Ratajkowski and stylish actress Vanessa Hudgens who both opted for black ensembles and ensured to pose up a storm in front of the cameras.

Heidi looked sensational in her sequinned silver dress which boasted a one-shoulder design and racy split, with the star adding some extra height to her toned frame with a pair of strappy heels.

Emily also cut a very sexy figure for the fundraiser at La Certosa di San Giacomo, displaying her endless legs in a figure-hugging black number with dramatic puffed sleeves. Meanwhile, Vanessa commanded attention in a chic one-shoulder dress which featured flashes of emerald green around the skirt.



Strictly set for first ever all-male pairing

Los Angeles | Agencies

Strictly Come Dancing is reportedly set to feature its very first all male pairing in the upcoming series after signing a celeb for new series to partner Graziano Di Prima. Tom Daley and Alan Carr are among the famous faces who have been approached to make up the pairing, according to The Sun. And the publication also claims whichever celebrity has been signed up will be partnered with Graziano, after the dancer impressed bosses with his powerful performance with co-star Johannes Radebe. A source told the paper: "The bosses are thrilled Strictly will be able to show its first all-male couple this year. And they have their sights firmly on Graziano. There is no reason why a gay celebrity should automatically be paired with a gay dancer." The Italian star, who is engaged to dancer Giada Lini, and Johannes became the first professionals on the show to perform a same-sex couple dance back in 2019.

Billie Eilish gushes about good pal JB

Los Angeles | Agencies

Billie Eilish gushed about fellow singing sensation Justin Bieber as she reflected on their friendship during a recent interview. "He's just the sweetest baby ever, I love him," Billie, 19, gushed when the topic of Justin was broached on SiriusXM's The Morning Mashup. "He'll call me sometimes and just say stuff that makes me just feel heard and like there's somebody else that goes through the same stuff. So it's really nice to have him." Certainly Billie has been listening to his advice as she finds herself back in the spotlight, with the release of her new studio album, Happier Than Ever. Although she had great experiences with her friend Justin, things weren't as rosy when it came to the subject of Billie's feelings about her body.

Billie revealed that she is obviously not happy with her body but very confident in who she is. During the interview she gave a piece of her mind to 'people who promote unattainable body standards' by not being forthright about their plastic surgery. "It's completely fine to get work done - do this, do that, do what makes you feel happy," said the songstress.



NELLY AND SHANTEL SPLIT AFTER SIX-YEARS TOGETHER

Los Angeles: Rapper Nelly and his model girlfriend Shantel Jackson have split after six years together. The rapper's long-time girlfriend has confirmed the pair have gone their separate ways but remain on good terms. Responding to a follower who asked on Instagram: 'R u [and] Nelly still together? I love seeing u guys together', she replied: 'No we're not..... Just friends.' The breakup will come as a surprise to their fans, as Nelly claimed just last year that the pair were 'working towards' an engagement. Nelly admitted he couldn't imagine his life without Shantel. He gushed at the time: 'I would not want my life to not have Shantel in it. She's sweet, beautiful, and the more we got to know each other, she's just as beautiful inside.'

"Calling Shantel 'The One', Nelly added: 'She's great. She's really dope. We have a great time, and we understand each other.' Nelly's previous relationships include actress Lashontae Heckard, singer Ashanti, and rapper Eve.



DUA ON A TRIP WITH BEAU ANWAR HADID

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Dua Lipa took to Instagram on Sunday to share a sweet snap with the brother of supermodels Gigi and Bella during a boat trip out at sea. She's currently holidaying in Albania with her boyfriend Anwar Hadid. With a mountainous view as the perfect backdrop, The Don't Start Now hitmaker wore very little makeup for the loved-up snap which she captioned with, "my display, which begin from as far up as his neck, continuing all the way down to his fingers. The model wore his short brown locks in a tousled style and lovingly placed his hand, complete with orange, purple and blue painted nails, on Dua's shoulder. The global pop sensation certainly hasn't held back in sharing content with her fans from her latest holiday.

Tom Zanetti pays tribute to late girlfriend Lizzie

Los Angeles | Agencies

DJ Tom Zanetti has paid touching tribute to his late girlfriend Lizzie as he marks her birthday 11 years after her tragic death. Tom took to Instagram to mark the special day and shared a lovely picture of his late partner as he gushed: 'Memories can't be taken'.

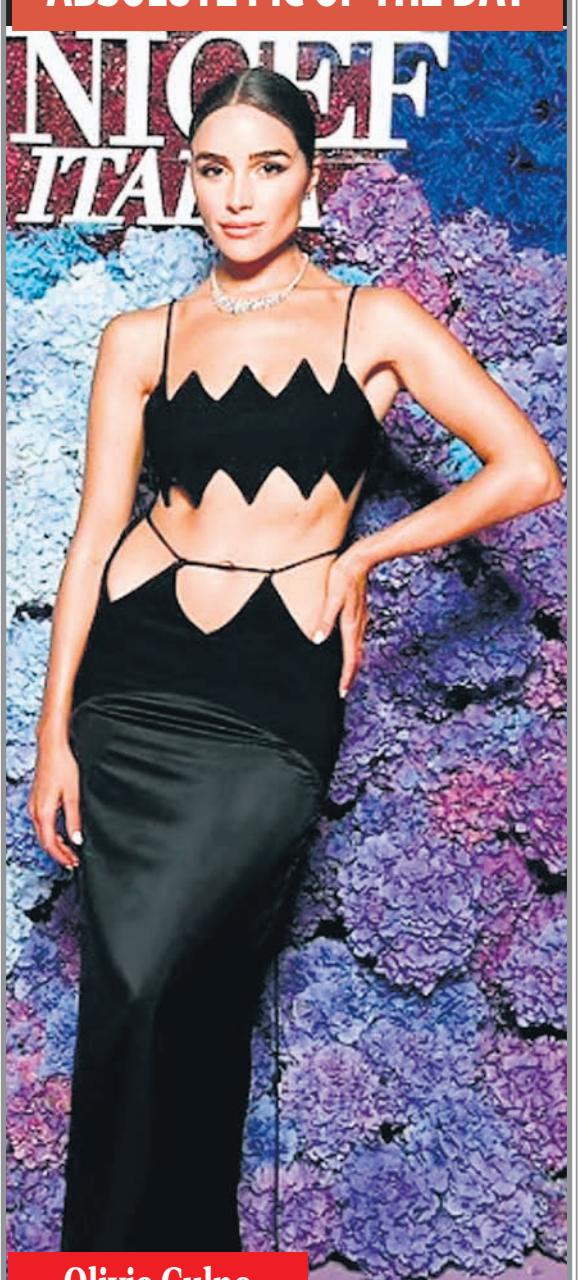
Elizabeth Rose Pickavance aka Lizzy passed away in 2010 aged just 20 in a car crash on the M62 near Gildersome when she was driving home from work in Manchester.

Sharing a snap of his late love to Instagram Stories, Tom penned: "Happy birthday Elizabeth Rose Pickavance. We all miss you, will always love you and forever wish. I could have seen how you grown into the perfect lady with each year older. Memories can't be taken."

Tom has previously marked the anniversary of her death with tribute posts on social media and also spoke about his grief in 2018 following the death of Love Island star Sophie Gradon's partner Aaron Armstrong.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Olivia Culpo



PV Sindhu beats He Bingjiao to win women's singles bronze

Tokyo | Agencies

Indian shuttler PV Sindhu won the women's singles bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday, defeating China's He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 to add a second medal to India's tally at the Games. With Sindhu's bronze, India have now equalled their tally of 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

It was Sindhu's second medal at the Olympics after she bagged a silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics. She also became the first Indian woman to win

two Olympics medals. Before her feat, wrestler Sushil Kumar was the only Indian to win two medals at successive Olympics.

Sindhu's first point in the match came with a 22-shot rally running for 27 seconds. She rose to take a quick 4-0 lead before the left-handed He levelled at 5-5. Post the break, Sindhu started to dictate terms, snatching three points. All of this, combined with her fierce power, clearly rattled He who lost the opening game in 23 minutes.

In the second game, Sindhu didn't loosen her grip. She continued to domi-

nate her Chinese opponent and took an early 4-1 lead.

Sindhu raced to 20 with an amazing smash. She then wrapped up the match with a scintillating cross-court smash and took the bronze medal by winning the second game 21-15.

For Sindhu, it has been a resounding campaign at the Olympics. She topped Group J and did not drop a single game in her winning matches except for the semifinal defeat to Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei.

But she recovered well to outclass He in straight games.

Brilliant India secure semifinal berth after four decades in Men's Hockey

Tokyo | Agencies

With a brilliant performance from a young team that lived like a family during the pandemic and played as a single unit in Tokyo, India made it to the medal round of the Olympic Games men's hockey tournament after a gap of 41 years, beating Great Britain 3-1 in the quarterfinals on Sunday.

It was Super Sunday for India as the team coached by Australia's Graham Reid rode on a scintillating performance by goalkeeper PR Sreejesh to outwit Great Britain in the fourth and final quarterfinal, setting up a last-four clash with reigning World Cup winners Belgium. Australia take on Germany in the other semifinal.

Victory over Belgium will put India in the final for the first time since the 1980 Moscow Olympics when they beat Spain to win their eighth and last gold medal in Olympics hockey.



A defeat against Belgium will keep them in the hunt for the bronze medal.

It is the first time that India have reached the semifinal of Olympic hockey competition since 1972 when they won a bronze in Munich as there were no semifinals played in Moscow, with the top-two teams in the preliminary

league making it to the gold-medal match while the team that finished third and fourth contested for bronze.

Forwards Dilpreet Singh, Gurjan Singh, and Hardik Singh scored for India while Sam Ward reduced the margin on an indirect penalty corner.

But India have to thank

their defenders and goalkeeper Sreejesh for the victory as they absorbed the pressure from Great Britain -- especially in the fourth quarter when skipper Manpreet Singh was shown the yellow card for a desperate tackle -- and thwarted repeated attempts from the British forwards.

Tennis: Zverev clinches gold medal in men's singles

Tokyo | Agencies

German tennis player Alexander Zverev beat Karen Khachanov of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) 6-3, 6-1 to clinch the gold medal in the men's singles tennis final of the Tokyo Olympics at the Ariake Tennis Park on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Zverev, yet to win a Grand Slam, was in imperious form during the final which lasted an hour and 19 minutes. He also became the first German male tennis player to win a singles Olympic gold.

It was an easy straight-set win for the world No. 5 to beat a misfiring Khachanov in the final after getting the better of top seed Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the semifinals.

Zverev, the 2020 US Open finalist, secured the early break for 2-1 in the opening set. He held his serve until breaking again at 5-3 to take the first set.

Zverev's domination continued further as he took an early second-set lead. It meant that



Khachanov was outplayed by the superior stroke-play of Zverev.

In the end, Zverev won the gold medal as Khachanov found the net, leading to the German dropping to his knees. Khachanov, cross with himself, smashed his racquet in frustration. Khachanov took the silver while Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta won the bronze after defeating Djokovic on Saturday.

TENNIS: BARBORA-KATERINA CLINCH WOMEN'S DOUBLES GOLD

Tokyo: Top seeds Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova earned Czech Republic's first gold medal in women's doubles with a straight-sets victory over Switzerland's Belinda Bencic and Viktorija Golubic at the Olympics on Sunday. Barbora, the French Open singles and doubles champion this year, and Katerina defeated the Belinda-Viktoria pair 7-5, 6-1, in the one hour and 25 minutes, becoming the first team from the Czech Republic to claim the women's doubles gold. The reigning French Open champions went a step further on Sunday, becoming the first from their country to prevail in any of those finals. Barbora and Katerina converted five of their 11 break points, winning nine of the last 10 games to triumph. Belinda and Viktorija earned Switzerland's second straight Olympic silver medal in women's doubles, following Timea Bacsinszky and Martina Hingis in 2016. Belinda, who defeated Barbora in the round of 16 of the singles event, will head home with two medals after clinching the gold in singles on Saturday.



American Schauffele wins Golf gold; Lahiri ends tied-42nd

Tokyo | Agencies

Xander Schauffele of the United States won the men's golf gold at the Tokyo Olympics with 18-under-par 266 on Sunday at the Kasumigaseki Country Club, in Kawagoe City, Saitama Prefecture.

India's Anirban Lahiri had a one-over in the final round and finished joint 42nd with three others with a five-under for the tournament. Udayan Mane was 56th with a one-over in the final round and a total of three-over.

Heading into the final round on a tied-28th position, Lahiri carded a one-over 72 in the final round to slip further to the tied-42nd spot with a total score of five-under 279 (67, 72, 68, 72).

Olympic debutant Mane too shot a one-over 72 in his fourth round to finish 56th in the 60-player field with a score of three-over 287 (76, 69, 70, 72).

Slovak golfer Rory Sabbatini grabbed the silver, one shot behind.



The world No. 204 player surprised the course with an Olympic record-setting 10-under-par round of 61 on Sunday.

US SWIMMER CALEBDRESSEL SHINES WITH FIVE GOLD IN SIX EVENTS

Tokyo | Agencies

Caleb Dressel of the United States made himself the most successful swimmer in Tokyo, with five gold from the six events he featured in as the swimming competitions concluded here on Sunday.

In the first race in the morning, Dressel won his fourth gold at the Olympics, triumphing in the men's 50m freestyle. The reigning world champion set an Olympic record time of 21.72 seconds, and finished 0.48 seconds before Florent Manaudou of France. Bruno Fratus of Brazil took a bronze in 21.57 seconds, reports Xinhua.

"Winning bronze releases a lot of pressure that was on my back. For the past few weeks I've been in my own bubble. I've been off social media, so



to win the bronze medal is great," said Fratus. The 24-year-old Dressel had three gold in hand prior to Sunday's final -- from 100m freestyle, butterfly and 4x100m freestyle relay. An hour later, Dressel helped the United States break its own world record to win the last swimming gold in Tokyo from the men's 4x100m medley relay. Finishing in

three minutes and 26.78 seconds, the American swimmers sliced 0.5 seconds off their previous mark of 3:27.28 set in 2009. Britain won the silver in 3:27.51, while Italy bagged the bronze with the time of 3:29.17. Team USA has not missed a single gold in the event in every Olympics they attended since 1960, and this is their 15th Olympic title.

Basketball player Durant becomes USA's top scorer at Olympics

Tokyo | Agencies

Two-time NBA champion and two-time Olympics gold medalist Kevin Durant has now scored the most points for the United States in the Olympics.

Durant, who plays for the Brooklyn Nets in the NBA, scored 23 points in the Team USA's 119-84 win against the Czech Republic on Saturday, taking his points tally to 354.

He overtook Carmelo Anthony (336 points). LeBron James (273) is third and is followed by David Robinson (270) and Michael Jordan (256) in the top five on the all-time US scorers list.

The USA are the three-time defending champions in Olympics basketball and favourites to win the title even though the team comprising all NBA players suffered a sensational defeat against France in the



group stage.

The victory against the Czech Republic has sealed their place in the quarterfinals.

Durant, who made his Olympics debut nine years ago at 2012 London, already has two gold medal and will be looking to join Anthony at three gold medals, the most by any US basketball player.



Nottingham | Agencies

The Indian cricket team, led by Virat Kohli, has reached Nottingham on Sunday. They are having their training session in Nottingham ahead of the first Test against England on August 4 at the Trent Bridge Cricket Stadium. After a break of three weeks after the World Test Championship final in Southampton, the Indian team had a practice match against the County Select XI from July 20-22. Post that, the Indian team continued to train till their final training session on Friday at the Chester-le-Street ground in Durham. Prithvi Shaw and Suryakumar Yadav, who have been named as replacements for Avesh Khan (thumb fracture) and Washington Sundar (finger injury), are yet to join the Test team in England.

India Squad: Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammad Shami, Mohammad Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, KL Rahul, Wriddhiman Saha, Prithvi Shaw, Suryakumar Yadav and Abhimanyu Easwaran.

Rajput, Tomar India's last medal hopes in shooting on last day of competition

Tokyo | Agencies

Former Navy man Sanjeev Rajput, now into his third Olympics, and young Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, who is on his Olympic debut, will look to bring cheers to the Indian shooting contingent in Tokyo, when they compete in the men's 50m Rifle 3 positions qualification round, at the Asaka Shooting range on Monday, the 10th and concluding day of the shooting competitions.

Rajput and Tomar are ranked sixth and second in the world in this most gruelling shooting event on schedule.



Both Indians will have to fight hard for a top-eight spot, given the presence of the likes of defending Olympic champion Sergey Kamenetsky of Russia Olympic Committee (ROC) and world No. 1 Istvan Peni of Hungary in the 48-strong field, among other heavy-weight 3P exponents. The Indian shooters have had a dismal outing in Tokyo, with only Saurabh Chaudhary making it to the finals of the 10m air pistol event but finishing seventh. All the other shooters in pistol, rifle and shotgun shooting have dished out sub-par performances.

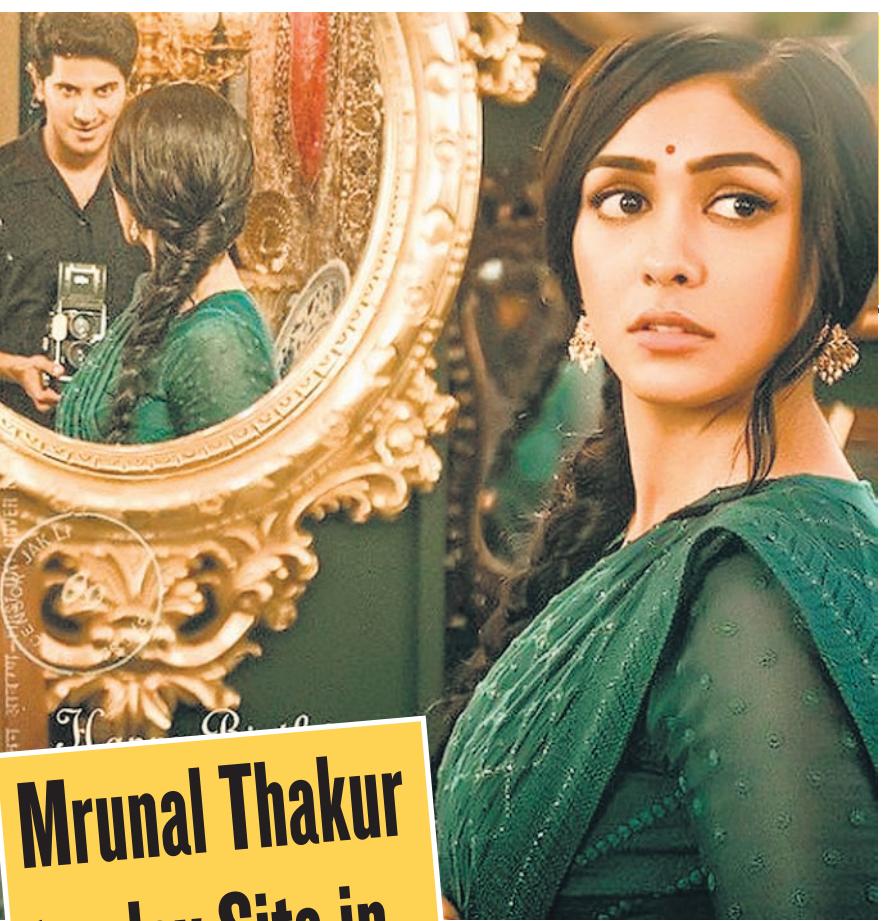
Can't wait to Work!

Shahid Kapoor all excited to work with Vijay Sethupathi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shahid Kapoor is eagerly waiting to start work on Raj Nidimoru and DK's web series with Vijay Sethupathi. The actor took to Instagram to share a short clip of himself revealing that he was waiting to work with Vijay, with a playful dig at his co-star Raashi Khanna. Shahid wrote, "Waiting on set call me soon @raajandk ... can't wait to share the frame with @vijaysethupathi, sorry @raashiiikhanna, I've got too used to having you around on set." The series is yet to be titled.

Raj and DK's *The Family Man*, starring Manoj Bajpayee received rave reviews and the second season released this June. Earlier, this month, Raj and DK had dropped a photo featuring Manoj Bajpayee and Shahid Kapoor with the caption, "And this happened."



Mrunal Thakur to play Sita in untitled next

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Actress Mrunal Thakur, who will soon be seen with actor Dulquer Salmaan in their yet-to-be-titled trilingual film, revealed her look and character's name on Sunday. While Dulquer's character is called Lieutenant Ram, Mrunal's character has been introduced as Sita. Directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, the teaser shows Dulquer click-

First Look

ing a picture of Mrunal as the two look at each other. The film produced by Ashwini Dutt and Priyanka Dutt under Swapna Cinema is being made in Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. It will be presented by Vyjayanthi Movies.

Incidentally, Mrunal also celebrates her birthday on Sunday. She uploaded the first look and captioned it as: "Here's a gift from you to my special day! Thank you @swapnacinema for this! Here to conquer your hearts with the lovely @dqsalmaan!"

The shooting of the film was recently wrapped in Kashmir.

Lakshmi

Manchu loves travelling for food

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Telugu actress Lakshmi Manchu is enjoying every moment of hosting the Telugu cookery show 'Aha Bhojanambu'. A foodie herself, she says there have been days when she has just gone out of her way to taste a delicacy. "I love food and don't have any favourites. I love Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, Italian. I like my big meals. I love travelling for food." Revealed Lakshmi.

The eight-part series comes with an interesting twist. Lakshmi invites a celebrity guest, who has to cook with whatever ingredients are provided to them on the show.

Talking about hosting a cookery show, Lakshmi says: "My daughter (Nirvana) and I are big fans of cooking shows. Being able to host a show with a twist to our regular foods is very exciting." The series is currently streaming on a Telugu OTT platform.



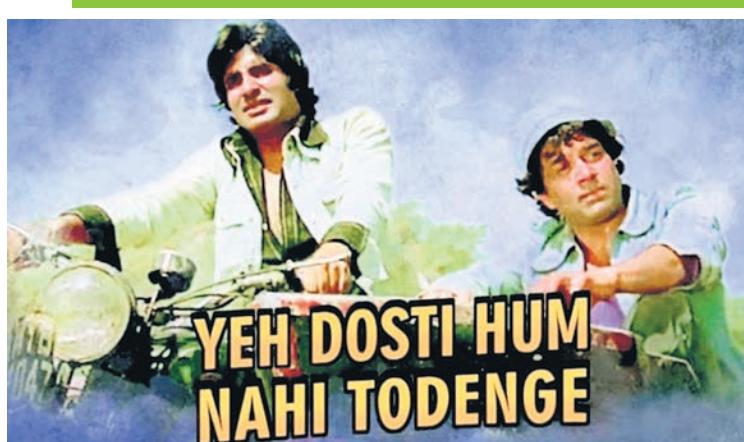
Pooja Dey all set to join 'Maaya 4'

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mithila Palkar

HAPPY FRIENDSHIP DAY



YEH DOSTI HUM NAHI TODENGE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On the occasion of Friendship's Day, Dharmendra Deol decided to wish his followers with a throwback from his film Sholay, featur-

ing Amitabh Bachchan. The star took to Twitter and posted a screenshot with Bachchan from the iconic film's song, "Yeh dosti hum nahin todenge" (We won't ever let this friendship go). Dharmendra tweeted with the

DHARMENDRA SHARES SHOLAY THROWBACK WITH BIG B

photo, "Happy friendship day!" Accompanying the photo, were several hearts. Fans flooded the post with love and comments, wishing him a happy friendship day. *Sholay*, which released in 1975, completed 45 years in December 2020 and is considered one of the most influential films ever made.

While Dharmendra and Bachchan share a close friendship, on an episode of Bachchan's *Kaun Banega Crorepati* he revealed that Dharmendra almost fired a real bullet at him during the climax of the film.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pooja Dey, who is known for featuring in web series 'Gandii Baat 5', is now set to feature in Vikram Bhatt's upcoming web series 'Maaya 4' which also stars popular actors like Rohit Roy and Rushaad Rana.

The actress is quite impressed with the working style of her co-star. Pooja praised Rohit Roy's grounded nature and said working with him is a great opportunity for her and he is always supportive. Talking about her role she revealed, "I am playing the character of Niharika Rao and has a pivotal presence in the entire story. 'Maaya 4' will be as intriguing as the previous seasons and will keep the audience hooked to their screens. It is known for its thrilling storyline and dark concepts. I'm excited and blessed to be part of it."

