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13 CIVILIANS, SOLDIER KILLED IN NAGALAND VIOLENCE AFTER 'MISTAKEN' ARMY OPS

9 of family test positive for Omicron in Rajasthan

▶ AN ASSAM RIFLES JAWAN WAS KILLED IN THE MOB ATTACK AFTER THE INCIDENT, WHICH TOOK PLACE BETWEEN OTING AND TIRU VILLAGES.
▶ A LARGE NUMBER OF ANGRY VILLAGERS ON SUNDAY ATTACKED THE ASSAM RIFLES CAMP IN MON AND THE JAWANS OPENED FIRE IN THE AIR TO DISPERSE THE MOB.
▶ NAGALAND POLICE ARE YET TO PROVIDE DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT.
▶ NAGALAND CHIEF MINISTER NEIPHIU RIO, WHO RUSHED TO KOHIMA FROM NEW DELHI ON SUNDAY, HAS ORDERED A HIGH-LEVEL PROBE BY A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM.
▶ NAGALAND GOVERNOR, PROF JAGDISH MUKHI, CONDEMNED THE INCIDENT AND SAID THAT A COURT OF INQUIRY HAS BEEN INSTITUTED AGAINST THE ARMY PERSONNEL INVOLVED.

“The unfortunate incident leading to killing of civilians at Oting, Mon is highly condemnable. Condolences to the bereaved families and speedy recovery of those injured. High-level SIT will investigate and justice delivered as per the law of the land. Appeal for peace from all sections.”
Chief Minister, Nagaland



ment, said that 15 civilians were killed in the Assam Rifles firing. The leaders of various Naga organisations, including Konyak Hoho and Oting Village Students' Union (OVSU), claimed that eight coal miners were returning from Tiru coal mining area in a pick-up van when they were targeted. OVSU President Kewang Konyak said that the security forces fired on them due to "mistaken identity", killing six people on the spot and two injured were taken to the hospital by the Assam Rifles. He said that hearing the incident, an angry mob rushed to the areas and the Assam Rifles personnel fired in self-defence, killing seven more civilians and injuring 12 villagers. The injured civilians were taken to the nearest hospital. Huge contingent of police came to the spot very late since the place is far away from the police station. Villagers and sources said that the security personnel are believed to have mistaken the victims as members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang-Yung Aung and fired on them. Angry locals attacked the security forces and torched their at least three vehicles. Defence sources said that the security forces have suffered severe injuries in the incident, including one soldier who succumbed to the injuries. A brief statement of the Army said that based on credible intelli-

gence of likely movement of insurgents, a specific operation was planned to be conducted in the area of Tiru under Mon district. "The incident and its aftermath is deeply regretted. The cause of the unfortunate loss of lives is being investigated at the highest level and appropriate action will be taken as per the course of law," the statement said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also condemned the killings. "I express my deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives," he said. Shah said a high-level Special Investigation Team has been constituted by the state government and it will "thoroughly probe this incident to ensure justice to the bereaved families." Reacting to the incident, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "This is heart wrenching. GOI must give a real reply. What exactly is the home ministry doing when neither civilians nor security personnel are safe in our own land?" Strongly condemning the incident, the NSCN-IM in a statement said that notwithstanding the ongoing political dialogue that has seen much fruit during the period running more than two decades, the violence against the Nagas continues unabated. This is one of the most unfortunate incidents since the Indo-Naga ceasefire signed in 1997, the statement said.



Team Absolute | Jaipur
A four-member family, who had come to Jaipur from South Africa, and five of their relatives, have tested positive for Omicron variant of coronavirus, officials said on Sunday. Genome sequencing reports of the nine people came positive on Sunday. After travelling from South Africa, the family of four - a couple and their two children - reached Jaipur, via Dubai and Mumbai, on November 25 and attended a wedding at City Palace. Subsequently, they tested Covid positive and have been admitted to the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS). Other cases were detected in their family too. Health officials said that the family tested negative when they departed from South Africa, and had tested negative at both Dubai and Mumbai. On November 25, they reached Jaipur and attended a wedding in City Palace. Meanwhile, there was no lung infection found in their

69 STUDENTS TEST COVID POSITIVE IN 2 K'TAKA DISTRICTS
Bengaluru: As many as 68 students have tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 24 hours in Shivamogga and Chikkamagalur districts of Karnataka. In the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya residential hostel in Seegodu village in Chikkamagalur district as many as 40 students and teachers tested positive. Initially, three students and four staff tested positive. The health department immediately swung into action and collected the swab samples of 418 students and all staff members and sent it for testing. All students are asymptomatic and the residential school has been sealed down. In another incident, 29 nursing students tested positive for Covid at a private nursing college in Shivamogga. CT scan report done on December 3, neither was any symptom of cough, cold, or fever.

Maoists call for bandh in MP, Chhattisgarh, Maha on Dec 10

Team Absolute | Bhopal
The police in Madhya Pradesh's Maoist-affected Balaghat district have found pamphlets on road with a message calling for bandh in three states -- Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, on December 10, officials said on pamphlets, enraged over the killing of Maoists in a police encounter at Gadchiroli in Maharashtra, a group of rebels burnt the road-roller at a village. Confirming the incident, a senior police officer in Balaghat district told reporter that police patrolling has been increased in the area and a search operation was underway. Balaghat has been one of the most Naxal-hit districts in Madhya Pradesh. Last month, a group of Maoists allegedly killed two villagers on the suspicion of being police informers in Malikhedi village. As per the police, in a similar incident in June this year, the Maoists had killed a 42-year-old man in Bamhani village in the same district. Police said that as per the pam-

TOMATO PRICES SOAR, TOUCH RS 100/KG IN CHENNAI



Chennai: The price of tomato on Sunday touched Rs 100 per kilogram in the Koyambedu wholesale vegetable market in Chennai. The price, which was Rs 90 per kilogram on Saturday, reached Rs 100 on Sunday. After the incessant rains that caused havoc in Tamil Nadu, the prices of vegetables had shot up and the tomato prices had crossed above Rs 100 per kg. However, after the arrival of huge consignment from North India, the price had come down in the range of Rs 40 to Rs 60 per kilogram at the Koyambedu market. With rains lashing the entire South Indian states, there are major crop losses in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and parts of Tamil Nadu where tomato is largely grown. This has led to the current spurt in prices.

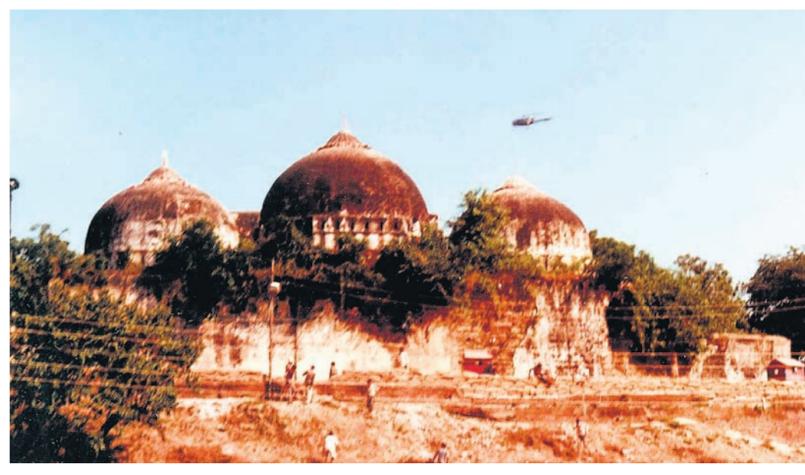
India ranked fourth most powerful country in Asia

India is the fourth most powerful country in Asia, as per the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021. India is ranked as a middle power in Asia. As the fourth most powerful country in Asia, India again falls short of the major power threshold in 2021. Its overall score declined by two points compared to 2020. India is one of eighteen countries in the region to trend downward in its overall score in 2021, the report said.
Sanjeev Sharma | New Delhi
The annual Asia Power Index -- launched by the Lowy Institute in 2018 -- measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in Asia. The project maps out the existing distribution of power as it stands today, and tracks shifts in the balance of power over time. The country performs best in the future resources measure, where it finishes behind only the US and China. However, lost growth potential for Asia's third largest economy due largely to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has led to a diminished economic forecast for 2030, Lowy Institute said. India finishes in 4th place in four other measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence. India is trending in opposite directions for its two weakest measures of power. On the one hand, it remains in 7th place in its defence networks, reflecting progress in its regional defence diplomacy -- notably with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which includes Australia, Japan and the US. On the other hand, India has slipped into 8th position for economic relationships, as it falls further behind in regional trade integration efforts, Lowy Institute said. India exerts less influence in the region than expected given its available resources, as indicated by the country's negative power gap score. Its negative power gap score has deteriorated further in 2021 relative to previous years. As per the report, many developing economies, including India, have been hardest hit in comparison to their pre-Covid growth paths. This has the potential to reinforce bipolarity in the Indo-Pacific, driven by the growing power differential of the two superpowers, the US and China, in relation to nearly every other emerging power in the region. Uneven economic impacts and recoveries from the pandemic will likely continue to alter the regional balance of power well into the decade. Only Taiwan, the United States and Singapore are now predicted to have larger economies in 2030 than originally forecast prior to the pandemic. Yet richer countries, such as Japan, have seen their economic prospects improve not just relative to 2020, but also to economies with lower vaccination rates. China, which avoided a recession last year, is not far behind.



Ayodhya security on high alert for Dec 6

Arshad Afzaal Khan | Ayodhya
The security forces in Ayodhya have been put on high alert in view of 30th anniversary of the demolition of Babri mosque. The administration has established a special control room in the district magistrate office to keep vigil on any development on December 6. The Ayodhya temple town and the district has been divided in multiple security zones and forces have been deployed at sensitive points. All the magistrates have been instructed to keep round the clock vigil on all minor and major developments in the twin towns of Ayodhya and Faizabad. The Muslim community in Ayodhya, that used to observe 'Black Day' on every anniversary of the demolition of the mosque has decided not to do so this time. Haji Asad Ahmad, a Muslim leader and Ayodhya corporator, said, "now after



the Ayodhya verdict that has given the Babri Masjid land for Ram temple, we wish to create an atmosphere of harmony and brotherhood with our Hindu brothers and sisters, so we decided not to hold any such program this time, but, there will be recitation of holy Quran in all mosques of Ayodhya and Faizabad and we will pray to the Almighty for peace and brotherhood." Meanwhile, the Ayodhya police is carrying out regular mock drills in the temple town, and the special armed squads are doing security drills to plug every loopholes of security system. Talking to IANS, Ayodhya SSP Shailesh Pandey said, "We are alert for any kind of security emergencies on any day and we conduct security drills from time to time to keep our forces alert. However, we are extraordinarily vigilant keeping in view December 6."

WHY RECRUITMENT NOT TAKING PLACE WHEN GOVT HAS VACANCIES: VARUN GANDHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi
Criticising police action against protesting candidates of UP teachers' test in Lucknow, BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Sunday asked why recruitments are not taking place when there are vacancies in the government. Tweeting a video of police reportedly using batons, he said: "These children are also 'Son of Mother India', let alone accepting their demands, no one ready to listen to them. Above this, barbaric 'lathicharge' on them. Put your hand on heart and think they would be treated the same if they were your own children. You have vacancies as well as qualified candidates, so why are recruitments not taking place." On November 28, the UPTET 2021 had to be cancelled after the paper was leaked. On December 2, Gandhi questioned the BJP government on job and paper leaks.





GANGSTER PLANNING ROHINI COURT TYPE SHOOTOUT NABBED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Deepak Dhankar, a highly dreaded member of notorious Kapil Sangwan Gang, was nabbed by the Special Cell of Delhi Police, an official said here on Sunday. Dhankar, during the interrogation, disclosed that he was planning to eliminate Manjeet Mahal, another notorious gangster, in judicial custody while being produced in courts. His attack plan seemed similar to the dramatic firing incident at Rohini Court in September, in which the most wanted gangster Jitender Singh Mann, alias Gogi, was killed by two assailants in a Courtroom. Gangster Dhankar also told the police that he had procured the arms and ammunition for the purpose of murder of Manjeet Mahal and his brother Sanjay Mahal. Furnishing details about Dhankar's arrest, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Jasmeet Singh, said that information was received about Dhankar's arrival at Kakrola village, Delhi on Friday, December 3. Subsequently, a trap was laid by the police team in the specified area. "At about 2 p.m., Deepak Dhankar sitting in a Celerio car was spotted coming from the Najafgarh side. He was signaled to stop the car but when he sensed the police presence, he



whipped out his pistol and aimed towards the police team. Members of the police team rushed towards the car, overpowered the accused and disarmed him," the official said. The cops recovered one semi-automatic pistol of .32 and 5 live cartridges from his possession and a case under appropriate sections of law was registered at the Special Cell police station. Further sharing details about the criminal activities and rivalry between both the gangs, the official informed that Dhankar was previously involved in 6 sensational criminal cases including murder, attempt to murder, robbery/dacoity, car-jacking, trespass,

criminal intimidation, assault on police, conspiracy, extortion and arms act in Delhi and Haryana. Apart from above murder case, the accused was not even attending courts in other cases. The notorious gangster Manjeet Mahal was having a fierce rivalry with the Kapil Sangwan Gang in South-West Delhi. In retaliation of killing of Sunil, brother in law of Kapil Sangwan in December 2015 by Manjeet Mahal, Nafe alias Mantri, Dharmender and their other associates, the gang members of the rival gang led by Kapil Sangwan fired indiscriminately and shot dead Nafe's father and severely injured his wife and mother on the same day in their house in Najafgarh. Thereafter, Sangwan with his associates gunned down father and brother of Dharmender, an associate of Manjeet Mahal who was earlier arrested in Sunil's murder case. After the arrest of Kapil Sangwan, Deepak Dhankar along with Krishan, Ankush and had taken the command of the gang. Both with the help of their other associates gunned down Manjeet Mahal's father in village Mitraon, Delhi in January, 2017. Notably, more than eight people have so far lost their lives in this gang rivalry between the gangs of Kapil Sangwan and Manjeet Mahal in south west Delhi in the last 6 years.

Sri Lankan Navy attacked us, claim Indian fishermen in TN

Chennai | Agencies

Fishermen from Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu on Sunday alleged that the Sri Lankan Navy personnel attacked them on Saturday by throwing bottles and stones while they were fishing near Katchatheevu.

The fishermen association president of Rameswaram, Devadass told the media persons that around 4,000 fishermen were fishing off Katchatheevu coast on December 4.

The fishermen alleged that Sri Lankan Navy personnel had come in four boats and hurled stones and bottles at them. While 10 boats were damaged, the fishermen were not hurt.

The fishermen from Rameswaram area were not fishing off the Katchatheevu coast since long time after



regular incidents of stone throwing against them.

In October 21, Rajkiran, a fisherman from Pudukottai was killed when the Sri Lankan Navy attacked them

while he was fishing with two of his colleagues. The two were arrested by Sri Lankan Navy for trespassing into Sri Lankan waters but later released.

Three die in Bihar's Vaishali, kin blame spurious liquor

Patna | Agencies

Three persons died in mysterious circumstances in Bihar's Vaishali district on Sunday, with their family members claiming that they had consumed poisonous liquor last night. The deceased were identified as Arjun Jha, a resident of Thakauri village, Arvind Singh of Mahathi village, and Manoj Singh of Padmaul village. All these villages fall under Tisiauta police station in the district.

As soon as deaths came to the light, teams of the district administration visited these villages for investigations.

"We are investigating the incidents and taking the statements of the deceased's family members. The dead bodies are sent to post-mortem examination to ascertain the actual cause of



incident. The FSL teams also visiting in the village to collect samples," SDPO, Mahua, Poonam Keshri, said. While police was taking the statements, the relatives of Jha claimed that he used to drink liquor and smoke marijuana.

"Arjun Jha came in the house in drunken state on Saturday night. After staying couple of hours in the room, he started vomiting. We have given him some pills in a bid to stop vomiting. We have

also consulted village doctor who suggested us to admit him in Hagipur. Jha died on the way to hospital," said his sister-in-law Archana Jha. The villagers also claimed that a makeshift liquor manufacturing unit is operating in Thakauri village where large number of people assemble every day to consume liquor. The local police are aware about it but they do not take any action against its operators, they alleged.

Delhi Metro tackles air pollution with 14 anti-smog guns

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has pressed 14 Anti Smog Guns (ASGs) into service to combat air pollution at the sites where it is constructing infrastructure for the metro rails. The anti-smog guns throw fine mist from time-to-time to check the possibility of dust pollution emanating from the construction work. Currently, as part of its Phase 4 expansion as well as some other construction projects, 12 civil contracts are operational across the national capital. These state-of-the-art ASGs are capable of spraying fine mist up to 70 to 100 metres. One ASG is considered adequate for covering an area up to 20,000 square metre. The DMRC said it ensures that the water used for sprinkling is free from coliforms, viruses and bacteria. "High quality nozzles with droplet sizes of 10 to 50 micrometers are

used for greater impact. With the gradual expansion of construction work, more such ASGs shall be introduced at the sites in the days ahead," it said.

The Delhi Government in November imposed a ban on construction and demolition activities in the city, following soaring levels of air pollution. Currently, all construction work apart from those which are non polluting in nature have been stopped in compliance with relevant directions. While, the DMRC is ensuring complete compliance to all the pollution related instructions, these mist guns have been installed as a permanent measure to combat pollution and are employed at the sites round the year. Even when construction work is not going on, Mist Guns prevent the loose soil/earth stored at construction sites from being air borne thus reducing air pollution," it added. Traditionally, anti-smog guns were used at coal

and cement manufacturing sites across the world.

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BENGAL BJP MLA OFFICE BOMBING: NIA FILES CHARGE SHEET AGAINST THREE

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has charge sheeted three persons for hurling bombs at the office of West Bengal BJP MLA Pawan Kumar Singh.

The charge sheet was filed before the NIA Special Court, Kolkata on Saturday against Sonu Jaiswal alias Telus, Arif Akhtar, and Rahul Kumar, under sections of the Indian Penal Code, and the Explosive Substances Act.

The case pertains to hurling of several bombs adjacent to the gate of the office of the BJP MLA in September this year, in a bid to target the MLA and his family.

Initially, a case was registered at Jagaddal Police Station in this respect and later the case was handed over to the NIA for further probe.

The NIA's investigation revealed that all three accused had conspired to commit the crime by using explosives with an intent to destroy the property. After collecting crucial evidence against them, the agency decided to file the first charge sheet against the three, while continuing its probe.

Nitish to launch 'yatra' to gauge women's mood over liquor ban

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will soon embark on another yatra across the state to gauge the views of women voters over the liquor prohibition law. This move comes after the recent panchayat elections, as he is likely to visit all districts of the state and to also take stock of the development works. Sources say that as the Chief Minister has been criticised over this law, the main aim of this visit is to see the implementation of the liquor ban on the ground and gauge people's opinion



as well as take stock of various development works. Whether in or out of power, Nitish Kumar had been taking out 'yatras' across the state in the past.

Till now, the Chief Minister has undertaken 'Nyay Yatra', 'Vikas Yatra', 'Dhyanwad Yatra', 'Pravas Yatra', 'Vishwas Yatra', 'Seva Yatra', 'Adhikar Yatra', 'Sankalp Yatra', 'Sampark Yatra', among others to gauge the political pulse of people in the state.

While interacting with the media, the Chief Minister had himself said that after the end of panchayat elections, he will embark on a tour of the state. In the past, he usually started his yatra from Champaran but this time he is yet to make an official announcement as to from where he will start his yatra.

According to the information from sources, Nitish Kumar will spread awareness among women against liquor prohibition law during this visit and tell the people about its benefits. He will appeal to women voters to make the liquor prohibition law a success. Apart from spreading awareness about the liquor prohibition law, the Chief Minister will also review the functioning of government schemes in the state.

Sources say that Nitish Kumar will review the district-wise plans of his government with various government officials.

DECOMPOSED BODY OF WOMAN FOUND IN WATER TANK

Gurugram: A 30-year-old woman's decomposed body was found in an empty water tank of Ashiana society here in Sector-47 on Sunday, the police said.

A cleaning staff spotted the body and later informed the police.

A team of Sadar police station reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem.

According to the police, when the workers were engaged to trim the grass growing on the roof of the building, they complained of foul smell originating from an eight-foot deep water tank.

Following this, the workers looked inside the tank, and found the body of the woman.

"No injury marks were visible on the body. The woman's body has been placed in the mortuary and efforts are on to ascertain the identity of the victim. The body seemed to be about a week old. The matter is under investigation," Dinesh Yadav, station house officer of the Sadar police station, said.

After recommending booster dose for 40+, INSACOG says more experiments needed

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG) in its recent weekly bulletin has said that many more scientific experiments are needed to assess the impacts of booster dose, which are being guided and monitored by National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) and National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC).

However, in its previous weekly bulletin dated on November 29, INSACOG has recommended a booster dose for those 40 years of age and over, first targeting the most high-risk / high-exposure "may be considered".

Clarifying on the need of booster dose amid Omicron looming threat, the top genome sequencing body INSACOG has said that the mention of the booster dose was merely a "discussion about the potential role of additional dose of Covid-19 vaccines in high-risk populations" and



the recommendation was not for the India's immunisation programme. "Immunity and protection from

SARS-CoV-2 is multifactorial with several unknown factors and further compounded by emerging VOCs.

Many more scientific experiments are needed to assess the impacts of booster dose, which are being guided and monitored by National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19", said INSACOG.

The recommendations and suggestions regarding vaccines, schedule, and roll out come under the expressed mandate of NTAGI and the NEGVAC, said the Consortium on Genomics INSACOG. NTAGI is also expected to meet next week to assess the need for a booster jab in India.

However, INSACOG's clarification on the booster jab has come after Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session said that a decision on booster doses and kids' vaccines would be taken on the basis of scientific advice. The top health ministry officials have said many times that the priority at the time is to vaccinate all eligible population with both doses at the earliest.

Srinagar | Agencies

Two militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested by the security forces on Sunday in J&K's Shopian district.

Police said the security forces arrested Shahid Ahmad Ganie of Doomwani Keegam and his close associate, Kifayat Ayoub Alie of Pinjoora, both LeT militants.

Personnel of the police, 44 Rashtriya Rifles and 14 Bn CRPF launched a joint cordon and search operation in the area after receiving information about the presence of militants.

"When the joint parties of the security forces approached them, the two suspects tried to flee from the spot. The duo was arrested by the joint search parties.

"Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition including one Chinese pistol,



one pistol magazine, two Chinese hand grenades, eight pistol rounds were recovered from their possession in addition to Rs 2.90 lakh

cash," a police officer said. An FIR under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigation has been started.



SERVICE OF SICK PERSON IS PARAMOUNT - CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN

Medical camp a unique example of micro planning. Facility for testing and consultation with specialist doctors of the country with state-of-the-art machines provided in your own city. The health camp is based on the public-participation model of Chief Minister Chouhan - Medical Education Minister Sarang. Chief Minister visited the medical camp organised by Late Kailash Prasoos Sarang Foundation

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Nar Sewa is Narayan Sewa. Service to the suffering person is equal to the service of God. Service to the sick person is paramount. The way in which arrangements have been made for investigation and treatment for all, including the poor, the underprivileged in the medical camp organised by Late Shri Kailash Prasoos Sarang Foundation, is commendable. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a medical camp organised by Kailash Prasoos Sarang Foundation at Ashoka Garden, Bhopal.



Chief Minister Chouhan said that the camp has provided facilities for testing with state-of-the-art machines and treatment from specialist doctors of the country in their own city. This camp will prove to be effective in providing relief from the stress of costly treatment to the suffering persons. All necessary arrangements and public conven-

ience have been taken care of in the camp. This camp is a unique example of micro planning. The cordial behaviour of the experts and paramedical staff is commendable. Chief Minister Chouhan honoured Dr. Yugal Mishra, Heart Surgeon of Manipal Hospital New Delhi, Dr. Amit Joshi of Tata Cancer Hospital, Mumbai, Dr. Dilip Nikam, Cancer Specialist of Bombay Hospital, Mumbai, Dr. Suyash Kulkarni, Radiologist of Tata Memorial Hospital, Dr. Ashok Anand of JJ Hospital Mumbai, Dr. Srirang Bichu, Kidney Specialist from Bombay Hospital, Dr. Mohit Bhandari of Indore and Dr. Rakesh Taran, Cancer Specialist from Indore, etc who came to give their services in the camp.

Gandhi Medical College, stalls of Chirayu Medical College and Hospital Bhopal and Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Science Indore, sickle cell anaemia test and counselling centre and free medicine distribution centre.

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said that Chief Minister Chouhan presented a model of public participation of crisis management at the time of Corona crisis. In this, the government fought the battle against Corona together with the society. A health camp has been organised by Late Kailash Prasoos Sarang Foundation regarding this project of Chief Minister Chouhan. The government alone cannot do everything, the participation of the society is necessary in the field of health and education. All possible cooperation of doctors, health institutions has been received in the camp organised with this idea. Medical Education Minister Sarang expressed his gratitude to all. Minister Sarang presented a memento to Chief Minister Chouhan.



CM Chouhan releases 'Hind Di Chadar' Guru Tegh Bahadur National Souvenir

National Sikh Sangat officials call on Chief Minister Chouhan, Appeal to celebrate Balidan Diwas of Guru Gobind Singh sons as Children's Day

Bahadur National Souvenir 'Hind Di Chadar' published by Rashtriya Sikh Sangat. The National Sikh Sangat discussed about organizing the Prakash Parv of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji on April 1 with Chief Minister Chouhan. The representatives of the Sangat also requested to publish literature on the contribution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, to spread information about him from door to door and celebrate the Balidan Diwas of Baba Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh, as Children's Day on December 27.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Officials of the National Sikh Sangat called on Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the residence office. A saropa was presented to Chief Minister Chouhan to honour him. A portrait of Sikh Gurus was also presented to Chief Minister Chouhan. Chouhan released Shri Guru Tegh

Among those present in the meeting with Chief Minister Chouhan were National Sikh Sangat Delhi's National Organising Secretary Avinash Jaiswal, National General Secretary Bihari Lal Ji, Regional President Ajit Singh Narang Indore and Inderjit Singh Khanuja and Jitesh Singh Khanuja also from Indore and Jaspal Singh Reel from Bhopal.

Cong accuses MP govt of not following Constitutional rules

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the Madhya Pradesh Election Commission announced the dates for three-tier Panchayat elections in the state in three phases between January 6 and February 16, 2022, the state unit of the Congress on Sunday lashed out at the ruling BJP government accusing it of not following the Constitutional rules in the process.

The Congress said the state government was not following the mandatory constitutional rules of change in the rotation in reservation of seats after every five years of tenure. Sharpening its attack, the Congress raised questions as to why panchayat elections are being held in 2021-22 on the basis of reservation of 2014? Voicing its concern on this issue, the Congress accused the BJP of not complying with a set of rules suppressing the democratic rights of the citizens of the state.

"We have been demanding that Panchayat elections in the state should be held as soon as possible, but it seems the government is scared of these elections and it does not want to conduct elections," former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and state Congress chief Kamal Nath said.

Maintaining that the fresh elections should be held under the new reservation and rotation policy of seats, the Congress is all set to knock the door of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Monday. Talking to IANS, senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha said: "Many individuals have already opposed the state government's move. Conducting elections without following rotation in reservation is completely against the Constitutional rights of the individuals. Many individuals have already filed petitions at different benches of the High Court and by Monday a fresh petition on the same will be filed before the Jabalpur High Court bench."

"Panchayat elections in MP are being conducted under strange legal circumstances by completely ignoring the constitution process and provision, the ordinance passed by the state government was a threat to the public,"



Tankha added. Veteran Congress leader and two-time MP chief minister Digvijaya Singh was the first who voiced his concern on this matter soon after the elections schedule was announced on Saturday. The elections for the Panchayat bodies in the state have been pending since March 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Polling for 859 posts of district panchayats across 52 districts, 6,727 posts of 313 Janpad Panchayats, Sarpanch of 22,581 village panchayats and 3,62,754 posts of Panch members will be held in three phases. In the first phase, 6,283 village panchayats and 85 Janpad Panchayats across nine districts will go for the polls on January 6, 2022. The elections for 110 Janpad Panchayats and 8,015 village Panchayats across seven districts will be conducted in the second phase on January 28. The third phase of the polling for 8,397 village panchayats and 118 Janpad panchayats across 36 districts will be held on February 16, Singh said.

The process of filing nominations for the first and second phases will commence from December 13. As per the state Election Commission, around 15,863 booths have been categorised as "sensitive" while 6,233 are identified as "very sensitive", Singh said.

In 2015, polls for 3,91,066 posts at different levels of the panchayat system were held and the tenure of these elected representatives ended in March 2020. Elections for 114 village panchayats whose tenure is to end after March 2022 will be held separately.

CM CHOUHAN PLANTS AMLA AND SAPTPARNI SAPLINGS



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted Amla and Saptaparni saplings along with the eminent stage, TV and film actor Rajiv Verma. Chief Minister Chouhan has been planting saplings every day as per his resolve. Chouhan has been planting saplings along with various voluntary organizations, social organizations and various individuals with the aim of encouraging social participation in the activities of environmental protection. Chief Minister Chouhan said that planta-

tion is a small effort to repay the debt of Mother Earth. More and more people should cooperate in this effort. The Saptaparni sapling planted is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. This medicinal plant is used in the manufacture of various medicines. Amla tree grows in forests and gardens all over India. Amla is also called Amrutphal or Dhatriphal in Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda, Amla is such a fruit, which has innumerable benefits. Its regular consumption increases the immunity of the body.

THREE PERSONS KILLED IN KHILCHIPUR ROAD ACCIDENT

Bhopal: In Rajgarh, a brother-sister duo and another girl died on the spot on Saturday night when a speeding truck hit their motorcycle on National Highway-52, Khilchipur police station in-charge Pradip Golia said. A case was registered against the truck driver and the vehicle was seized, the police said. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has condoled the untimely demise of three members of the same family at Khilchipur in Rajgarh district. Chouhan has prayed to God to grant peace to the departed souls and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this loss. It may be noted that a brother and his two sisters died in an accident on the Jaipur-Jabalpur National Highway in Khilchipur of Rajgarh district late on Saturday evening.

BJP eyeing tribal vote bank in MP ahead of 2023 polls

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two years ahead of Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP is trying to woo state's tribal population, who have the power to swing the elections in the state. The BJP has intensified its campaigns of organising programmes to honour the heroes of the tribal community.

There is a possibility of BJP losing the polls in 2023 due to the farmers' protest. In 2018, the BJP had to face defeat in most of the Assembly seats reserved for the tribals. However, in 2013, it had won twice as many seats as the Congress and the party remained in power.

Therefore, it is now trying to plug the gap which cost it the first rank in the previous polls and to bring back into its fold the tribals from the state.

In September, a grand event was



organised in Jabalpur to honour the memory of Raja Shankar Shah and Raghunath Shah which was attended by Union Minister Amit Shah.

The Habibganj railway station in Bhopal which is majorly inhabited by the members of the Gond tribe, was recently named after the Gond queen Kamalapati Rani.

The BJP government also celebrated

the birth anniversary of Birsu Munda in Bhopal as Tribal Gaurav Diwas which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After this, the party organised another programme in Indore to pay tributes to Bhil tribe warrior, Tanya Bhil, on his sacrifice day.

Mahakaushal and Vindhya region in Madhya Pradesh are home to the Gond tribe, while Malwa and Nimar regions, are home to the Bhils and Bhilalas. The BJP is leaving no stone unturned to woo these people and bolster its poll chances in 2023.

Tribals constitute about 23 per cent of the voters in the state and have 47 seats reserved for them.

Till now, the tribal vote bank was believed to go to the Congress. However, with the BJP too eyeing the crucial tribal votes now, the 2023 Assembly elections have become an interesting battle to watch out for.

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EDITOR'S SPECS

Government-Opposition faceoff

The face-off over the suspension of 12 MPs who allegedly created a ruckus during the monsoon session of Parliament could be a well thought out strategy of the government to engage the opposition on an issue which could have been a non issue. Otherwise, the government could have had to face tough question on inflation, Chinese intrusion, compensation to farmers and Covid deaths. The government has been demanding an apology from the suspended MPs but the opposition is firm on not tendering an apology. Meanwhile the suspended MPs have been sitting on protest in Parliament; MPs of the ruling BJP too protested against them on Friday. Leader of the House Piyush Goyal said, "The opposition leaders are making provocative statements and have refused to apologise on the serious issue even though I have offered an apology on small issues. When they are not willing to apologise, how can the matter be resolved?" The statement itself is a manifestation that the government is not interested in resolving the matter despite the Chair suggesting that both sides sit and discuss the issue. In these circumstances the opposition has of late got the sense that the government's strategy is of confrontation and not resolution and then they started pushing for issues like inflation and farmers' compensation. The MPs are moving the suspension of business notice under rule 267 on a daily basis which is being rejected by the Chair. On Friday also the Chairman rejected various notices of the opposition leaders under rule 267. On Thursday the opposition parties resorted to sloganeering after the Rajya Sabha assembled for Question Hour and later walked out of the House after they were denied permission for a discussion on inflation. The whole week has passed but the opposition in the Upper House could not raise the issues it wanted as the entire focus was on the suspension of the MPs.

India and China in the emerging Geopolitics

D.C. Pathak

Advent of Biden Presidency with its resonating calls of 'America is back', 'we will repair our alliances' and 'will engage with the world once again' on one hand and the rise of President Xi Jinping with a stronger hold on China after the Plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of CPC, on the other, have got strategic analysts to examine if a new Cold War was already on the horizon.

India has to define its stand and negotiate its international policy keeping in view the nation's best interests of the long run. Sino-Pak military alliance that chiefly worked against India, natural friendship between the two largest democracies of the world and the need for a rapid advancement of our Defence capabilities, are the major paradigms that should determine India's approach to both development and security.

Xi Jinping is implementing a two-fold strategy of seeking the economic route to becoming the second superpower and pursuing 'Sinicisation of Marxism' to define the future of Communist China. In a huge give and take between the Goddess dictatorship of China and the fundamentalist regime of Pakistan, the former has invested on CPEC located on the territory of PoK ceded by Pakistan to China in the face of the Indian protests and got an opening into the Muslim world where sympathy for Islamic radicals has been on the rise.

Pakistan is close to the pro-US group led by Saudi Arabia and yet has a good equation with Islamic radical organisations represented by Taliban. With one leg in the camp of 'revivalists' -- Pakistan -- it mediated between the US and the Taliban on Afghanistan -- would be in a position to assure the Chinese that the Cold War game of the West using Pak-Afghan region to 'radicalise' Muslims of Xinjiang and other parts of China, would not be allowed. The axis of the two principal adversaries of India has become very active after the Indian Parliament

scrapped Article 370 of the Constitution in August 2019 and converted J&K and Ladakh into union territories. India had successfully evolved a strategy of dealing with both China and Pakistan together.

It needs to be recalled that China drew the best lessons from the demise of the USSR -- it could clearly see that the Soviet regime had become an oligarchy that ignored the internal economic decline because of which it was not able to sustain the war in Afghanistan. This led Deng Xiaoping to adopt the policy of opening the Chinese market to the world in a controlled fashion and thus initiate a process of faster economic growth on which China has not looked back. China has become the second biggest global economy by investing in markets abroad and accessing technological knowledge wherever it was available -- including the research work of the US universities where it established 'Chairs' to reach out to the same.

Xi Jinping combines the persona of Deng and Mao Zedong and while consolidating Chinese economy further, he has reverted to the concept of supremacy of the Communist Party of China as the symbol of Marxism. This has helped him, among other things, to keep his leadership going on the strength of ideology and project it as something that was free of any personal vested interest. The recent conference of the Central Committee of CPC credited Xi Jinping with achievement of the first Centennial goal of making China a 'moderately prosperous society' by 2021 -- the hundredth year of the party's existence and acknowledged his pledge to make China a 'great modern Socialist country' by 2049 -- the second centennial marking the completion of hundred years since Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China. By highlighting the importance of 'ideology' and 'line', Xi Jinping has identified himself with the Party so completely that his leadership can not be easily challenged by any dissenters.

Under Xi Jinping, China is pro-

gressing economically and also politically extending its influence in the world taking care to buy time for its mission and somewhere following the doctrine of winning a war without a battle. It is joining multi-lateral platforms to create a non-combatant image, inducing economic dependence of other smaller nations on it through its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) and forging bilateral alliances and pacts to further its geo-political advancement.

Sino-Pak strategic alliance -- an illustration of this multi-prong objective of China -- is a cause for great concern for India. China knows it can not change the Western systems and is not in a hurry to challenge the global economic order -- it is exploring alternate approaches of invading others economically and doing it successfully. As far as territorial expansion was concerned Xi's China adheres to its known 'two steps forward one step backward' strategy -- which is salami slicing of sorts -- that was in evidence on LAC as also in the Indo-Pacific. India has suitably responded to these moves on land as well as on sea by undertaking a matching military build up and actively joining in Quad, respectively.

Some analysts have perceptively noted that President Xi Jinping has embarked on a larger than life mission of surpassing Mao Zedong in building China as the dominant power of the world -- matching the place it once occupied in its civilisational history. His new strategy of bringing all 'under one heaven' compels a recall of the description the Chinese Emperor once enjoyed as the 'son of heaven'. It is remarkable that a Communist dictatorship carrying the stamp of Marxism today is deriving strength from the country's civilisational roots. This reflects the desire for world domination -- the Emperor of China expected 'tribute' from other countries as protection money.

Xi's China is also working on fail-safe alliances -- using its economic hold as in the case of Pakistan. The defence expenditure of China has been on the rise -- in comparison to India it rose from a near parity in



the Nineties to more than three times of India's defence budget, as at present. China's move forward is neither transactional nor transformational but a strategy of continuum -- steady in pace and direction -- attempted on a good understanding of the global 'space' on land, sea and air. Geo-politically China is now in the frame so far as the emerging scene of the world getting divided between two superpowers, was concerned.

India has set in motion a well-considered strategy of handling the economic and security challenges emanating from this situation. There was never any doubt that the US and India must together anchor the collective effort of the democratic world to counter the threat from the Communist dictatorships on one hand and that from Islamic extremists on the other.

The policy of the Modi government to have bilateral relations on the basis of mutuality of interests in the economic and security spheres has been very successful. India is enlarging the ambit of friendships with European democracies, Australia, Japan and Israel -- including association with Quad -- to promote collective security against these dangers. As a nation with a voice in the global matters pertaining to war and peace, India is working for self-reliance in the area of defence and building military strength to take on any aggressive move of the PLA on the LAC and

tion from across the LOC.

India has maintained close friendship with Russia which has -- apart from defence deals with India -- been on the same page on the vital issues of Afghanistan and radicalisation. It is the policy of mutuality of security interests in Afghanistan that has made India work in collaboration with Iran, notwithstanding the conflicts that this country had with the US and Israel. Indian diplomacy has worked hard to keep the Western powers convinced of the legitimacy of India's policy towards all these other countries.

Finally, there is an added challenge on the internal security front because of the intent of the China-Pak combine to instigate acts of terror, insurgency and sectarian discord in India in an attempt to destabilise this country. A new dimension of the domestic scene of India is the rise of civil society forums which in collusion with anti-India lobbies abroad and elements hostile to the Modi government at home, play politics by proxy on issues ranging from Kashmir to Northeast and from safety of Dalits and minorities to poverty alleviation. Fortunately, we are getting adequate intelligence to draw a line between genuine protests and sponsored agitations.

(The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau; the views expressed are personal)

international

Iran's proposals lead to pause in Vienna nuke talks, mounting uncertainty

Tehran | Agencies

The talks aimed at reviving the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal was adjourned in Austria's capital Vienna, after which diplomats returned to their capitals for consultations before they will reconvene next week.

Senior diplomats from the UK, France, and Germany on Friday expressed "disappointment and concern" at the latest proposals from Iran. These developments, analysts say, have led to the suspension of the meeting and mounting uncertainty for future talks. Xinhua news agency reported.

"It was emphasised that the proposals of Iran on the removal of illegal and oppressive sanctions and the nuclear issue are on the table," Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani told Iranian media on Friday in Vienna.

Since the European representatives needed to consult



with their capitals for a "documented and reasonable response" to these proposals, it suggested that the talks be suspended for a few days, he was quoted by Iranian news network Press TV as saying.

The response from other sides to Iran's proposals would be the base for further negotiations, Bagheri Kani said, adding the European parties were not "satisfied" with some parts of Iran's proposals.

After "thoroughly and carefully" analysing the proposals by Iran's new delegation, senior officials from the three European countries said in a Friday statement that Iran "has backtracked

on the diplomatic progress made" by demanding "major changes," some of which were incompatible with the 2015 accord, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

However, Iranian media reported that Iran's proposals are "in full conformity with the JCPOA and the principles contained therein", citing an informed source familiar with the Vienna talks.

It is "unclear how these new gaps can be closed in a realistic time frame," European diplomats said.

These "new gaps" between the European countries and Iran are a

continuation of their different opinions about the texts negotiated during the previous six negotiating rounds.

The three European parties want Iran to agree to restart talks from where they left off in June, while Iran's negotiators reiterated that the texts of the previous rounds of talks were only "drafts" and thus they are not legally binding for Iran.

In a more optimistic tone, when commenting on the achievements in the past days, EU representative Enrique Mora, who chaired the Vienna meetings, told reporters on Friday that there had been progress "in the sense that we have had a new Iranian delegation."

Similarly, the talks helped other parties to increase their understanding of the position of the negotiation team of Iran's new government, Wang Qun, Chinese envoy to the UN and other international organisations in Vienna, explained on Friday.

13 DIED, 98 INJURED IN INDONESIA'S MT SEMERU ERUPTION

Jakarta: At least 13 people died and 98 others were injured after Mount Semeru in Indonesia's East Java erupted, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said on Sunday. "Two bodies have been identified, while others are still in the process," according to the BNPB's spokesman Abdul Muhari. All those injured, including two pregnant women, are currently under medical treatment at nearby health centres. Meanwhile, 902 people have been evacuated to a village hall, a school building, and houses of orship. Volcanic ash has buried a number of houses, roads and a bridge, Xinhua news agency reported. Officers are digging up the ash covering the road using heavy equipment, while evacuating and searching for missing persons. The 3,676-meter-high volcano erupted on Saturday at 3:10 p.m. Jakarta time. The hot clouds stopped falling due to the rain. Authorities called on people not to move near the rivers on

Sri Lankan manager's skull received multiple hits, limbs broken by Sialkot mob

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The preliminary post-mortem of Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara reveals that he died of a severe blow to his head and most of his limb bones had been shattered before the body was set on fire, Samaa TV reported.

The report and additional videos that surfaced on Saturday have revealed new details on the lynching. It emerged that at least one colleague tried to shield Priyantha from the mob.

The Sri Lankan national was lynched by a mob of factory workers and others on Friday over alleged blasphemy allegations. He worked as exports manager at Rajco Industries' unit located at Wazirabad Road.

Factory employees first killed him and then dragged his body out to set it on fire. The grisly events were recorded on mobile cameras, the report added.

The postmortem report reveals the final moments of Priyantha Kumara, who had been working in the country



for over a decade. According to the report, Priyantha's skull received multiple hits and a severe blow then went deep into his brain causing the death. The mob broke almost all of the limb bones, Samaa TV reported.

About 99 per cent of the tissues were damaged with burns and wounds. The body was burnt except for the lower legs.

Following the legal formalities and post-mortem, the

police have escorted the body to Lahore under security. The body will be handed over to the Sri Lankan High Commission in Islamabad.

The mob had accused Priyantha of blasphemy after he allegedly tore down some posters of a religious outfit pasted to the factory walls. However, a police investigation on Saturday revealed that Priyantha and workers had a heated exchange over another issue, the report said.

18 KILLED IN BUS ACCIDENT IN EASTERN KENYA

Nairobi: At least 18 commuters died after a bus ferrying choir members plunged into a river in Kitui County, eastern Kenya, the police said.

Mwingi East Sub-County Police Commander Joseph Yakan said 10 passengers have been rescued after a bus which had at least 30 people on board when the accident occurred at 11 a.m. on Saturday plunged into the river.

The victims were choir members of Mwingi Catholic Church, and were travelling to Nuu area from Mwingi Town for their male colleague's wedding, when the accident happened, Xinhua news agency reported.

Yakan said the driver of the bus attempted to steer the vehicle past a flooded bridge, but the water tides were too strong, sweeping the bus into the river.

"Some were rescued but we have 18 bodies now. We have launched an investigation to establish the cause of the incident," he said on the phone.

Yakan said the bus is currently absorbed in the mud adding that rescue efforts are underway.

Overnight airstrike on Houthi convoy kills 16 in Yemen's Taiz

Aden | Agencies

A total of 16 people were killed as a result of an aerial bombardment against Houthi military vehicles in Yemen's southwestern province of Taiz, a military official told Xinhua on Saturday. "An airstrike was launched late on Friday night and struck a convoy of the Houthi rebel militia in the countryside district of Maqbanah in Taiz, causing a huge explosion," the local military source said on condition of anonymity.

The airstrike struck the Houthi military convoy when it was passing through an area held by a group of civilians, he added, Xinhua news agency reported.

The source confirmed that the aerial bombardment, which partially destroyed the convoy, killed 16 people including five civilians, and wounded about



eight. The district of Maqbanah in Taiz is controlled by the Houthi rebels, and the

group accused the Saudi-led coalition of carrying out an aerial bombardment against the district. The Houthi-affiliated Masirah television network reported that 16 civilians including children were killed "in a raid carried out by the Saudi warplane in Maqbanah district on Friday night." The Saudi-led coalition has made no immediate comment yet, but it has recently intensified airstrikes against various Houthi-held sites across the war-ravaged Arab country. Yemen has been mired in a civil war since late 2014 when the Houthi militia seized control of several northern provinces and forced the internationally-recognised government of President Abd-Rabbu Manour Hadi out of the capital Sanaa. The Saudi-led Arab coalition intervened in the Yemeni conflict in March 2015 to support Hadi's government.

31 KILLED IN CENTRAL MALI ATTACK

Bamako: At least 31 people have been killed and 17 others injured when armed men attacked a truck carrying civilians in central Mali, authorities said in a statement.

The statement, issued by the transitional government of Mali on Saturday, said a group of unidentified armed bandits had attacked and set ablaze a truck carrying people to a fair-ground near the village of Songho on Friday, Xinhua news agency reported.

Reinforcements were "currently deployed" in the area to track down the perpetrators, it added, pledging to take all measures to "arrest and punish the perpetrators of this despicable and tragic act."

Malian Interim President Assimi Goita decreed three days of national mourning from Sunday to pay tribute to





OMICRON SPREAD: MAHA LOGS 7 NEW CASES, HEIGHTENS SCRUTINY

Team Absolute | Pune

The Covid-19 variant Omicron has cropped up more in Maharashtra with 7 new cases detected in Pune, including 3 minors, health officials said on Sunday. While three infectees arrived here from Lagos, Nigeria, one had recently travelled to Finland, and three others are their close contacts who have tested positive for Omicron.

According to the officials, a 44-year-old woman, a Nigerian citizen of Indian origin, along with her two daughters, aged 18 and 12, arrived here on November 24.

The woman had come to meet her elder brother, 45 and his two daughters, aged 7 years and 18 months.

All 6 members of the two families have now tested positive - the two siblings and their four daughters - including 3 minors.

The brother and sister and her adult daughter are fully vaccinated, but only the 44-year-old Nigerian woman has displayed symptoms.

The seventh person had recently visited Finland from November 18-25 and four days after arrival complained of mild fever. He had taken both doses of the vaccine and during the routine surveillance, has tested positive for Omicron.

All seven patients are currently under treatment at the Jijamata Hospital in Pimpri-Chinchwad, and their condition is described as stable.

The developments came a day after a 33-year-old man who flew down from Capetown in South Africa to Mumbai via Dubai and New Delhi tested positive on Saturday, sounding the alarm bells in



the state health setup.

A resident of Dombivli town in Thane, he is currently under treatment at a Covid centre and his condition is said to be stable but all his contacts have tested negative.

The state health authorities have been keeping an eagle eye on other passengers arriving at the international airports in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur since December 1.

In the past five days, a total of 28,221 passengers

arriving by international flights have been surveyed, including 4,901 from the "high risk" countries.

A total of 5,444 passengers have been subjected to RT-PCR tests, including 543 from other countries and 4,901 from the "high risk" countries of whom 9 samples have been sent for genomic sequencing.

The state has appealed to all people that all those who have had international travel history in the past one month must get their doses on priority.

Maha Omicron patient responding well to treatment

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The 33-year-old man from Maharashtra's Thane district, who had tested positive for the Omicron variant of coronavirus, is in a 'stable' condition and is responding well to the medical treatment, a senior health official said on Sunday. Samples of six other people, who tested positive for the coronavirus after arriving in Kalyan-Dombivli area of Thane district from different countries, have been sent for genome sequencing and the results are awaited, another official said.

The marine engineer, a resident of Dombivli town, arrived in Delhi from South Africa on November 23 and had given his samples for COVID-19 testing at the Delhi airport. He had then taken a flight to Mumbai, sources earlier said. "He is stable and responding well to treatment," deputy director of health services, Mumbai circle, Dr Gauri Rathod said. The patient will continue to be treated at the COVID-19 care centre in Kalyan and will not be shifted elsewhere, she said.

He will undergo the treatment protocol, as prescribed for the Omicron variant, for 14 days, the official said. Besides this patient, six other people who had travelled from different



countries to the Kalyan-Dombivli area, have tested positive for the coronavirus and are kept in isolation, Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation's epidemic cell chief Dr Pratibha Panpatil said.

They include four from Nigeria, and one each from Russia and Nepal.

Their samples have been sent for genome sequencing and the results will be known in the coming days, Dr Panpatil said.

"The condition of all the six is stable. They are asymptomatic and none of them had come from high-risk countries," she added.

Cases of the Omicron variant have also been detected in Karnataka, Gujarat and Delhi. According to the Centre, the countries designated as 'at-risk' are European countries, including the United Kingdom, and South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel. Under the new norms, RT-PCR tests are mandatory for passengers arriving from the 'at-risk' countries and they will be allowed to leave the airport only after the results come.

Also, two per cent of the passengers arriving by flights from other countries will be subjected to the test randomly.

'RBI expected to hold rates on uncertainty over new Covid variant'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India is expected to retain key lending rates and accommodative stance to support growth during the upcoming monetary policy review schedule next week, said experts.

The Monetary Policy Committee meeting of the central bank will be held between December 6-8. "There were growing expectations that in the December MPC meeting, the RBI would hike the reverse repo rate to narrow the corridor between repo and reverse repo rate. However, the new Covid variant 'Omicron' has again pushed the global and Indian economy in a state of uncertainty and nervousness," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist and National Director, Research, at Knight Frank India. "There is also added uncertainty of any knee-jerk reaction of Indian and global financial markets to (the US) Fed's monetary policy indication/action."

In such a scenario, the RBI, in its upcoming meeting, is likely to keep the rates on hold, Sinha said. "On the growth front, while most economic indicators have surpassed pre-Covid levels, there is still a lot of slack in the economy. Hence RBI may decide to wait and watch till the next MPC meeting in February 2022," Sinha said. At present, the Monetary Policy Committee of the central bank has



maintained the repo rate, or short-term lending rate, for commercial banks, at 4 per cent. Besides, the reverse repo rate was kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent. "Given the uncertainty of the new variant, we maintain our call for a reverse repo rate hike in the February RBI MPC meeting rather than in the upcoming December meeting," Kotak Securities said. "We expect the RBI to continue on its path of normalisation with the reverse repo rate hike in February policy and repo rate hike in mid-FY23." Furthermore, base effect, along with relatively lower food prices, have eased India's October retail inflation on a sequential, and year-on-year basis. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 4.48 per cent in October from 4.35 per cent in September. Even on YoY basis, October 2021 retail inflation was lower than 7.61 per cent recorded for October 2020.

CYBER CELL ARRESTS MAN FOR CHEATING WOMEN ON PROMISE OF MARRIAGE, JOB

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: Acting on a complaint from a woman, Mumbai cyber cell has arrested a man from Pune for allegedly cheating at least 10 women on the false promise of marriage and providing jobs. The victim woman had filed a case in this connection on December 2. The accused has been identified as Yuvraj Bhasole alias Satish alias Rajveer. After preliminary investigation, the accused has been sent to judicial custody till December 8. "The accused used to impersonate as an IPS officer or IB agent," cyber cell personnel said. He threatened to make the victim's picture viral on social media and demanded money. Since 2013, he has cheated more than 30 married and divorced women and has realised a huge sum from them.

Priyanka Chaturvedi quits Parliament TV show over MPs' suspension

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Sunday stepped down as an anchor for a show on the state-run Sansad TV channel in protest over the suspension of twelve MPs including her from the Rajya Sabha over "unruly behaviour" last week. Ms Chaturvedi expressed her discontent on suspension from the Upper House saying that it is something which "has never happened in parliament history." The opposition MPs were suspended for the entire Winter session of the parliament for their alleged misbehaviour in the previous session in August. Resigning from Sansad TV which among public affairs shows also broadcasts programming of the two houses of parliament, Ms Chaturvedi posted on Koo, "It is with anguish that I step down as anchor of @sanskad_tv's show Meri Kahani, I am unwilling to occupy space on Sansad TV for a show but denied space on it for discharging parliament duties due to arbitrary suspension." "I must step away," she asserted. "When today highest number of women MPs have been suspended for an entire session in recorded history of Rajya Sabha then I need to speak



up for them," Ms Chaturvedi said in another post, attaching a copy of her resignation letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu. The opposition has termed the suspension of the MPs as "undemocratic" and in violation of all the rules of procedure of the Rajya Sabha. The MPs also staged protests in the Parliament premises demanding

revocation of the suspension. The suspended MPs are Elamaram Kareem (CPM), Phulo Devi Netam, Chhaya Verma, R Bora, Rajamani Patel, Syed Nasir Hussain and Akhilesh Prasad Singh of the Congress, Binoy Viswam of CPI, Dola Sen and Shanta Chhetri of Trinamool Congress, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Anil Desai of Shiv Sena.

IIT Bombay: Breeding geniuses by the lakeside

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Nestled in a green jungle beside the picturesque Powai lake with misty-grey hills in the background, the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) inspires and awes, as it promises to be the final academic destination for many students aiming to hit the sky in life.

Set up in 1958 as the country's second IIT -- after IIT Kharagpur (IIT-KGP, 1950) -- in the list of 23 IITs currently, IIT-B enters the momentous diamond jubilee year of its historic first convocation held on December 22, 1962, when around 70 wide-eyed young men passed out of the institute.

Decades later, the golden jubilee convocation in 2012 was attended by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The institute has a little more than 12,005 students in 2021, as per the current annual report released by its Director, Professor Subhasis Chaudhuri.

The groundwork for the first IIT-KGP was inspired and prepared well before Independence by the late Bengal academician Humayun Kabir, who later served as the Education and Civil Aviation Minister of India.

After the country achieved freedom in 1947, its first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pushed the idea forward and even laid the foundation stone for IIT-B, according to the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology (CIITs).

Nehru wanted science and technology to play a prominent role in modernising the new India and meeting the needs of its growing population, and envisioned that the IIT system would, over time, produce scientists and technologists of the highest calibre who would engage in research, design and development to help build the nation towards self-reliance in her technological needs.

"The institutions were to be designed with the necessary dynamism, flexibility of organisation and capacity to adapt in the light of expanding knowledge and changes in the socio-economic requirements of a modern society," says the CIIT.

The earliest IITs got the benefit of material assistance and academic cooperation from cer-



(1966 batch) -- who turned heads at IIT-B, being the lone female student among 300 boys, today the situation is different with 20-25 per cent female students on the campus.

As the President of the IIT-B Alumni Association (IITBAA), Deepak Patil, says, at IITs, the mind is trained not only academically, but also to think deeply, rationally, to handle any problem, to go to the root and evolve a logical solution.

IITBAA Chairman Girish Nayak says IIT education makes the student sharper and analytical, trains them overall to solve any kind of problems, grapple any challenges in life without getting surprised or overwhelmed, and this is something that stays with them forever.

The duo feels that the IITs offer an excellent opportunity for personality development, total independence, no family support systems to shield them from any emotional problems, thrown together with total strangers from different parts of the country and learn to live together.

"It's here that we realise that there are many who are not only as brainy as you, probably more intelligent than you... There would be hot debates of high intellectual levels on practically any topic under the sun, from technology to politics. All of these adds to your personality and intellect and yet makes you humble," said Patil.

Plus, the students here get the advantages of an outstanding faculty, staff, academic-industry connection, and the rich experiences of the trail-blazer alumni, which result in achievements that make global headlines. A few of the many notables who have passed out of IIT-B over the past six decades are: BSE MD & CEO Ashish Chauhan, Syntel founder Bharat Desai, Infosys Co-founder Nandan Nilekani, Twitter Inc. CEO Parag Agrawal, Senior Advocate Colin Gonsalves, ex-BMC Commissioner Jairaj Phatak, ex-Union Minister Jairam Ramesh, late Goa CM Manohar Parrikar, mathematician Ravindran Kannan, ex-Dean of Harvard Business School Nitin Nohria, economist Ajit Ranade, and ex-President of Bell Labs Arun Netravali, among others.

tain developed countries -- IIT-B from USSR, IIT-Madras from Germany, IIT-Kanpur from the US and IIT-Delhi from the UK. Over the years, the IITs have created world-class educational platforms dynamically sustained through internationally recognised research, based on excellent infrastructural facilities. The faculty and alumni of IITs have made a huge impact in all sectors of the society, both in India and abroad, and the IITs are globally recognised as 'centres of academic excellence', reputed for the outstanding calibre of the students graduating from them. Over the years, even IIT-B grew in leaps and bounds and now ranks nationally and globally among the most renowned institutes of excellence in various fields of technology. Compared to the first girl -- Tejaswini Saraf

President to visit Maharashtra from Dec 6 to 9



Team Absolute | New Delhi

President Ram Nath Kovind will start his Maharashtra tour with a visit to the Raigad Fort to pay tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on Monday.

On Tuesday, the President will visit Air Force Station, Lohegaon (Pune), where he will witness flying display and interact with Air Warriors, a communique from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said on Sunday. The President will present the 'President's Standard' to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron in Mumbai on December 8, it added.

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ BRIEFLY STOPPED AT MUMBAI AIRPORT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez was stopped at Mumbai Airport by authorities on Sunday but later allowed to proceed.

According to the information, Jacqueline was recently quizzed by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a prevention of money laundering case involving Suresh Chandrashekhar and seven others.

A highly-placed source said that a LoC (look out circular) was issued against the actress, and the agency had suspected that she might go abroad and hence, they had written a letter to the authority concerned.

The authorities stopped Jacqueline when she arrived at Mumbai airport but later, she was freed. According to sources, she was about to catch a flight to Delhi.

The Enforcement Directorate had on Saturday filed a chargesheet under PMLA act naming few Bollywood actresses as witnesses including Jacqueline. The court had taken cognisance of the charge sheet soon after it was filed and had asked the agency to supply the charge sheet copy to all the accused. It is possible that Jacqueline might be called to join the investigation again.

The next date in the charge sheet matter is December 13. The ED officials were tight



lipped over the matter. Allaying apprehensions, the Health Department said that genetic changes/mutations in viruses is a natural phenomenon and they should not panic, but strictly follow all Covid appropriate behaviour and adhere to all protocols. Unwilling to take any risks, since December 4, BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation Commissioner I. S. Chahal clamped stringent home isolation norms for all international passengers from the afflicted countries.





Adele would be starstruck by Dwayne Johnson

Los Angeles | Agencies

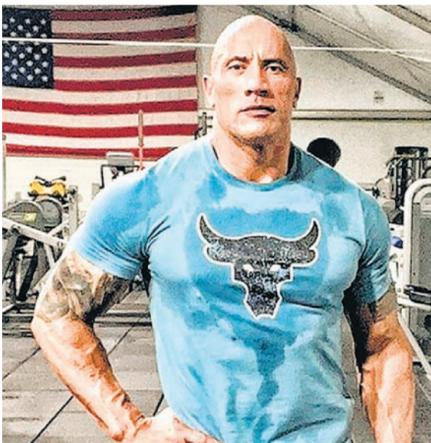
Singer Adele would "cry" if she ever got to meet Hollywood action star Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson because she's such a big fan. The 'Easy on Me' hitmaker said that the 'Jungle Cruise' actor is the one person who she'd be starstruck to meet and she "nearly fell off" her chair when she received a bouquet of flowers from him as an apology for not being able to be in the audience for her recent 'One Night Only' TV special, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "Someone I've never met, that I think I would actually cry, is The Rock. I was the biggest wrestling fan when I was younger! He sent me flowers because he and his wife couldn't make it to my show and literally I nearly fell off me chair!"

Adele was quick to stress she doesn't have a crush on the 'Moana' star.

She added: "He always paints his little girl's nails and stuff like that, doesn't he? He's so cute. I wish he was my dad... Oh yeah, it's not like I - I haven't got a crush on him or anything. It's just, he's amazing. He's just incredible, I want him to be my mate. I want him to be my friend."

The 33-year-old star is a big fan of the former WWE star, one thing she doesn't enjoy is 'Real Housewives' and she fears



her "brain will die" if she starts dedicating time to the Bravo franchise.

Speaking during a 'Power of Make-Up' video on NikkieTutorials' YouTube channel, she explained: "I know a lot of people love it, but I can't. My brain will die, I can't...I don't know who any of them are, so I don't feel like I can start from the beginning when it's been on for so long. I'm not going to lie, it doesn't work for me."

Adele said she had once tried to watch 'Real Housewives of New Jersey'.

She added: "One time I did watch one episode of 'The Real Housewives of New Jersey' when they were all like literally killing each other, but it was too much, I was like I can't, I can't watch. I'd rather watch a wildlife programme."



Billie Eilish no longer gets 'freaked out' being in public places

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Billie Eilish used to struggle with anxiety disorder, which causes people to avoid places or situations that may trigger panic, but she no longer gets "freaked out" in public places.

Speaking to Vanity Fair, she said: "I'm starting to have an adulthood which is new for me, and very exciting, and I have had new experiences and new people and lots of love." "My attitude used to be like, 'I can't go out, I can't go here, I can't go there...' I wasn't able to go to a park or go get coffee, it freaked me out. But in the last year I opened up to it."

Eilish used to be known for her signature black and green hairdo, but she credits going blonde with helping her deal with the disorder, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She explained: "If I'm being cautious and not trying to be in everybody's faces, it's cool... I didn't used to be able to do that because my pride was too huge. I was like, 'I only want to be seen if I look like myself.' So I would never wear anything normal."

The Grammy-winner said she no longer cares if people hate her.

She said: "I feel a lot of pressure, but back then I was more loved - I was pretty over all loved, to be honest. And I was scared because I wanted to keep that love. But now tonnes of people hate me, so I'm not worried anymore. If you like me, you like me, and if you don't, you don't."

BTS give heartfelt speech after receiving Variety's Record of the Year Award

Seoul | Agencies

South-Korean super K-pop band BTS has delivered a heartfelt video speech at Variety's Hitmakers event, after being awarded record of the year for 'Butter'.

While accepting the honour on Saturday, RM reflected on what the success of the hit song means to them, and described what it was like to perform their first shows since 2019 this past week. "We'd like to thank Variety for this amazing honor," RM said, reports variety.com.

"'Butter' holds a very special place in our heart. During these uncertain and turbulent times with

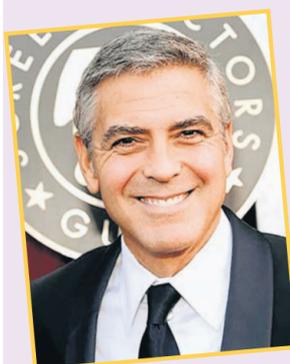
the pandemic, we took time to look back on our past and present and decided to release 'Butter' in hopes of lifting spirits."

"The song became an anchor for us to enjoy what we can now and keep moving forward. We just finished our first in-person concert we longed for in two years, especially since the pandemic and this feels truly like the beginning of our new chapter." "BTS recently took over L.A.'s SoFi Stadium with four sold-out shows, playing to 70,000 fans each night. Variety's Angeliqe Jackson described the first night of the concerts as "rife with confetti, smoke, pyrotechnics and -- of course -- the smoothest of dance moves."



GEORGE CLOONEY TURNED DOWN \$35 MILLION OFFER FOR A DAY'S WORK

Los Angeles | Agencies



Hollywood star George Clooney has shared that he turned down a \$35 million offer to film a commercial after he consulted his wife Amal.

The 60-year-old actor-filmmaker revealed the job offer when he was talking with The Guardian about his upcoming directorial feature 'The Tender Bar' and was asked

whether he is satisfied with the money he's earned, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Well, yeah," he admitted. Alluding that it's not always money that gives him satisfaction, he added: "I was offered \$35m for one day's work for an airline commercial, but I talked to Amal (his wife) about it and we decided it's not worth it."

George went on explaining why he turned down the job. "It was (associated with) a country that, although it's an ally, is questionable at times, and so I thought: 'Well, if it takes a minute's sleep away from me, it's not worth it,'" he said, as his wife Amal is a renowned human rights lawyer.

George married Amal in 2014 and they welcomed twins, daughter Ella and son Alexander, in June 2017. In the same interview, the star talked about why he has slowed down in recent years when it comes to accepting onscreen roles.

'Harlem': A frothy, 'girls wanna have fun' series



TROY RIBEIRO

Series: (Streaming on Amazon Prime)

Direction: Malcolm D. Lee, Linda Mendoza, Stacey Muhammad and Neema Barnette.

Cast: Meagan Good, Grace Byers, Shoniqua Shandai, Jerrie Johnson, Tyler Lepley, Whoopi Goldberg, Jasmine Guy, Andrea Martin, Robert Richard, Juani Feliz, Kate Rockwell and Sullivan Jones.

Ratings: *** and 1/2 (three stars)



This frothy series created by Tracy Oliver centres on the exploits of four stylish and ambitious best girlfriends living in Harlem, New York City, the mecca of Black culture in America.

The friends, three coloured and one white, with varied tastes in life, dreamt of a fairytale life as young girls, but now in this phase of their lives, in between careers, they are constantly thinking, contemplating and debating about dating and relationships, whenever they meet. They banter without missing a beat. The four are:

Camille, essayed by Meagan Good. She is a professor of anthropology at Columbia University. She has extensive knowledge of the dating norms of many cultures, but has a hard time navigating her own love life between her ex -- Ian (Tyler Lepley) -- and current boyfriend Jameson (Sullivan Jones). Making matters worse for her is her

work-life balance, as she fails to impress her boss, Dr Elise Pruitt (Whoopi Goldberg).

Tye, a "dyke" played by Jerrie Johnson, is an IT entrepreneur who has created a successful queer dating app. But on her relationship front, she is always conscious of what people will think of her if she dates a white woman and thus keeps her partners at arm's length. Shoniqua Shandai plays the fizzy-head Angie. She is a confident, vibrant and filter-free black singer-cum-actress who is forthright and constantly suspicious of people's attitudes towards black people.

Grace Byers portrays Quinn, the only white among the four. She is a fashion designer who depends on her family's trust fund. She dates Shawn (Robert Richard), a stripper, after meeting him for the first time, but being bi-curious, she is confused, thus complicating her love life decisions.

The characters are relatable and the

cast slip into their roles effortlessly delivering their chops effectively.

Shoniqua is too dramatic and over the top for most of the time. The only odd one out is Jasmine Guy, who plays Quinn's concerned mother. For an elite society lady, she is too loud and a bit crass, which makes her so out of place.

The series, consisting of ten episodes, begins with the girls appearing to be on a desperate note, but gradually, the script meanders on an even keel. Each episode proves to be a hardy one and it is executed here with an appealing self-awareness about the flush of new love or lust, and the way it can become a matured yet all-consuming distraction.

Overall, the series is entertaining, mildly addictive, and so fluffy that it does not take itself seriously at all. Not to mention the fact that it bears similarities to so many other four-friend chick-flicks and series templates available on various OTT platforms.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Carla Ginola



INDIA VS NEW ZEALAND, 2ND TEST

KIWIS 140/5 AT STUMPS, INDIA FIVE WICKETS AWAY FROM WIN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India were closing in on a memorable win in the second and final Test, reducing New Zealand to 140/5 in 45 overs, the visitors still needing 440 runs to save the match on the third day of the match at the Wankhede Stadium here on Sunday.

Ravichandran Ashwin claimed three wickets for 27 runs as India pushed for a famous victory in a match in which New Zealand's left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel claimed 14-225, the best figures by any bowler against India.

Daryl Mitchell struck a defiant half-century and added 73 runs for the fourth wicket with Henry Nicholls (36 not out) to delay the inevitable. At stumps on Day 3, Rachin Ravindra was keeping (Daryl Mitchell's) company, with two runs



Brief scores
India 325 & 276/7 in 70 overs (Mayank Agarwal 62, Cheteshwar Pujara 47, Shubman Gill 47, Virat Kohli 36, Axar Patel 41 not out; Ajaz Patel 4-106, Rachin Ravindra 3-56) v New Zealand 62 & 140/5 in 45 overs (Daryl Mitchell 60, Henry Nicholls 36 not out; R Ashwin 3-27, Axar Patel 1-42).

against his name. Earlier, India declared their second innings at 276 for 7 in 70 overs just before tea on the third day, setting New Zealand a target of 540. Mayank Agarwal scored 62 and shared a century partnership with Cheteshwar Pujara while Shubman Gill (47) and Virat Kohli (36) added 82 runs for the third wicket as India went searching for runs. Axar Patel blasted an unbeaten 41 runs off 26 balls as India declared at 276/7. Ajaz Patel, who on Saturday claimed a historic 10 wickets in an innings, was the best New Zealand bowler on the day as he claimed 4-106 in the second innings for an overall match haul of 14-225 -- the best figures by any bowler against India. The previous best was 13/106 by Ian Botham of England at the Wankhede Stadium in 1980.

JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP

France beat India 3-1 to finish third

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

India suffered a crushing 1-3 defeat against France in the bronze medal match of the 2021 FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium, here on Sunday. French captain Timothy Clement converted three penalty corners for France in the 26th, 34th and 47th minutes to lead his side to a podium finish while for India, Sudeep scored only one goal in the 42nd minute. This match was a chance for India to avenge their 4-5 defeat against France in their tournament opener. However, the European side continued to dominate the hosts.

India started the proceedings aggressively and got the first penalty corner in the first minute of the first quarter. Sanjay took the shot but it was brilliantly saved by the French Goalkeeper Guillaume de Vaucelles. But India continued the attacks from both the flanks.

Uttam Singh, from the left flank, showed remarkable pace and dribbled past to at least three French players to get into the circle, he took a shot but again Guillaume de Vaucelles saved it. France got a penalty corner late in the first quarter when there was a clash between Clement and Abhishek Lakra in the circle. France failed to score on it. India were trying to negate the continuous pressure



from France, but the visitors got another penalty corner in the 26 minute when India's defender Shardanand Tiwari tried to stop French defenders. The referee awarded him the Green Card as India went down to 10 men in the match. French skipper Clement converted it into the goal and gave France a 1-0 lead in the bronze medal contest. Clement scored two more goals in the second quarter to take 3-1 lead as the hosts were looked like mere spectators in the field. It was Clement's hat-trick as at the end of third-quarter France took 3-1 lead in the match. In the fourth quarter, India got many chances but none of the players managed to score, while France too got penalty corners but failed to exceed their lead.

BWF WORLD TOUR FINALS

Sindhu loses to An Se-young in final

Bali | Agencies

India's star shuttler PV Sindhu lost the final of the BWF World Tour Finals to South Korea's An Se-young in straight games 16-21, 12-21 here on Sunday.

The 19-year-old South Korean Se-young was at her best on Sunday and Sindhu proved no match for her as the Indian tried her level best to get back but failed.

Sindhu started defensively and gave an early advantage to the South Korean, but the Indian fought back to level the scores at 15-15. But the South Korean didn't lose her focus and won the game with a terrific smash.

In the second game, Sindhu matched her opponent, but after the mid-break, she lost concentration and the second game as well.

Sindhu had overcome a stiff fight in the semifinal, defeating Akane Yamaguchi of Japan 21-15, 15-21, 21-19. It was Sindhu and



Yamaguchi's fourth meeting of the year. While the Indian beat the Japanese shuttler at the All England Open and the Tokyo Olympics quarterfinals, Yamaguchi came out on top in the most recent meeting -- the Indonesia Masters semifinals. Sindhu had won the title three years back in 2018 and this match was the Indian shuttler's third final appearance.

Asian Champions Trophy: Indian women's hockey team crushes Thailand 13-0

Donghae (South Korea) | Agencies

Donghae (South Korea) : Dragflicker Gurjit Kaur slammed five goals as the Indian women's hockey team began their campaign on a roaring note, crushing Thailand 13-0 in the Donghae Women's Asian Champions Trophy here on Sunday. Gurjit gave India the lead in the second minute after an infringement by Thailand in their defensive third prompted the referee to award a penalty stroke. Gurjit, who scored four goals at the Tokyo Olympic Games, smartly put the ball into the back of the nets to give India a 1-0 lead. The early goal put Thailand on the back foot, and Vandana Kataria, the only Indian women's player to score a hat-trick at the Olympics, slammed the second goal five minutes later. By the time the first quarter was over, Lilima Minz had added another field goal in the 14th minute, while Gurjit Kaur and Jyoti scored two more from penalty corners in the 14th and 15th minute, giving India a 5-0 lead. The second quarter started much the same way as India kept most of the possession, giving no room to Thailand to cause any danger. Within the first minute of the second quarter, Rajwinder Kaur, who made her international debut on Sunday, scored a field goal in the 16th minute, and in the 24th minute, Gurjit scored her third goal and Lilima scored another from a PC, also in the 24th minute. The Indian



team demolished the Thai defence as they struck another PC in the 25th minute through Gurjit, thus giving India a 9-0 lead at the end of the second quarter. Returning from the 10-minute half-time break, India dominated by continuing to make threatening circle penetrations from the left flank. But Thailand dug in deep and defended

well for the first six minutes in the third quarter. But Jyoti broke the threshold, scoring another field goal in the 36th minute to exceed India's lead by 10 goals. A defensive error four minutes later from Thailand gave India another PC, but this time Gurjit's powerful flick was deflected by the opposition. A well-constructed move from the middle late in the 43rd minute caught Thailand's defence napping as Sonika struck in her first goal in the match. The fourth quarter, which was a mere formality by the time it started, saw Navneet Kaur threatening Thailand's defence with deep runs from the right flank. But Thailand's defence managed to keep the danger at bay, preventing any further damage to the scoreline. In the 55th minute, Monika managed to get her stick on a long pass inside the circle, as she deflected the ball into the back of the nets to exceed India's lead by another goal. Three minutes later, Gurjit Kaur scored her fifth goal from a late penalty corner, adding in the 13th goal for India. This was the India team's first match since the historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics. In the absence of captain Rani Rampal, who has been rested from the tournament, India is being led by veteran goalkeeper Savita. India's match against Malaysia, scheduled for December 6, will not take place due to Covid-related issues, Asian Hockey Federation said. India will next play hosts Korea on December 8.

Lewandowski answers Messi chants with a new goal record

Berlin | Agencies

Robert Lewandowski's ability to concentrate on the point seems at a similarly high level as his goal-scoring skills. Only days after the disappointing outcome of the 2021 Ballon d'Or award, the 33-year-old turned into the man of the match in the German Clasico.

The Pole not only scored two decisive goals, his 15th and 16th this season, after only 14 rounds of matches, but delivered a masterpiece of fighting spirit on Saturday night.

It was Lewandowski, who made Bayern win the delicate and nail-biting duel against Borussia Dortmund 3-2.

"I saw him in the 97th minute clearing a ball with enormous effort near our box. That might tell the story," Julian Nagelsmann said. The Bayern coach added, "We saw the world's best player and an outstand-



ing striker." Having lost the Ballon d'Or vote narrowly to Argentine star Lionel Messi, the Bayern striker in a thrilling game proved his class on all levels professional sport requires, Xinhua reports. Over most of the 101 minutes, including 10 minutes of extra time, the Bayern striker must have heard the chants from the stands. Dortmund's fans praised Paris striker Messi, trying to disturb the Ballon d'Or runner-up.

Lewandowski's on-pitch answers not only impressed his coach but the German record international Lothar Matthaus. The Bayern striker set a new national league record by scoring his 118th away goal. He scored 22 league goals (in 15 games) and 26 in all competitions against his former club Dortmund.

Last season, the Pole with 41 goals outpaced the nearly 50-year-old record of German striker legend Gerd Muller of 40 season goals scored in 1972.

Inter crush Roma in highly-anticipated Serie A game

Rome | Agencies

The highly-anticipated Serie A fixture between Inter Milan and Roma turned out to be one-sided, as the Nerazzurri won 3-0 away with Hakan Calhanoglu also scoring, hammering the capital team led by Inter's former coach Jose Mourinho.

Inter entered the Stadio Olimpico with four Serie A victories in a row, and it ran riots in Saturday's match as it sealed the win by half-time.

The defending champions went ahead in the 14th minute in spectacular style, as Calhanoglu's in-swinging corner nutmegged goalkeeper Rui Patrício and went into the net. The away side doubled the lead minutes later, Calhanoglu was involved again as the Turk squared for Edin Dzeko to



score against his old club, Xinhua reports. Denzel Dumfries put the icing on Inter's cake in the 39th minute when Alessandro Bastoni floated in a cross from the left, the Dutchman outpaced Matias Vina for a diving header. AC Milan also got the job done in the first-half, as a pair of strikes

from Franck Kessie and Alexis Saelemaekers surged it to dominate Salernitana 2-0 at San Siro. The win, coupled with Napoli's 3-2 home defeat to Atalanta, sent AC Milan to the top of the table with 38 points, while Inter Milan also catapulted themselves into Napoli dropped to third.

Pollard out of Pakistan tour due to hamstringing injury

St John's (Antigua) | Agencies

Cricket West Indies (CWI) said on Sunday that captain Kieron Pollard is out of the white-ball tour of Pakistan later in the month due to not recovering from a hamstringing injury which he sustained during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the UAE and Oman. It also announced Devon Thomas and Rovman Powell as Pollard's replacements in the ODI and T20I squads respectively. "Pollard will undergo rehabilitation work in Trinidad, under the supervision of CWI's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Israel Dowlat, and will be reassessed in a few weeks ahead of the upcoming home tours against Ireland and England in January 2022," said a statement by the CWI. In Pollard's absence, Nicholas Pooran and Shai Hope will be captaining the



T20I and ODI teams respectively. "With Pollard ruled out, Nicholas Pooran will lead the team in the T20Is. He was stand-in Captain when West Indies beat Australia 4-1 in the five match CG Insurance T20I Series in St. Lucia earlier this year. Shai Hope will Captain the team in the ODIs for the first time. Pooran is Vice Captain for the ODIs and Hope the Vice Captain for the T20Is," further said the statement.

ITF WORLD TOUR C'SHIPS PRANJALA BEATS SOWJANYA TO CLINCH WOMEN'S SINGLES TITLE

Bengaluru | Agencies

Pranjala Yadlapalli clinched the KSLTA ITF World Tour Championships women's singles title after beating Sowjanya Bhavisetti, here on Sunday. Yadlapalli, who played two back to back three setters in her quarterfinal and semifinal matches and suffering cramps, dreaded yet another three setter in the title clash against state-mate Sowjanya. After being 3-5 down in the first set, she went all out to claim the set 7-5 and breezed through the second after initial hiccups to win the Championships. This was Pranjala's fourth ITF title of her career. Battling with a nagging shoulder injury that saw her out of the action for almost two years, the 22-year-old had last won the ITF Lagos title three seasons ago.

The finals began on a fiery note with both the players testing each other's corners. Sowjanya, with



a renewed confidence of having felled the top seed Rutuja Bhosale on Saturday, was in an attacking mode but at times, it proved to be her disadvantage. Pranjala with an alarming calmness, was careful of her serving shoulder and trusted more on her backhand. After both the players had broken each other's serve twice in first four games, Pranjala held hers to go 3-2 up. But her opponent won the next three games to lead 5-3. Serving to survive in the set, Pranjala came up with some great down the line backhand shots and a few unforced errors by Sowjanya helped her win four games in a row and wrest the first set. The second set saw both the players going for broke and held their respective serves until the fourth game. Pranjala then took control of the match as she played some quality tennis and didn't give a fumbling Sowjanya any chance of a comeback and won four games on a trot to wear the singles crown.



Jacqueline Fernandez stationed in Daman for Ram Setu



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Jacqueline Fernandez is one of the busiest bees of Bollywood, as the actress is continuously shooting for her upcoming films. Currently, she is shooting in a hill station since long for her next. A source close to the actress recently revealed, "Jacqueline has been shooting in Daman with Akshay for Ram Setu for her month long schedule. The shoot has been quite intense and hectic so the actress has hardly got any time to work on anything else. She has been stationed in Daman for the past one month."

The source adds, "She would be back in the Mumbai for a day to finish off her trails and brand shoots before she has to fly to UAE for the Dabangg tour. She will be taking some time off from Ram Setu shoot to rehearse for the tour because there is absolutely no breather for her between the Ram Setu schedule wrap and the tour start."

The busy actress has a packed lineup of films in her kitty including, Cirkus, Bachchan Pandey, Kick 2, Attack and Ram Setu.

RRR to be the biggest and widest Indian film release in the US



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker S.S Rajamouli who has made India proud with his last release Baahubali 1 and 2 is back with his next film RRR, starring superstars, Jr. NTR, Ramcharan, Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt, and Shriya Saran amongst other actors.

The makers of the film are leaving no stones unturned to make this film reach as many people as possible. Apart from India, the makers of the film are aiming to release this film in almost 999+ multiplexes only in the US, bringing back the glory of Indian Cinema to the audience.

Sarigama Cinemas and Raftar Creations are jointly distributing the movie in the USA. The anticipation among the audiences has been increasing day by day not just in India but worldwide as it is the biggest action drama to date.

The makers of SS Rajmouli's Pan-India film 'RRR' have shared multiple assets including posters and songs with glimpses of Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt, Ram Charan among others. The film's trailer is also to be unveiled this month, on the 9th of December, followed by a grand event. Post Baahubali's success, SS

Rajamouli became a nationwide household name, he has made another film on a grand scale and is set to break many records. The movie includes a star-studded lineup besides lead actors Ram Charan and Jr. NTR. Ajay

Devgn, Alia Bhatt, Olivia Morris will be seen in pivotal roles while Samuthirakani, Ray Stevenson, and Alison Doody join in as supporting roles. Jayanti Lal Gada of PEN Studios has bagged the theatrical distribution rights across North India and has also bought worldwide electronic rights for all languages. Pen Marudhar will be distributing the film in the North Territory. The Telugu-language period action drama film is produced by D. V. V. Danayya of DVV Entertainments. RRR is releasing on 7th January 2022.

I am not rebellious like Rinku: Sara

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Sara Ali Khan, who is recently in the capital to promote her movie 'Atrangi Re', seemed quite confident and her excitement reflected when she said: "Mai Atrangi hoon (I am Atrangi)."

Sara is hopeful of attention from the audience that she failed to get in 'Love Aaj Kal 2'.

She expressed her gratitude for director Aanand L. Rai, saying: "This opportunity came to me at the right time. After ten days of 'Kedarnath', I was on the sets of 'Atrangi Re'. It was great because people didn't like 'Love Aaj Kal' and I am working for the audience and there was no point in getting depressed. You need to push yourself and that is what Aanand ji did for me."

Sara further opened up about playing 'Rinku' and how she related with her character. "We both are confident people whose confidence even masks their inner vulnerability. But at the same place we are different. I am not rebellious by nature. I will not break the bottles or run away 21 times. I have a very supportive family. I can never dance at my husband's marriage. And of course, I can't speak in a Bihari accent."

It was not easy for Sara to get into the skin of her character but she believes that one should not judge the character. "The most important thing while doing a film is you should not judge your character. That is what Aanand ji told me. He made me fall in love with my on-screen character 'Rinku'. And once you understand life, you know there is no right or wrong or black and white always. So, you cannot judge everything and that is what I learned and realised while doing this movie."

The most difficult thing for her is to learn the Bihari accent. She shared: "It was not at all easy. When you go on the sets while doing such movies it is never a cake walk. It is not just about learning the accent but you need to understand the body language, dialogue and dialect so perfectly and effortlessly that while you are on the sets, you just think about the particular scene and nothing else comes to your mind."

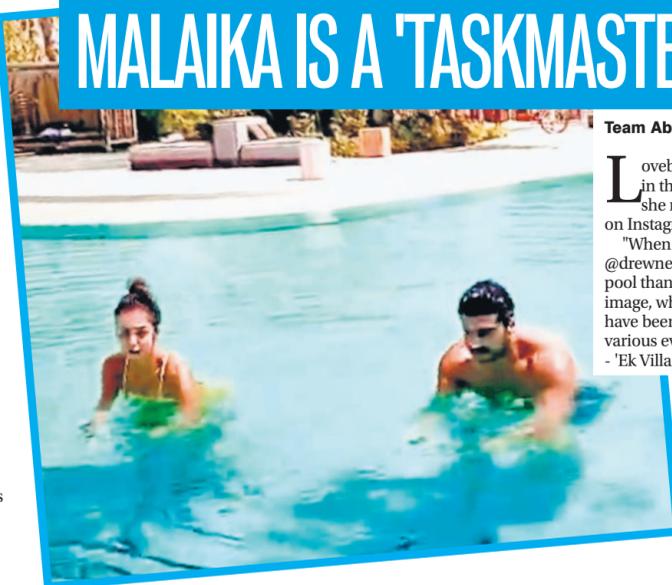


MALAIKA IS A 'TASKMASTER': ARJUN KAPOOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Lovebirds Arjun Kapoor and Malaika Arora are currently holidaying in the Maldives. The actor has called his girlfriend a "taskmaster" as she made him work out during their vacation. Arjun posted a video on Instagram on Sunday, where the couple are seen doing aqua cycling.

"When the girlfriend is a tougher task master than your trainer... See @drewnealpt I'm working out even on holiday in the @patinamaldives pool thanks to @malaikaaroraofficial !!!," he wrote as the caption for the image, which in just 10 minutes got over 7,000 likes. Arjun and Malaika have been dating for a while. The two have been pictured several times at various events. On the work front, Arjun currently has three films lined up - 'Ek Villain Returns', 'Kutney' and 'The Lady Killer'.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Sushmita Sen feels the love as 'Aarya 2' trailer clocks 30 million views

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sushmita Sen-starrer 'Aarya 2' is one series that the audience is eagerly waiting for and it is evident with the kind of response that the trailer has gathered with 30 million views and counting.

Sushmita, who plays the titular character in the series, took to her Instagram to thank the audience for the love and appreciation.

Expressing her gratitude to the audience, the actress shared a milestone picture and wrote in the caption, "The sensational trailer of Aarya 2 has been loved by one and all! Crossing the milestone of 30 million views is a testimony to the love showered by fans and viewers from around the globe (sic)."

She continues in the caption, "An elated Sushmita Sen expressed her gratitude with a social media post - We FEEL the love!!! #AaryaSeason2 #30millionviews Already!!! Thank you guys for making this journey ever so exciting!!! I love you beyond!!! #duggadugga With gratitude, #TeamAarya (sic)". Season two of 'Aarya' created and directed by Ram Madhvani traces the journey of a mother as she fights the dark world of crime and enemies in order to protect her family and children.

The series, which also stars Sikandar Kher, Vikas Kumar, Mayo Sarao, Ankur Bhatia, Akash Khurana and Dilnaz Irani, will be available to stream on Disney+ Hotstar from December 10.



Vani Kapoor