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U19 WOMEN'S T20 WC

Soumya, Trisha led India to title with seven-wicket victory over England

POTCHEFSTROOM | Agencies



India's quest for a maiden world title in women's cricket finally came to an end on Sunday when they defeated England by seven wickets in a low-scoring finale to emerge as the winner of the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup at the JB Marks Oval here. Nearly 18 years after India first made it to the final of a World Cup through the 50-over event in 2005, Shafali Verma & Co produced a superb bowling performance coupled with some outstanding fielding to bowl out England for just 68.

Fast bowler Titas Sadhu, off-spinner Archana Devi and leg-spinner Parshavi Chopra were accurate in their line and length and found enough help to pick two wickets each. Shafali, left-arm spinners Mannat Kashyap and Sonam Yadav took a scalp each in a dominating bowling performance. Titas made a breakthrough on the fourth ball of the innings by having Liberty Heap mistime the heave and give her a simple return catch. Apart from Titas and Archana keeping things tight, India was also sharp with their ground fielding.

Captain Shafali Verma, who turned 19 on Saturday, began the chase by flicking a down-leg delivery from Hannah Baker through fine leg for four, before lofting Sophia Smale over long-off for a humongous six in the next over. But in a bid to go big off Hannah in the third over, Shafali mistimed the chip and gave a low catch to mid-on. Shweta Sehrawat got her first four by driving on an overpitched delivery off Grace Scrivens in the fourth over. But on the very next ball, she tried to work through the on-side, but the turn in from Grace took the top edge to short fine leg, departing for five.

Through some tight bowling and sharp fielding, England was restricting India's runs. But Soumya and Trisha kept the scoreboard ticking by taking singles. Soumya also got a boundary off Sophia in the eighth over by flicking past the keeper and replays showed Grace's elbow was in contact with the rope while pushing the ball away. Trisha creamed Alexa Stonehouse through a delightful drive-through extra covers in the 13th over. But in a bid to go for glory, she stepped out for a cross-bat swipe and was castled by Alexa. Soumya finished off the chase with a brace and then took a single through point to give India their first global trophy in women's cricket.

Brief scores:
England 68 all out in 17.1 overs (Ryana Macdonald-Gay 19, Titas Sadhu 2/6, Parshavi Chopra 2/13) lost to India 69/3 in 14 overs (Soumya Tiwari 24 not out, Gongadi Trisha 24; Hannah Baker 1/13, Grace Scrivens 1/13) by seven wickets.

“ It’s really surreal. I have been looking forward to this day for a long time. We had a plan in our mind, and thankfully we executed what we planned. The spinners backed up really well. We have played 2 matches and watched all the games that happened here, and had a pretty good idea where to bowl. I want to thank them (fans and supporters back home) with all my heart, said player of the match Titas Sandhu.”



“ The way all the girls are performing and backing each other, so happy. Incredible feeling. Thanks to the staff, the way they have been backing us every day and telling us that we are here for the cup and because of them we are here. All thanks to them. The players have been backing me a lot. Thanks to BCCI for giving me this beautiful team and really happy for winning the cup. She (Shweta Sehrawat) has been excellent and has followed all the plans from the staff. Not just her, Archana, Soumya and I can't really take the names but they all have been incredible, said Indian skipper Shafali Verma.”

Stonehouse through a delightful drive-through extra covers in the 13th over. But in a bid to go for glory, she stepped out for a cross-bat swipe and was castled by

Alexa. Soumya finished off the chase with a brace and then took a single through point to give India their first global trophy in women's cricket.

Rahul hoists Tricolour at Srinagar's Lal Chowk

RAHUL ASKED AMIT SHAH TO WALK FROM JAMMU TO LAL CHOWK, IF J&K SITUATION IS GOOD

Team Absolute | Srinagar

Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) concluded on Sunday after senior Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi hoisted the national flag at Srinagar's historic city centre, Lal Chowk. BJY started Sunday morning after Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders left their night stay halt at Pantha Chowk on the outskirts of Srinagar city.



Many enthusiastic locals came out to greet Rahul while elderly women hugged and blessed him. Many local politicians of other parties also marched with the Congress leader during his March to Lal Chowk. He is scheduled to address a party rally at the Congress headquarters in Srinagar city later in the day.

Throwing a challenge to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that if the situation is so good in J&K, then he should walk to Srinagar's Lal Chowk from Jammu.

Responding to questions on the BJP's claims that there is peace in J&K, he said: "There are targeted killings in the state, bomb blasts happening, what security personnel are talking indicates that the situation is not good... if the BJP thinks so, why doesn't Amit Shah walk to Lal Chowk from Jammu." Gandhi said people are in pain in the state and the Congress is of the view that restoration of statehood and democratic process is the first step.

He said his ancestors moved from Kashmir to Allahabad and he was moving towards Kashmir with love and affection. Gandhi said that he looking forward with an open mind, and asserted that on Article 370, he stands by the Congress Working Committee resolution. The Congress leader, along with many fellow marchers started the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Tamil Nadu's Kanniyakumari on September 7 and hoisted the national flag at Srinagar's Lal Chowk on Sunday after completing a 3,970 km walk.

KASHMIRI PANDITS ARE ASKING WHAT HAS GOVT DONE FOR US: RAHUL

New Delhi: Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Sunday posted a video of his interaction with Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and posed a question that the community is asking the Central government about being used for political gains. He tweeted, "Today, Kashmiri Pandits are asking the BJP government - what have you done for us except using us politically? Do you have any answers, Prime Minister."

Rahul Gandhi had a conversation with the group in Jammu where Kashmiri Pandits complained about the apathy they were facing from the government.

In the video, the Pandits are seen saying that the BJP wants the issue to be alive and that there have been no welfare measures after the Manmohan Singh government at the Centre.

KERALA YOUTH STABBED TO DEATH IN POLAND

Thiruvananthapuram: A youth from Kerala, working in Poland, was stabbed to death there on Sunday, as per his family. Working in Poland for the past five months as a supervisor in a private firm, Suraj, 23, from Ollur (Thrissur), was stabbed to death by a group of Georgians following an altercation. Four youths from Kerala who were with Suraj were also injured during the attack. The Indian embassy in Warsaw has confirmed the death of Suraj, according to his family members. Recently, Ibrahim Sherif, a youth from Kerala's Palakkad, was found dead in an apartment in Poland. The body of the youth, working in a private bank as an IT engineer, was found after there was no information from him since January 24. The Polish police have communicated to the Indian embassy that Emil, the house owner of Sherif, had killed him and that he was arrested. However, Sherif's relatives said that there was no official confirmation on the motive behind his killing.

Odisha Health Minister, shot by cop, succumbs to his injuries

BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

Odisha Health Minister Naba Kishore Das, who was shot and critically injured when a police officer opened fire at him in the state's Jharsuguda district on Sunday, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital here, officials said. In a statement, the Apollo Hospital here said the Minister was admitted to the hospital here with gunshot wounds on his left chest. A team of doctors, led by Dr Debashish Nayak, immediately attended to and operated on him. On operating, it was found that a single bullet had entered and exited the body, injuring the heart and left lung, and causing massive internal bleeding and injury, it said. "The injuries were repaired, and steps were taken to improve the pumping of the heart. He was given urgent ICU care. But despite best



efforts, he could not be revived and succumbed to his injuries," the hospital said. In a shocking incident, a police officer opened fire at Das in Jharsuguda earlier in the day. The incident occurred near Gandhi Chhak of Brajarajnar in Jharsuguda as Das was on the way to attend a function. ASI Gopal Das, who was in his uniform, suddenly came near the minister's vehicle and opened fire at him with his service revolver, said

Brajarajnar sub divisional police officer (SDPO) Gupteswar Bhoi. The ASI was taken into custody, but the reason behind the brutal attack on the senior BJD leader is yet to be ascertained. The minister fell unconscious at the spot. In such critical condition, he was first admitted to a local hospital. Then, he was airlifted to Bhubaneswar and admitted to the Apollo Hospital. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has expressed deep shock and distress over the Minister's death. In a statement, he said: "I am shocked and distressed over the very unfortunate demise of Minister Naba Das. The doctors made every possible effort to save his life. But unfortunately, he could not recover." Stating that Das was an asset for both the government and his party, Patnaik said he has successfully carried out many initiatives in the Health

Department to the benefit of the people. As a leader, he was instrumental in strengthening Biju Janata Dal, he added. Das was a grass root person and was loved and respected by all, cutting across parties and sections of people. His death is a great loss to the State, Patnaik said. The CM has prayed for peace and tranquility of the departed soul and expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family members. Patnaik, who had visited the Apollo Hospital, had directed the Crime Branch to investigate the case. Senior officers of the Crime Branch have been asked to rush to the spot, he said. Soon after receiving orders, ADG, Crime Branch, Arun Bothra left for Brajarajnar along with his team to inquire into the incident, sources said. Meanwhile, a forensic team visited the spot and started investigations.

Two suspected Khalistani supporters detained in Delhi



New Delhi: Sources in the Delhi Police have claimed that two persons have been detained who allegedly made pro-Khalistani graffiti on the walls in Vikaspuri, Janakpuri, Paschim Vihar, Peeragarhi and other parts of West Delhi. The anti-national graffiti matter was reported in the first week of January. The Delhi Police Special Cell also lodged an FIR. Seeing the gravity of the matter, the Special Cell formed a special team to nab the accused who were trying to create a riot-like situation in Delhi. "The sleeper cell of Khalistani groups were active in Punjab and in Delhi. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) had also alerted us. Now we have nabbed two suspects in the matter," said the source. As of now the Delhi Police have not given any official statement in the matter.

GREEN INDIA CHALLENGE FLAG HOISTED ON ANTARCTICA'S HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Hyderabad | Agencies



The flag of Green India Challenge, launched to nurture the nature and environment better and provide clean air to mankind, is reaching new heights. The Green Challenge launched by Rajya Sabha member Santosh Kumar is spreading the campaign to fight the climate change and the importance of plantation. The Green India Challenge flag is hoisted in the country and abroad as well. At the end of the globe, Anmish Verma climbed Mt Vinson, the highest mountain in the icy continent of Antarctica, and hoisted the Green India Challenge flag. Anmish Verma said that there is an environmental threat to the world in the form of global warming. Stating that Santosh Kumar launched Green India Challenge with a determination to plant trees extensively, Anmish

said that he is climbing the highest mountains to display the Green India Challenge flag with the aim of creating environmental awareness. Anmish said that he successfully completed the climbing of seven peaks in seven continents including Everest. Anmish said that he feels proud to present the Green India Challenge on the Globe's South Pole and thanked Santosh Kumar for providing this opportunity.

219 tech firms sack over 68K employees in Jan, deeper layoffs coming

New Delhi | Agencies

The month of January started on a super bad note for employees in the tech world. With more Big Tech companies like Microsoft and Google joining the ongoing layoff season, more than 3,400 tech employees are being laid off per day on average in January globally. As per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi, 219 companies have laid off more than 68,000 employees in January so far. In 2022, over 1,000 companies laid off 154,336 workers, as per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi. The mass tech layoffs of 2022 are continuing into the New Year. The sacking episodes have gained speed amid global economic meltdown and recession fears. Deeper layoffs are coming in 2023 as most business economists have predicted that their companies will cut payrolls

in the coming months. According to a report in CNN citing a new survey, only 12 per cent of economists -- surveyed by the National Association for Business Economics (NABE) -- anticipate employment will increase at their firms over the next three months, "down from 22 per cent this fall". This is the first time since early days of the Covid pandemic that more business leaders anticipate jobs shrinking at their firms. The findings indicate "widespread concern about entering a recession this year", according to Julia Coronado, president of NABE. With more Big Tech companies like Microsoft and Google joining the ongoing layoff season, about 3,000 tech employees are now being laid off per day on average in January globally, including in India. According to the survey, a little more

than half of the business economists feel the risk of a recession over the next year at 50 per cent or higher, which means more layoffs in the offing in 2023. Amid the layoffs come another bad news for employees, especially from India in the US, as Google has paused its Program Electronic Review Management (PERM), a key step in acquiring an employer-sponsored green card. Google has sent an email to foreign employees, notifying them that the tech giant will pause any new filings of PERM, leaving foreign workers in a limbo. "Recognising how this news may impact some of you and your families, I wanted to update you as quickly as possible on the difficult decision we've had to make to pause new PERM applications. This does not impact other visa applications or programmes," an email

from a company executive read. A Google employee posted the email on Team Blind, an anonymous social networking site for certified IT workers. A PERM application is a critical first step in the green card (permanent residence) process. The process requires employers to demonstrate that there are no qualified US workers available for the particular role, which has been an increasingly difficult position for us to support given the labor market today. Meanwhile, LinkedIn is full of job hunts, offers of support for laid off friends and colleagues, and advice for coping with career hurdles as several companies trim their workforce to navigate through an uncertain macroeconomic environment. Some LinkedIn groups are providing assistance around signing exit paperwork and aiding with connections for new jobs.



Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha

RIGHT-WING OUTFITS ORGANISE MORCHA AGAINST 'LOVE JIHAD', DEMAND ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sunday against 'love jihad' and demanded anti-conversion laws and a crackdown on alleged land grabbing in the name of religion. Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha, organ-

ised by Sakal Hindu Samaj, began from Shivaji Park in Dadar and culminated at Kamgar Maidan in Parel, covering a distance of more than 4 km.

Activists shouted slogans against "love jihad", and demanded anti-conversion laws and a crackdown on land grabbing in the name of religion.

Several leaders and MLAs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and those of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction also participated in the rally. Police personnel were deployed along the route of the march to prevent any untoward incident. The Mumbai Police had on Saturday issued a traffic notification for the morcha. The police in a traffic notification said that on January 29, 2023 between 09-00 hrs 14-00 hrs, Sakal Hindu Samaj has organised a morcha from Shivaji Park to Maharashtra Rajya Kamgar Kalyan Mandal, Dadar (West), Mumbai. Due to which the traffic movement will be affected on the routes of morcha.

Some routes were diverted for vehicular traffic. No parking was also announced on the roads around the morcha route.

Customs officials seize 9.5 kg gold in 2 days



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Customs officials at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here have lodged eight cases of gold smuggling on January 27 and 28 and seized 9.5 kg gold worth Rs 4.75 crore.

A senior Customs official said that among this, two Azerbaijani nationals were arrested following a tip off, during the intervening night of January 27 and 28.

"The two Azerbaijani nationals arrived from Dubai carrying 6 kg of gold valued at Rs 2.99 crore concealed in

their bag," the official said. The gold was seized under Section 110 of Customs Act and the two arrested under its Section 104, and produced before a competent authority which sent them to 14 days judicial custody.

Dan Reynolds of Imagine Dragons all praise for Indian food, promises to return



Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the Imagine Dragons took to the stage to perform at the first Indian edition of the multi-genre music festival lollapalooza, the band's frontman Dan Reynolds left no stone unturned to engage the crowd and delivered a performance that made festival-goers drown in joy. Reynolds made a point to praise Indian food and also promised to return to

India soon with another performance. The singer while interacting with the crowd said: "You guys are very warm and loving, it's a pleasure to perform in front of you guys. Your food is amazing, thank you for sharing. We would like to do this again." The band performed their hit songs like 'Whatever It Takes', 'Thunder', 'Believer', 'Enemy' and others. While Day 1 of lollapalooza saw performances by Imagine

Dragons, Japanese Breakfast, Greta Van Fleet, Lollapalooza and the Punjabi musician A.P. Dhillon, who sent the crowd in frenzy along with his fellow Punjabi singer Shinda Kahlon, Day 2 of the festival will present performances by The Strokes, Prateek Kuhad, Divine and others. Lollapalooza India, co-produced and promoted by BookMyShow, is being held at the Mahalaxmi Race Course in Mumbai.

WOMAN WANTED IN GURUGRAM-MANESAR LAND SCAM NABBED IN MUMBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

A woman fugitive, who was wanted in more than 23 criminal cases of cheating in Delhi and Haryana, including Gurugram-Manesar industrial model township land grab scam, was arrested from Mumbai by a team of Delhi's Crime Branch, officials said on Sunday. Ravindra Singh Yadav, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) said that the accused was identified as Sona Bansal.

"The team of ARSC, Crime Branch meticulously worked on detecting the most wanted fugitive couple. Inspector Arun Sindhu got a tip off about the accused who was hiding in Mumbai. The information was developed and the team was sent to Mumbai.

"A raid was conducted in a high end society in Mumbai and Sona Bansal was arrested from there. Her husband Atul Bansal was not found there and his whereabouts are being ascertained. Though both are natives of Delhi, they had been residing there with the assumed identities of Sulochana and Arun Gupta prepared fake and forged documents," said the



police. During interrogation, she claimed that her husband died a few years ago but she has failed as of now to prove her claims. Accused Atul Bansal and his wife Sona Bansal were wanted in several high profile white collar economic crimes, including the 'Gurugram-Manesar Industrial Model

Township Land Grab Scam' amounting to Rs 1,500 crore. Both were the directors of the builder firm named after their son 'Aditya Build Well (ABW) Infrastructure Limited'. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of the FIR registered at Manesar police station,

Gurugram and thereafter investigation was taken up by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), against them.

Several alleged persons, including Atul Bansal and his wife Sona Bansal of ABW Infrastructure Limited, were charge-sheeted by the ED which found in its probe that the accused grabbed the land from farmers and land-holders at nominal rates by instilling in them the fear of acquisition of their land. Believing the accused and under the fear of losing their land to acquisition, the farmers and land holders sold their lands to such private entities, who ultimately sold the same to various builders, who obtained licences and gained handsome profits in a fraudulent manner.

Most of the land parcels were purchased by ABW Infrastructure Ltd. group, which were controlled by Atul Bansal, Sona Bansal and others. After obtaining licenses, A.B.W. Infrastructure Limited further sold the licensed/unlicensed lands and building licences to some private persons. In 2018, the Panchkula Court declared them Proclaimed Offenders.

Bombay HC verdict raises hopes of Delhi's Air India Colony residents

Team Absolute | New Delhi | Mumbai

The staff of aviation company Air India, residing in Delhi's Vasant Vihar area, is hoping to get some respite from the Delhi High Court following the Bombay High Court's recent order restraining Air India from deducting penal rent and damage charges from the salary of the employees residing in AI staff quarters at Kalina, Santacruz.

"We are now hopeful that we too might get some relief from the Delhi High Court and our salaries won't be deducted," an AI employee said on the condition of anonymity.

The AI employees and the airline have been at loggerheads over vacating the quarters since last year. The 116 petitioners and residents of Air India Colony pleas will be heard on January 31 in Delhi High Court.

"I had received a notice on December 29, 2022 regarding eviction from the residential colony and deduction of salary. Just two days after the notice from AI, Rs 1,20,000 were cut from December salary leaving me with not enough money even to run my house," she said.

"They even did not give us 14 days' time after the



notice as they knew we might knock on the doors of court against their notice," said another AI employee.

The notice or letter, sent to Air India employees residing in Air India Colony at Kalina, Mumbai and Delhi's Vasant Vihar, said a fine of Rs 15 lakh and Rs 10 lakh, respectively, will be deducted from their salaries and others. "In addition, you are also liable to pay damage charges of Rs 15/10 lakh. Any liable charges, penal rent or damage charges would be recovered from salary/retirement/service benefits and any financial benefits accrued or likely to accrue in future, including JDC arrears admissible to you," the letter read. The employees, who have not

vacated their flats since August 2022, have had their salaries deducted since that month and it will continue till they vacate the properties.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) sent a letter to Air India, conveying that those not vacating their accommodations will have to pay the monthly rent at twice the market rate, in addition to the fine.

"Hence, in terms of the letter dated 29.9.2021 of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, it has been decided to levy the penal rent equivalent to the sum of normal occupancy charges and double the market rent for the period of your unauthorised stay w.e.f, 01.08.2022 till date or till you vacate the company accommodation @ Rs 64,000 per month, which will be recovered from your salary / other dues, payable to you," read the AI notice to its employees.

The residents claim that though airlines have been bought by the Talace Private Limited, a Special-Purpose Vehicle of Tata Sons, it is still working on government directions. "Why isn't the company supporting us? Instead they are transferring or giving punishment postings to us," said a resident of the colony which houses the company's cabin crew members, pilots, engineers and other staff.

Indigo passenger tried to remove emergency exit cover mid-air, case filed

Team Absolute | Mumbai/New Delhi

A passenger travelling on a Nagpur to Mumbai flight today allegedly tried to remove the cover of the emergency exit while the aircraft was in the air and on approach for landing, news agency said quoting IndiGo Airlines. The crew on board alerted the captain and the passenger was "appropriately cautioned", it added.

IndiGo claimed there was no compromise on the safe operation of the flight, and a First Information Report, or FIR, has been filed against the passenger for unauthorised tampering of the emergency exit.

This comes days after the national aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) revealed that a passenger on an IndiGo, Chennai-Tiruchirappalli flight opened the emergency door on December 10 last year. However, there was no untoward incident as the flight hadn't yet taken off.

Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia later confirmed the passenger was Tejasvi



Surya and said he opened the door "by mistake" and apologised for it. Officials said Mr Surya "rested his hands on the door", unlocking the exit, and the flight was delayed by over two hours for its destination.

Airlines have been under extra scrutiny since last year, initially because of several mechanical failures mid-air, and more recently due to the crew's handling of unruly passengers.

Court acquits 2 men in case of woman's rape and forced abortion

Team Absolute | Thane

A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has acquitted two persons accused in a case of rape of a woman and forcing her for an abortion, while giving them the benefit of doubt.

Thane Sessions Judge Dr Rachna R Tehra, in the order pronounced on January 16, said the prosecution failed to prove the charges against the accused persons beyond reasonable doubt, hence they need to be acquitted.

A copy of the order was made available on Saturday. The prosecution told the court that one of the accused, aged 47, befriended the victim in 2009 and raped her on several occasions in Bhiwandi and Kalyan towns under the pretext of marrying her.

The accused later got married, but still maintained sexual relations with the victim, as a result of which she became pregnant.

The accused then asked the vic-

tim to abort the foetus. When she refused, he took her to a doctor under some pretext where she was forced to undergo the abortion, the prosecution told the court. A 62-year-old man had assisted the main accused in getting the woman's abortion done, the court was told. The defence counsel contested the case and denied all the charges levied on the accused persons. The judge in her order said the prosecutrix and her mother have not supported the case of the prosecution. Therefore, it is not just and proper to keep the matter lingering. "There is nothing on record to show the accused made a false promise only to satisfy his lust," the court said. Further, there is no evidence that both the accused threatened the prosecutrix with dire consequence and that the accused in furtherance of their common intention with an accused doctor (who later died) caused the miscarriage of the prosecutrix without her consent, it said.

PULWAMA YOUTH ESTABLISHES SPORTS ACADEMY IN PUNE

Team Absolute | Pune

With the aim to provide comfortable platform for the young aspiring cricketers of Kashmir Valley, a youth from south Kashmir's Pulwama district established a sports academy at Pune in Maharashtra.

Rouf Ur Rafiq, owner of Pulwama Gymkhana team belongs to Lajora village of Pulwama, who is working as Assistant Professor at Cluster University, Kashmir, and has started a sports academy at Pune, titled 'Brilliant Sports Academy & Cric Challengers', with the motive to change the style of cricket in Kashmir, and to provide appropriate platform for young aspiring cricketers.

Rouf has been very enthusiastic towards cricket since his childhood and has promoted cricket in Pulwama district after starting Pulwama Gymkhana Cricket Club for the players of nearly 32 villages of the district. Talking to a journalist, Rouf has said that he is interested in cricket since his childhood, and would even read about cricket when he was in 8th class only.

He said that he pursued education in Pune and Mumbai, besides Kashmir, and had later



established an academy at his village, titled 'Green Sports Academy', for the football, cricket and volleyball players, while he accordingly started Pulwama Gymkhana, particularly for the players having poor background.

He added that the players performed very well through his cricket club, following which seven players were selected for national level. Giving details about the Brilliant Sports

Academy & Cric Challengers established in Pune, Rouf said that he went several places, especially Jammu, Chandigarh, Delhi and Bengaluru, "but has found Pune comfortable for players of Kashmir, as the conditions are favourable with normal temperature and breeze."

He added that Pune has more than 35 academies, while it has 10 types of turf wickets, due to which he had chosen the said place for the aspiring sportsmen of the Valley. As per him, seven players from the Kashmir Valley, and 3 locals have already registered their names in the newly established academy, while more than 27 others are also supposed to join it.

"Our academy in Srinagar, Kashmir, will also remain functional in summers. However, the Pune-based academy will remain open throughout the year, where we are supposed to train youngsters in football, Volleyball, hockey and chess, Besides Cricket," Rouf said.

Meanwhile, the owner of the academy has said that he also tries to promote the culture and heritage of Kashmir, and has served guests with Kashmiri dry fruits (walnut, almond) and Kashmiri 'KAHWA'.

EMPLOYEE DUPES SECURITY GUARD AGENCY OF RS 10 LAKH

Mumbai: An employee of a Marine Drive-based security guard agency was arrested by police on Saturday, for siphoning off Rs 10.7 lakh from the agency within a span of five months. According to preliminary investigation, the accused transferred the amount in 39 transactions to his account from another account. The company had employed Ayyappan Yeaski Mutthu in July 2022 as a payroll manager with the task of preparing the salary chart of guards from Mumbai, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

He was fired on January 14. The new payroll manager discovered the discrepancy in the accounts. "He found a salary was credited to 'Jatin Wadher', who was not an employee. When more bank statements were screened, it was found that within five months, money was credited to Wadher's account 39 times," told an officer privy to the investigation.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Covid cripples millions & best protection is vaccination

About 71 per cent of people with long Covid required medical treatment or were unable to work for six months or more, according to a new study. Some 18 per cent of patients -- most of whom were younger than 60 -- had still not returned to work more than a year after their initial infection, according to the study by the largest workers' compensation fund in New York. At least 65 million people are thought to have long Covid, according to a latest review of 200 Covid-19 studies published in Nature Reviews Microbiology journal earlier this month. The US-based researchers estimate that the condition is present in 10 per cent of the 651 million Covid-19 cases that have been documented worldwide, reports South China Morning Post. The World Health Organisation (WHO) published a standardised clinical case definition of long Covid in 2021, but experts say diagnosis is still a challenge. Most Asian countries do not track the number of long Covid patients. Experts believe that the best protection from long Covid is vaccination. Another study this month warned that Covid-19 patients have an elevated risk of death for at least 18 months after they got infected. Covid patients were more likely to develop numerous cardiovascular conditions compared to uninfected participants, which may have contributed to their higher risks of death, according to the study of nearly 160,000 participants published in Cardiovascular Research, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). "The findings indicate that patients with Covid-19 should be monitored for at least a year after recovering from the acute illness to diagnose cardiovascular complications of the infection, which form part of long Covid," said Professor Ian CK Wong of the University of Hong Kong, China.

Dynamics of Intelligence

D.C. PATHAK

Security is not a one-time event and is in need of a review at appropriate times depending on how much the strategic scene around the country would have changed and new factors affecting external and internal security of the nation would have cropped up. Security by definition is protection against 'covert' threats from an unseen enemy - an 'open' attack on our borders would be frontally repelled by our defence forces - and intelligence precisely is the information about the hidden plans of the adversary. Intelligence hence is the anchor of security. India's Intelligence agencies have done a wonderful job of safeguarding national security with their somewhat limited resources - an important factor enabling them to always perform at their optimal best is the supreme dedication of the professionals manning them. Officers of the Indian Police Service who lead the agencies all willingly choose anonymity over the 'glamour' of uniform, have a quiet sense of pride in their contribution to the elected political executive's task of protecting the sovereignty of the democratic State and instinctively keep the knowledge of sensitive operations handled by them, to themselves. Through their training on the use of special 'tradecraft' they maintain the best management practices that led them, among other things, to always put the objectives of the organisation above any personal interests. Long before books were written on Management as a profession, India's Intelligence agencies had three basic principles of management built into their working - there would be no confusion about credit-sharing, the seniors would provide 'participative and nurtural' leadership to those working for them which would require knowing enough about the latter's concerns, if any, outside of the work place too and great reliance would be put on the concept that 'the individual was at the centre of all productivity'. The fact that in Intelligence, even the smallest step in an operation is an integral part of the larger organisational 'mission', to keep the entire 'hierarchy' on the same grid leaving little scope for any internal discords or undirected pursuits overtaking that mission. Leadership of Intelligence agencies was always clear about one more basic thing - it helped the political executive in exercising its sovereign power of taking a decision for the

State but it did not dictate policy. The world scene changed drastically with the end of the Cold War consequent on the dismemberment of USSR that led to the emergence of a unipolar order dominated by the US. It so happened, however, that the threat of a new global terror arose from the same territory - Afghanistan - that had contributed to the demise of one superpower. The rise of Islamic radicals pitted against the US during the 'war on terror', revived the historical legacy of Jihad that the Wahhabis had launched in the nineteenth century against the Western encroachment on 'Muslim lands'. India is now exposed to the danger of Pakistan inducting Islamic radicals of Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS as well, in its covert offensive against this country. Pakistan's 'proxy war' against India has acquired newer dimensions in as much as Pak agents are using social media for creating terror cells, recruiting 'lone wolves' and arranging terror funding. Anti-India forces are harnessing civil society groups for alleging violation of human rights and particularly unequal treatment of minorities in India. Further, a new level of collusion between Pakistan and China has come into play in creating internal destabilisation here. In fact, more than the threat of war, India is facing an unprecedented threat to its 'internal' security from 'external' forces. Since 'national security is inseparable from economic security', the Intelligence agencies have to look out for any operations of India's adversaries and competitors using non-traditional channels like business entities, socio-cultural fronts and even technological interactions to gather information of Intelligence value about how India was doing. In the post-Cold War era, open warfare seemed to have given way to proxy wars and 'covert' offensives designed to weaken the target country. There is a paradigm shift in the way Intelligence agencies would now be required to expand their charter and take to more comprehensive ways of assisting those at the helm of governance, in handling both international relations and internal security. Good Intelligence was always rated for its completeness and comprehension so that the course of action suggested itself. Today the contribution of Intelligence in solution-finding has become crucially important. Expectations from Intelligence agencies have touched a new high. Fortunately, the agencies were - by training and because of the premium they put on competent analysis - always ready to assist with responses to and

formulation of strategies on, security threats. Under the present Union Home Minister, internal security issues are being handled with a firm hand and the Ministry of Home Affairs has stepped up police modernisation in terms of improving connectivity of police stations across the country, strengthening the man power and the facilities needed by police forces and generally working for providing better leadership to the latter at all levels. Police is often the first responder in internal security situations and it is now recognised that central Intelligence agencies should have the advantage of seamless cooperation from state and district Intelligence units (DIUs) - this does not detract from the state's autonomous responsibility of managing law & order and the police. It was following the Kargil war that a committee headed by Dr K Subramanian, former Chairman, JIC, examined the then security and Intelligence set up of the country for possible improvements and expansion - its most important recommendations being the appointment of a National Security Advisor, establishment of a centralised communication and electronic Intelligence agency named National Technical Research Organisation and consolidation of military Intelligence by way of creation of a defence intelligence agency. In these two decades since then, the security scenario for India has undergone major changes. In the Cold War era our Intelligence agencies were devoting a major part of their resources to the study of international Communism and its bearing on India. After Cold War ended with the dismemberment of USSR and the demise of International Communism, a major task of the agencies has been to cover the threat of terrorism in all its dimensions and produce ground level information needed for Intelligence-based counter-terror operations in Kashmir and elsewhere in India. Good Intelligence has helped minimise the collateral damage in these operations. Also, the primacy of collation and analysis of total Intelligence at the national apex - from where integral responses to threats to our national security would also be directed - demands a new level of inter-agency cooperation and coordination between the Centre and the states. Divided security does not help. The role of NSCS under the National Security Advisor, in evolving an integral assessment of the threat scenario and an all-pervasive strategy of response has therefore, been

extremely valuable. It might be a good idea to get a compact body quickly examining where all can the systems be further strengthened and the nation's Intelligence set up provided with more trained man power and other wherewithal, to enable it to deal with the developing situation internationally and at home. It is a matter of great satisfaction that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have been taking great personal interest in the annual DGPs conference convened by Director of Intelligence Bureau and other meets called for deliberations on national security issues. Intelligence agencies of the nation need all support from the regime at the top since national security and economic development are the two highest responsibilities - in that order - of the democratic state. Intelligence for national security is needed by the government regardless of the party label of those in power, because this function is clearly above politics. The people of India always appreciate initiatives taken at the national level for strengthening the security of the nation against external and internal threats. Today, it is extremely important that awareness of national security perspectives is spread far and wide so that citizens can have the satisfaction of contributing to the national effort in this regard. The Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) established in 2020 at Gandhinagar, as an Institution of National Importance on the express desire of the Prime Minister, is a pioneering national security and police university of India pursuing the mission of extending this awareness in the academic world. RRU is committed to building national strategic and security culture through research and training, embracing security and military cadres as also the civilian society and it has already achieved remarkable success in this direction during the short period of its existence. Also, there is need for taking security education to schools for students who are senior enough to grasp it - as part of civics and general knowledge. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) - the think-tank associated with the National Security Council - might be the appropriate forum where this could be discussed for evolving a simple but meaningful content as an add on to the school education.

international

44 KILLED AS BUS FALLS INTO RAVINE IN PAKISTAN

Islamabad | Agencies

At least 44 people were killed when a bus they were travelling in fell into a ravine in Pakistan's Lasbela district on Sunday. The vehicle carrying 48 passengers was proceeding towards Karachi from Quetta, Lasbela Assistant Commissioner Hamza Anjum, was quoted as saying by Dawn. The speeding vehicle rammmed into pillar of a bridge while taking a U-turn near Lasbela and caught fire, Anjum added. The bodies extricated from the wrecked bus could not be identified and DNA testing will be done for identification of the deceased, Anjum



added. In a post on Twitter, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah expressed grief

over the tragedy and extended condolences to the bereaved families.

6.3 MAGNITUDE QUAKE HITS PAKISTAN

Islamabad: A 6.3 magnitude quake jolted parts of Pakistan on Sunday. The quake, that hit the region at 12.54 p.m. was epicentred at 69.65 degrees East longitude and 38.65 degrees North latitude, Dawn reported quoting Pakistan Meteorological Department. Its epicentre was Tajikistan and depth was 150 km. Tremors were felt in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and several other cities, Radio Pakistan reported. However, as per the US Geological Survey, the quake's magnitude was 4.4 with a depth of 32.4 km.

N.Korea rejects alleged arms trading with Russia, warns of 'undesirable result'

Seoul | Agencies

A senior North Korean official on Sunday rejected alleged weapons transactions with Russia, warning the US of an "undesirable result" if it continues to spread such rumours. Kwon Jong-gun, director-general in charge of US affairs at North Korea's foreign ministry, claimed the US again talked about the "groundless rumour" of arms dealing between North Korea and Russia in an attempt to justify its offer of weapons to Ukraine, Xinhua News Agency reported. The US has recently announced its decision to send 31 M1 Abrams tanks to



Ukraine to help its fight against Russia's invasion. Kim Yo-jong, the powerful sister of the country's leader Kim Jong-un, said Washington is crossing the "red line." "Trying to tarnish the image of the DPRK by fabri-

official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "The US should be mindful that it will face a really undesirable result if it persists in spreading the self-made rumour against the DPRK." Kwon did not say what he meant by an undesirable result. Earlier this month, the US said North Korea continues to provide ammunition to Russia, releasing satellite imagery of Russian railcars travelling between Russia and North Korea on November 18 and November 19 for what the US called the initial delivery of North Korean weapons to a private Russian military company, the Wagner Group, for use in Ukraine.

CHILLY WEATHER CLAIMS 170 LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul: Heavy snowfall and chilly weather have claimed 170 lives in Afghanistan over the past three weeks, spokesman for the Ministry of Natural Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs Shafiqullah Rahimi said on Sunday. "A total of 170 people, including children and women, have lost their lives and 30 others including women and children injured due to chilly weather and snowfall in 24 out of the country's 34 provinces over the past three weeks," Rahimi told Xinhua. More than 150 residential houses have been completely destroyed or partially damaged over the period, the official said, adding the continued freezing climate and snowfall have also killed about 80,000 cattle including cows, sheep and goats elsewhere in the country, Xinhua News Agency reported. The official also called on aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to needy Afghan families in this critical stage and help them survive the freezing winter. In the cash-strapped and war-ravaged Afghanistan where there is no central heating system, people often use coal, wood or liquid gas to keep themselves warm in winter, which in many cases claims human lives due to gas leakage or carbon monoxide emission.

Israeli-Palestinian clashes erupt in Jerusalem after anti-Israeli attacks

Jerusalem | Agencies

Clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police erupted in Jerusalem on Saturday evening in the wake of two anti-Israeli attacks in the disputed holy city. Israeli police entered Arab neighbourhoods in the city looking for people who may have assisted the assailants in the previous attacks, sparking clashes with Palestinians. On Friday evening, a Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem shot dead seven Israelis and wounded three others. On Saturday morning, a 13-year-old Palestinian from the city shot at a group of Israelis, wounding two of them. "The forces are encountering stone throwing, Molotov cocktails and fireworks," said a police statement, adding the police's increased operational readiness "will continue in the coming days". Footage on social media showed widespread firing of fireworks in several Jerusalem neighbourhoods, Xinhua news agency reported. On Saturday, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) said that a Palestinian assailant shot at a restaurant near the Dead Sea. There were no casualties and the shooter escaped from the scene.



Israeli media also reported the Israeli military entered the West Bank Palestinian city of Jericho. The details of the raid were unclear and it was not confirmed by the military. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a security cabinet meeting later Saturday to discuss the response to the

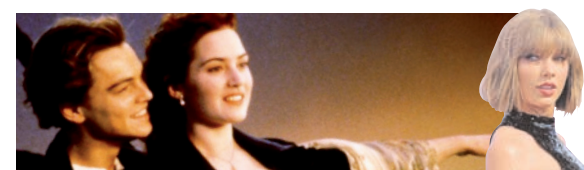
latest events, vowing the response "will be strong, swift and precise". Earlier this week, a raid by the Israeli military in the West Bank city of Jenin resulted in the killing of nine Palestinians, triggering vows of revenge from Palestinian militant organisations.

AVALANCHE HITS JAPAN'S NAGANO PREFECTURE, SEVERAL SKIERS FOUND UNCONSCIOUS

Tokyo: Several people were found unconscious after an avalanche hit a ski resort in Japan's Nagano prefecture on Sunday, local media reported.



The accident took place around 2:30 p.m. local time (0530 GMT) in the backcountry area outside the course of Tsugaike Kogen Ski Resort, Xinhua News Agency reported quoting local police. The accident site is on a slope eastside of Mount Norikura, at an altitude of more than 2,100 meters, the country's public broadcaster NHK reported. Several snowboarders were involved, with the exact number of people involved and their degree of injury remaining unknown, reported NHK, citing local police and firefighters. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, there was almost no snow in the northern part of Nagano prefecture during the day, but the depth of snowfall in Otari village reached 103 centimeters as of 3 p.m. local time, NHK reported. The weather agency also issued an avalanche warning for Nagano prefecture due to the sudden increase in heavy snowfall after January 24.



Pamela Anderson offers reconciliation to Lily James over 'Pam & Tommy'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Baywatch' star Pamela Anderson has said she would "love to invite" Lily James to the debut of her documentary, 'Pamela, a love story' despite Lily portraying her in a film she did not want to happen.

Lily essayed the role of Pamela in the Disney+ drama 'Pam & Tommy' last year.

But now she has said, reports Mirror.co.uk: "I said to Netflix, 'I'd love to invite Lily to the premiere of the movie.'"

"I think it's hard to play somebody when you don't know the whole picture." She further said, quoted by Variety: "I've got nothing against Lily James. I think that she's a beautiful girl and she was just doing the job. But the idea of the whole thing happening was just really crushing for me."

As per Mirror.co.uk, Pamela hasn't watched a single minute of the series, but she could not escape the billboards promoting Lily in prosthetics. "It just looked like a Halloween costume to me," she said.

In the new Netflix documentary out, she is shown reacting to the news Pam & Tommy was being made. She says: "It really gives me nightmares. I didn't sleep last night at all. I never watched the tape. I'm not going to watch this."



HILARY DUFF, EX JOEL MADDEN ARE NEIGHBOURS AND THE FAMILIES HANG OUT OFTEN!

Los Angeles | Agencies

Los Angeles| Hollywood actress Hilary Duff is keeping it friendly with at least one ex. The 'How I Met Your Father' star revealed on 'Watch What Happens Live' that she and ex-boyfriend Joel

Madden have long been good friends, after "the whole world's mind was blown for a hot second" at her and husband Matthew Koma's dinner with Madden and his wife Nicole Richie.

"By the way, I have a good relationship with their whole family. I think people were (blown away). I don't know. We're neighbours. And we actually hang out all the time," she explained.

"I was just in her driveway, honk-

ing for her to come drink wine with us the other day," Duff added of Richie whom Madden married in 2010. "She wouldn't, she was asleep by 8."

She said now that they're neighbours, "We get them to hike with all the time," adding: "And you know what? It's lovely."

As per People, Duff previously posed for a photo last February during "date night" with Koma, 35; as well as Madden and Richie, and Pete Wentz and partner Meagan Camper. They were also joined by Pulse Music Group founder Josh Abraham and wife Gina.

"My husband is a giant troll, it's one of my favourite things about him," Duff noted. "Right when they moved in, for some reason Matt Photoshopped a picture of Joel and (brother Benji Madden) in a photo with me on Valentine's Day with like, 'Happy Valentine's Day, Honey'." "So, this was before we started hanging out, and I think Joel and Nicole

were like, 'Oh my god, they don't like us and we just moved in here next to them.' But no, they just know that Matt is a big troll and likes to have lots of fun," she said.



Katy Perry regrets not working with Billie Eilish

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Katy Perry admits that one of her biggest career mistakes was turning down the chance to work with "boring" Billie Eilish. In 2016, the 'E.T.' singer was told by one of her friends to check Billie out but Katy was less than impressed at the time, reports Mirror.co.uk.

During a Q&A at a private event for Los Angeles based station KIIS-FM, Katy opened up about the massive fail.

She told the audience, as quoted by Mirror.co.uk, that her friend's

email read: "Hey, check out this new artist. I'd really like us to work with her because she was working with me for Unsub (Records)."

"It was a song called Ocean Eyes, and it was just a blonde girl, and I was like, 'Meh, boring,'" she said.



"Big mistake, huge mistake," she added. Since 2016, Billie has gone on to win multiple awards, become the youngest

singer in history to headline Glastonbury and get a Golden Globe Award and an Oscar for her song "No Time To Die" which featured as the swan song for Daniel Craig's James Bond.

Gerard Butler recollects almost killing Hilary Swank on 'P.S. I Love You' sets

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Gerard Butler is still feeling guilty over an incident with co-star Hilary Swank on the set of their 2007 romcom, 'P.S. I Love You'. During a recent episode of 'The Drew Barrymore Show', the actor talked about how he "almost killed" Swank on the film set, reports Deadline. It seems that Butler's character was required to dance shirtless, garbed only in a pair of suspenders. "I literally shot that scene for a day and a half and I had to dance like an idiot in the suspenders," Butler recalled, quoted by Deadline. "At one point, the clip, which was a crocodile clip, got stuck in the television as I'm crawling towards her and she's right in front of me and she's laughing hysterically. The clip was "so dangerous" that the camera crew devised plastic covers as protection. "I had to ping it, and it would go past my face. And this time I'm crawling towards the bed. It gets stuck," he said. "It releases, flies over my head, hits her in the head, slashes her head. I cut her open." Swank was taken to the hospital. "Imagine a studio, and in three seconds, everybody's gone, and I'm just sitting there in my boxer shorts and my boots and a pair of socks and I just started crying," he said. "I just scared Hilary Swank! I almost took her eye out and I just made a fool of myself for two days and this is what I have to show for it. She's off to the hospital." Swank has forgiven him.



Harrison Ford is happy for 'Indiana Jones' co-star bagging Oscar nomination

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Harrison Ford saluted his former 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom' co-star Ke Huy Quan for his Oscar nomination this week - the star's latest milestone following the success of his comeback film 'Everything Everywhere All at Once', reports People magazine.

"I'm so happy for him. He's a great guy," Ford told Entertainment Tonight at the premiere of his new Apple TV+ series shrinking. "He's a wonderful actor. He was when he was a little kid, and he still is," he added. "I'm glad. I'm very happy for him."

Ford and Quan last acted together in the second film in the 'Indiana Jones' franchise, where Ford played the titular role and Quan played the young Short Round. When asked if an on-screen reunion is possible between the stars, Ford told ET, "That'd be great."

As per People, the duo previously reunited in September 2022 when Quan shared a sweet photo of himself and Ford on Instagram. Ford attended an event to promote the upcoming 'Indiana Jones' film, while Quan was invited for his role in season 2 of 'Loki'.

Quan later detailed the encounter to The New York Times, telling the outlet that his heart was "pounding" as he approached Ford and thought, "Is he gonna recognise me? The last time he saw me, I was a little kid."

Ford, Quan said, ended up looking at him with his "classic, famous, grumpy Harrison Ford look" before recognising him.

"I go, 'Oh my gosh, he probably thinks I'm a fan and he's gonna tell me to not come near him.' But he looks and points at me and says, 'Are you Short Round?' Immediately, I was transported back to 1984, when I was a little kid,

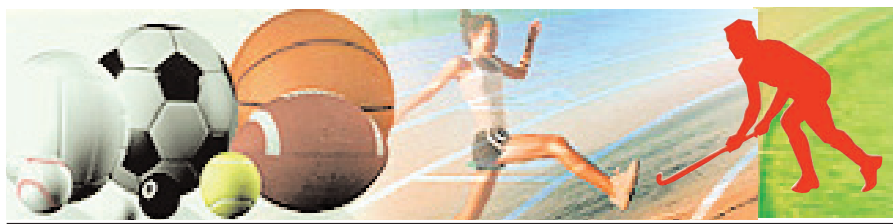


and I said, 'Yes, Indy.' And he said, 'Come here,' and gave me a big hug," Quan detailed.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Emily Atack



IND VS NZ 2ND T20I

INDIA RESTRICT NEW ZEALAND TO 99/8, LOOK TO LEVEL SERIES



Lucknow | Agencies

Arshdeep Singh scalped two wickets as India restricted New Zealand to 99/8 in the second T20I match on Sunday at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow.

Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Deep Hooda, and Washington Sundar scalped one wicket each. For New Zealand, Mitchell Santner remained unbeaten at 19 off 23 balls.

Indian spinners have been brilliant today and so have the Indian seamers! The spinners already spun a web around the Kiwi batters and put them in a helpless position before Hardik Pandya came into the attack and also brought Arshdeep Singh and Shivam Mavi along with him.

Hockey World Cup

Netherlands fight back to beat Australia 3-1, claim bronze medal

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Skipper Thierry Brinkman struck a double as the Netherlands came back from a goal deficit to beat Australia 3-1 and claim the third place in the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023.

This is the fourth medal for the Netherlands in the men's World Cup as they had finished runners-up in the last two editions in 2014 and 2018 and were third in the 2010 World Cup played in New Delhi.

Australia opened the scoring in the 13th minute when drag flicker Jeremy Hayward converted their first penalty corner. They maintained their one-goal advantage in the second quarter too as they led 1-0 at half-time.



proceedings in the third quarter and clinched third place in the World Cup. After penalty corner specialist Jip Janssen pulled the Netherlands level by converting a penalty corner in the 32nd minute, Brinkman put the Netherlands 2-1 up with a superb deflected goal in the 34th minute, capitalising on a

defensive error as the Dutch launched a swift counter-attack. Brinkman scored his second goal within five minutes as the Netherlands took control of the match, capitalising on some mistakes committed by the Australians in the defense. All three goals for the Dutch came in the third quarter as they pressed ahead

and dominated the quarter. The Dutch absorbed the pressure exerted by the Kookaburras in the fourth and last quarter, even when they were reduced to 10 players after Thijs Van Dam was shown a yellow card for a dangerous sliding tackle inside the shooting circle in the 52nd minute.

Bayern share spoils with Frankfurt in Bundesliga

Berlin | Agencies

Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich drop points for the third straight time in 2023 after Eintracht Frankfurt's Randal Kolo Muani canceled out Leroy Sane's opener to ensure a 1-1 draw in the 18th round.



minute when Daichi Kamada sent Kolo Muani, who beat Bayern custodian Yann Sommer from a tight angle into the far post corner.

The Eagles gained momentum in the closing stages but Djibril Sow, Mario Gotze, and Rafael Santos Borré couldn't clinch the winner despite dangerous opportunities.

Elsewhere, Union Berlin moved on second and reduced the gap behind Bayern to one point after beating uninspired Hertha Berlin 2-0 in the capital derby. Freiburg returned to winning ways as first-half goals from Michael Gregoritsch and Lucas Holer paved the way for a 3-1 victory over Augsburg.

Werder Bremen ended Wolfsburg's winning run as Niclas Fullkrug donated a brace to edge the Wolves 2-1. Jonas Hofmann's double strike helped Borussia Monchengladbach down Hoffenheim 4-1, while Mainz crushed Bochum 5-2.

Desert Vipers pull off an exciting 12-run win over Dubai Capitals, regains top slot



Dubai | Agencies

Desert Vipers pulled off an exciting 12-run victory over Dubai Capitals in the 20th match of the DP World ILT20 at the Dubai International Stadium on Saturday night to regain the top position in the points table.

Though Desert Vipers could post only a moderate total of 149 for 9 through a captain's knock of 40 off 32 balls with two boundaries and accurate bowling by Rohan Mustafa (2 for 27) backed well by Matheesha Pathirana and Tom Curran. For Dubai Capitals, Adam Zampa playing his first match, bowled brilliantly takes three wickets for 16 to bag the Player of the match award. Dubai Capitals' skipper Rowman Powell (34n.o) and Yusuf Pathan

(35n.o) put on an unbeaten partnership of 52 runs in 6.3 overs, but their effort went in vain before the tight bowling. Chasing a target of 150 runs, Dubai Capitals lost opener Robin Uthappa for 1 in the second over when Curran took a running catch at mid-on. In the third over, opener Hazratullah Zazai too fell edging Sheldon Cottrell to wicket-keeper Billings for 6. UAE's Chirag Suri and Shanaka took the score to 45 in 8.1 overs when Hasaranga had Shanaka brilliantly caught and bowled for 24. Suri scored 16 before lifting Rohan Mustafa to Hasaranga at deep mid-wicket. At the half way mark, Dubai Capitals were 53 for 4, needing another 97 runs to win. Sikandar Raza joined his skipper Powell. With 65 runs needed off 39 balls, Yusuf Pathan joined Powell and hit Matheesha Pathirana for a boundary and a huge six over long-off.

Australian Open

Djokovic downs Tsitsipas to win 10th Melbourne title, joins Nadal on 22 Grand Slam crowns

Melbourne | Agencies

Novak Djokovic claimed his 10th Australian Open singles title, preserving his perfect record in Melbourne Park by beating Greek player Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 7-6(4), 7-6(5) and equalling Rafael Nadal on 22 Grand Slam crowns.

The historic achievement triggered an outpouring of emotion from Djokovic, who climbed into his player box to share a tear-filled moment with his team while celebrations also erupted among the sea of Serbian flags in Melbourne Park's Garden Square.

It was the second meeting between Djokovic and Tsitsipas in a major final. At Roland Garros in 2021, Djokovic rallied from two-sets-to-love down to defeat the Greek and claim victory on the Paris clay.

Djokovic confidently assumed control early on the Rod Laver Arena. Although the Greek raised his game in the second and third sets to ensure some absorbing rallies, which whipped up an intense atmosphere in the crowd, the Serbian was clinical at key moments to seal a two-hour, 56-minute victory and improve his record in the Australian Open finals to 10-0.



On several occasions in the second set, the Greek reacted to winning crucial points by rousing his supporters in the crowd, and the third seed fed off the febrile atmosphere to raise his level at the Rod Laver Arena. Yet although Tsitsipas

carved out the sole break point chance of the set (which doubled as a set point) at 4-5, 30/40, Djokovic found a way to pull through. He arched a sublime forehand winner to save the set point and held his nerve again to claim the tie-break despite having dropped three straight points to surrender a 4/1 lead. Tsitsipas again threatened resurgence in the

third set, claiming his only break of the match in the opening game. As he so often has on the big stage throughout his career, however, Djokovic responded immediately. He broke back in the next game before clinching a third set dominated by serve - and his historic victory -- with a commanding tie-break display.

KREJCIKOVA, SINIAKOVA CLINCH SECOND STRAIGHT TITLE IN MELBOURNE

Melbourne |

Defending champions Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova continued their exceptional Grand Slam winning streak in women's doubles by capturing the 2023 Australian Open title.



Krejčíková and Siniakova posted a thrilling 6-4 6-3 victory over Japanese pair Shuko Aoyama & Ena Shibahara to clinch their seventh Grand Slam title together. The Czech duo have not lost a Grand Slam women's doubles match since 2021, having won all three of the majors they contested last year (the Australian Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open).

The top seeds needed one hour and 29 minutes to seal the win here at Rod Laver Arena, which earned them bragging rights as the first team to defend an Australian Open women's doubles title since Italy's Sara Errani and Roberta Vinci achieved the feat in 2014.

Krejčíková and Siniakova are up to 24 consecutive match-wins in women's doubles at Grand Slam events. Before their title run last year, they made the semifinals in 2020 and were runners-up in 2021. The duo, who won 14 titles together on the women's tour, first teamed up as juniors in 2013, winning three of the four girls' doubles titles that year.

Ranji Trophy 2022-23

Bihar thrash Manipur by 220 runs to win Plate Group title

Patna | Agencies

Bihar thrashed Manipur by 220 runs in the Plate Group final of the Ranji Trophy 2022-23 at the MoinUl Haq Stadium.

After getting reduced to 107/4 by stumps on the fourth day in a chase of 545, Manipur needed something spectacular on the final day to pull off a draw but they were bowled out for 324 in their second innings with Nawaz Khan claiming 5 for 95.

With this, Bihar and Manipur, the two finalists of the Plate Group, will be promoted to the Elite division next season.

Resuming Day 5, Langlonyamba Keishangbam continued to put up a fight alongside the other overnight batter, Bikash Singh. They added runs at a brisk rate to cause a bit of concern in the Bihar camp. Bikash smashed three sixes to race to 79 whereas the skipper Keishangbam helped himself to a century. The two batters put on 140 for the fifth wicket to raise hopes of a stunning comeback for Manipur. But Nawaz dismissed Keishangbam (117) and it triggered a collapse.



From there on, Nawaz went on a roll and continued to pick up wickets, including that of Bikash (79). Lower-order batter Pheirojiam Jotin played an entertaining knock of (48 not out off just 40 balls) but that came as not enough as Manipur were eventually bowled out for 324.

Nawaz, who finished with five wickets in the innings, ended up with a 10-fer in the game after producing a sensational performance (five for 82) in the first innings as

well. Earlier, Sakibul Gani's fantastic double ton (205) had helped Bihar put up 546 on the board in the first innings.

Brief scores

Bihar 546 (Sakibul Gani 205, Bipin Saurabh 155) & 335 (Sachin Kumar 132; Kishan Singha 7/94) beat Manipur 337 (Prafullomani Singh 82; Nawaz Khan 5/82) & 324 (Langlonyamba Keishangbam 117; Nawaz Khan 5/95) by 220 runs.

'It will nag at me for the rest of my life': Maxwell rues missing Test series against India



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell rued missing next month's Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India due to injury by saying it will "probably nag him" for the rest of his life.

Glenn Maxwell suffered a horrifying injury at his friend's birthday party in November last year, where he slipped and suffered a broken fibula in his left leg. The injury ruled him out for a good deal of time.

"It probably will nag at me for the rest of my life," Maxwell said during a Big Bash League commentary stint for Fox Cricket this week. Maxwell has said he is using the disappointment

from the injury to set himself up for the final few years of his career.

"I started looking forward, thinking I will make the best recovery possible - I'll come back early, and be stronger than ever. I started using it as a motivation factor rather than 'oh no, why has this happened to me?'" he said.

"I tried to turn it around and think how can I finish the back end of my career, be the fittest and healthiest and most motivated I have been? Maxwell added.

Australia will meet India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, starting on February 9 in Nagpur, which will be followed by a three-match ODI series scheduled from March 17 to 22.

Sunny Leone motivates contestant, shares story of her days of struggle

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Splitsvilla X4' host Sunny Leone shared her struggle story to motivate the contestant Kashish Thakur on the show. In the recent episode, it was seen that Kashish thought of making a connection with Uorfi Javed but was left heartbroken as she revealed that she is a mischief maker. Moreover, Kashish was seen sitting in the safe zone with his ideal match Akashlina, but his true connection Mehak is in the Dumping Zone. Kashish was worried because Hamid and Soundous had the power to dump someone and they would most likely kick Mehak out. Kashish said: "If Mehak is going, I am also leaving the show as I have given her a commitment and I won't back out from that. She is my priority." Kashish was so disheartened that he was willing to leave the show. Then Sunny consoled him by sharing her own story in the industry. She said: "I have been noticing you from Day 1 and I know exactly how you function," she's seen telling Kashish. "But if you lose this show because of a girl, that would be a different type of loss. I will give you an example of myself: if I had taken everyone seriously since I got here in this country, I would have packed my bags and gone back home." "It's been 10 years and I am still here; I didn't care what people have said out loud and they still do. Many will stoop low to demean you for no reason and this made me even stronger. Even though this is one show, I want you to look at the bigger picture and that bigger picture for you would be to win," she added.



RAKUL IS GRATEFUL FOR AUDIENCE APPRECIATION ON HER MOVIE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rakul Preet Singh is over the moon with the success of her latest streaming film 'Chhatrivali'. In the film, Rakul's titular character roots for sex education in small town Karnal. Taking to social media, the actress shared a quirky picture of herself from the film. She wrote in the caption, "My emotions right now are like this serotonin keychain thank you for giving sooooo much love to Sanya".

Of late, the actress has been toying around unconventional subjects like her last release 'Doctor G'. On the work front, the actress has an interesting line-up of films in both South and Bollywood.

Gazal Sood has joined a TV serial

Team Absolute | Mumbai

"Tarak Mehta ka Ooltah Chashma" actress Gazal Sood has joined the cast of "Happu Ki Ultan Palatan".

The actress stepped into the shoes of Aashna Kishore to play the role of Daroga Happu Singh's (Yogesh Tripathi) and Rajesh's (Kamna Pathak) eldest daughter.

Hailing from Ludhiana, Gazal has

been part of some popular television shows and web series before and is excited to portray a happy-go-lucky girl who struggles to speak fluent English.

Gazal said: "I am thrilled to be a part of the show, which is also my family's favourite. I have enjoyed watching Kat's character, and I could not be happier to play the character myself. The way she struggles to speak English always leaves me in splits. Comedy is one of my favourite genres, as it offers true enter-

tainment that puts smiles on viewers' faces."

"Having watched the show before, I have always admired the way the characters and the show portray comedy so effortlessly. I have started shooting and feel lucky to be surrounded by talented actors like Himani Shivpuri, Yogesh Tripathi, Kamna Pathak, and others. I hope people love my portrayal of the character, which has already gained so much popularity among viewers."



Manoj Bajpayee recounts shooting the 'cloth washing' scene in 'GoW'

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee spilled some beans about the 'cloth washing' scene in 'Gangs of Wasseypur'.

He shared: "Actually the whole scene was improvised during Reema Sen's auditions. One day I was called by Anurag ji (Kashyap) to accompany him for the audition. For the same, he had asked me to stand in the same frame as Reema where only he (Anurag) could see me."

Manoj, who is known for his works in films such as 'Satya', 'Kaun?', 'Shool', 'Raajneeti', 'Aligarh' is appearing on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' with the entire cast of 'Gangs of Wasseypur'.

He further recalled shooting for a sequence and added how the director instructed the entire sequence: "So while Reema was washing the clothes in the scene, Anurag suddenly instructed me to enter the sequence and I was a little surprised but followed whatever he said. Later on, after watching the film, we realised that whatever scenes have been captured was actually a part of our rehearsals. I am glad Anurag kept that scene the way it is as it went on to become popular."



PANKAJ TRIPATHI TALKS ABOUT CHALLENGES OF PLAYING SULTAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Pankaj Tripathi has talked about the challenges he faced while playing the role of Sultan in the film 'Gangs of Wasseypur'. He said: "Sultan Qureshi was a very challenging role to play as I am a pure vegetarian, and the shoot took place at a real location in Allahabad. The smell was unbearable and it was one of the most difficult experiences for me. Anurag (Kashyap) used to sit outside with the monitor while we were inside struggling. When the people over there found out about the shoot, they started overacting as they were a part of the frame."

The 'Mirzapur' actor recalled about the time he got emotional after receiving a call from Anurag Kashyap post the release of the film.

Pankaj shared: "On the day of the film release that is almost 1 and a half years after we completed the shoot, I got a call from Anurag. It was around 1-1.30 a.m. in the night and I was confused why he wanted to talk to me as I had not watched the film yet. As I picked up the call he congratulated me for my performance and said he would have hugged me if I was in front of them. I was extremely overwhelmed as all the hard work paid off."



Jaiswalpragya