




Britain's main oppn Labour Party Shadow Education Secy Bridget Phillipson gives an interview outside the BBC in London, on Sunday



Danny Jones and Tom Fletcher from British band McFly pose on the red carpet upon arrival for the BRIT Awards 2024 in London, on Sunday




3 A model presents a creation by Duran Lantink for the Women Ready-to-wear Fall-Winter 2024/2025 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus comes out of a courtroom after he was granted bail in an embezzlement case, in Dhaka, Bangladesh

allovertheworld



A member of the bell bearer groups from Greece and Europe poses during a parade, as part of the 6th edition of the European Bell Bearers Festival in the northern Greek port city of Thessaloniki, in Greece, on Sunday. The custom of the "Koudounoforoi" (bell bearers) is a folklore tradition residue of ancient rituals in honour of the God Dionysos, the Greek god associated with pleasure, festivity, wine and euphoria

Hundreds protest in Senegal to demand speedy elections
DAKAR: Several hundred people rallied in the Senegalese capital Dakar on Saturday calling for the country's postponed presidential elections to be held before April 2, the date when incumbent Macky Sall's term is set to end. The protesters gathered at a sandy lot in a working-class neighbourhood for the protest, called by the "Resistance Front", an alliance of opposition parties and campaigning groups. Many brandished Senegalese flags and portraits of the opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, jailed since July for "incitement to insurrection" and barred from running in the presidential vote. Sonko has endorsed Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is also in jail but who was cleared to be on the ballot. The crowd shouted "Macky Sall dictator" and "Free Sonko", singing a song in his praise.

Artificial glaciers stave off drought in Kyrgyzstan
SYN-TASH, (KYRGYZSTAN): In the Tian-Shan mountains of Kyrgyzstan, villagers have made an artificial glacier to provide water for their drought-hit farms. Standing on the ice hillock, farmer Erkinbek Kaldanov said he was optimistic about harnessing nature to counteract climate change. "We won't have any more problems with water," said the farmer, who was worried for his sheep last year after some unusual temperature spikes. "When the glacier melts, there will be enough water for the livestock and to water the land in Syn-Tash," the surrounding district, he said. The glacier currently measures five metres (16 feet) high and about 20 metres long. At the height of winter it was 12 metres tall. Local residents made it over a period of two weeks in autumn by re-directing water from the peaks of Tian-Shan, which tower more than 4,000 metres high in northern Kyrgyzstan.

Belgian police arrest 4 youth over jihadist plot messages
BRUSSELS: Belgian police on Sunday arrested four youths over messages they exchanged allegedly plotting a jihadist attack deemed "imminent enough to intervene", a spokesman for the federal prosecutor's office told AFP. The four -- three minors in their "late teens" and an adult man aged 18 -- were arrested when police raided home addresses in the cities of Brussels, Ninove, Charleroi and Liege, the spokesman, Eric Van Der Sypt, said. No weapons or explosives were found. Police took away mobile phones and laptops for analysis, he said, confirming reports from Belgian media RTBF and HLN. The messages the four exchanged on the internet about the alleged planned attack were "worrying enough to intervene, to do house searches," Van Der Sypt said.

Seven-year-old girl killed as boat carrying migrants capsizes in Channel LILLE, (FRANCE): A seven-year-old girl drowned on Sunday when a small boat carrying 16 migrants heading from northern France to Britain capsized, the prefecture in France's Nord department said. The boat "was not appropriately sized to carry so many people," the local authority said in a statement, causing it to capsize soon after people boarded in the Aa canal a few kilometres from the waterway's exit into the Channel. The inland accident is the latest in a trend that has seen migrants aiming to get to Britain from France boarding boats away from the coast to avoid stepped-up surveillance there. Police and firefighters rushed to the scene after a person out for a walk raised the alarm, the prefecture added.

Navalny supporters flock to grave to pay respects, gain hope MOSCOW: Hundreds of Alexei Navalny supporters queued to lay flowers and pay tribute to the deceased opposition leader on Sunday, in a significant show of support for the anti-corruption campaigner, who died last month in an Arctic prison colony. The outpouring of affection for President Vladimir Putin's staunchest opponent comes just two weeks before the Kremlin leader is set to secure another six-year term in an election where he will face no real competition. Long queues formed Sunday outside the Borisovo cemetery in southern Moscow - where Navalny was buried on Friday - for the third day running, following his shock death last month. Thousands came to Navalny's funeral service and burial on Friday, even as the Kremlin warned mourners they could be arrested.

Pakistan's newly-elected PM Shehbaz rakes up Kashmir issue

Pledges to improve ties with all leading nations, including neighbours

PTI, ISLAMABAD Pakistan's newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday raked up the Kashmir issue in his maiden address but pledged to improve ties with all leading nations, including the country's neighbours.

Shehbaz said that Pakistan would not become part of any "great game" and his government would increase the number of friends.

He pledged to build and improve ties with all leading nations, including neighbours.

"We will keep ties with neighbours on the basis of equality," Shehbaz, 72, said as he easily won the election in the National Assembly to become Pakistan's prime minister for a second time.

Shehbaz, however, raked up the Kashmir issue and equated it with Palestine. Let's all come together [] and the National Assembly should pass a resolution for the freedom of Kashmiris and Palestinians, he added.

He also thanked his allies in the coalition government for putting their trust in him and making him Leader of the House.

OVER 100 SUPPORTERS OF FORMER PM IMRAN'S PARTY PROTESTING VOTE RIGGING ARRESTED IN PUNJAB

PTI, LAHORE: More than 100 supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party have been arrested from different parts of Punjab province of Pakistan for staging rallies against alleged vote rigging, police said on Sunday. On the call of party founder Imran Khan, supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party held protests across Pakistan on Saturday against the alleged "massive rigging" in the February 8 general elections. Most arrests took place in Lahore where newly elected Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz ordered a clamp down on the protesting PTI supporters.

Police detain a supporter of former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party at a protest against the alleged skewing in Pakistan's national election results, in Lahore

"When my Quaid (leader Nawaz) was elected the prime minister thrice, the development that followed in the country is an example of its own. And it is not wrong to say that Nawaz Sharif is the one who built Pakistan, Shehbaz said in his victory speech.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president thanked his elder brother Nawaz and all the allies for putting their trust in him and making him Leader of the House.

Shehbaz, who was the consensus candidate of the PML-N and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), received 201 votes in the 336-member house.

Shehbaz's challenger Omar Ayub Khan of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) secured 92 votes.

Shehbaz said that the country was facing challenges primarily due to the fragile economy. He said that he was starting his tenure when the country was facing a budgetary deficit of more than one trillion rupees.

How we will pay the salaries for armed forces and how to pay the civil servants, he wondered and added that reforming the economy was the biggest challenge faced by the country.

SUNSET SILHOUETTE



A swan swims in the morning sunlight on a pond at the Veckenstedt pond farm in Veckenstedt, the northern Harz region, Germany, on Sunday

Covid-19 rapid tests still work against new variants

AGENCY, UMASS CHAN MEDICAL SCHOOL WORCESTER (US): By September 2020, just six months after Covid-19 triggered shutdowns across the US, it was clear that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, had mutated from its original form.

The question quickly arose whether existing rapid antigen tests could detect newly emerging variants.

Using clinical samples obtained from diagnostic labs throughout the US from 2020 to 2023, the National Institutes of Health, through its Variant Task Force, analysed the effectiveness of more than 100 rapid antigen test kits on over 300 variants.

The vast majority of the kits were able to detect new as well as prior previously known variants.

We are a team of researchers who have spent the past few years researching Covid-19 tests for their accuracy and performance. We understand why the public may still have questions about whether these tests are reliable, particularly as new variants continue to appear.

Do these tests work? There are two major types of tests for the detection of SARS-CoV-2.

The first, called a RT-PCR test, is more than 95 per cent accurate for detecting the virus. These were the tests that most Americans were given at drive-through and walk-in testing sites early in the pandemic.

The vast majority are now done at a doctor's office or clinic, though there are some home PCR tests, which typically cost five to 10 times more than rapid antigen tests.

The other type is an antigen test, commonly known as a rapid test, with an accuracy rate of more than 80 per cent. Most of these tests are sold over the counter at supermarkets and pharmacies.

Rapid antigen tests are relatively inexpensive, can be used without prior training and give quick results, typically within 10 or 15 minutes. One drawback is that they are less accurate than PCR tests, especially early in an infection when there is less virus present in the body.

Despite these inherent limitations, our team has demonstrated that these tests perform as well in 2024 as they did earlier in the pandemic, when different variants were circulating even though our initial study was completed in January 2022. That's because the virus protein detected by antigen tests has not changed much over the last two years.

unlike other parts of the virus that have undergone many mutations. Another study, which tested the accuracy of rapid antigen tests from 2020 to 2022, found similar results.

That said, researchers like us continue to test the tests, both in computer simulations and in the lab, to detect new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

Researchers wearing masks and other protective gear sit under tents collecting samples during a Covid-19 testing study.

FROM PAGE 1

WHEN INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION MET ON THE PLANET OF EXCELLENCE

The Innovation Award for driving innovation in enterprise was given to NUMADIC, a Goa-based supply chain tracking and coordination platform for B2B transporters and consignors in India.

The Community Impact Leadership Award for creating a positive impact within the community in every way was conferred to Street Providence for being constituted solely to care and rehabilitate homeless street people, drug & alcohol addicts, poor, marginalised, & abandoned senior citizens.

THOSE WHO LEFT FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND FOR GOAN ENTERPRISE TO FOLLOW

Together, these business icons of Goa have inspired countless individuals to strive for excellence in their respective fields. As Goa continues to grow and age, the contributions of these visionaries, Victor Albuquerque, BebeAzedo and Vincent Ramos, will be remembered and celebrated for generations to come.

NOISY VENUES IN ANJUNA, VAGATOR UNDER GSCPCR RADAR

The directive has been issued after the Commission received number complaints about the excessive noise levels emanating from entertainment venues, which not only breach legal sound limits but also infringe on the rights of children to a conducive study environment.

The directive has emphasised the critical need for the establishments to adhere strictly to the noise pollution rules laid out under the law.

As part of the enforcement strategy, the Commission has demanded monthly reports from the involved authorities to monitor progress and ensure accountability. These reports are expected to detail the actions taken against non-compliant establishments and the measures put in place to prevent future violations.

"Our tolerance for noise pollution violations is zero. The continuous stream of complaints to the GSCPCR from troubled students and parents, many reaching out for assistance well past midnight, highlights a concerning shortfall in our joint efforts to adhere to these legal mandates. To endanger our children's health and their future through a

blatant disregard for noise regulations in Anjuna and Vagator is deplorable and a direct attack on their rights. The bedrock of our society is the education and well-being of the next generation, and we are committed to fiercely safeguarding this at all costs," Peter F Borges, Chairperson Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, said.

"This step by the Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights underscores the importance of protecting children's rights and the environment from the adverse effects of noise pollution. It serves as a reminder to all businesses operating in these bustling areas of their legal obligations and the need for responsible conduct to maintain the harmony and well-being of the community," the GSCPCR said.

To endanger our children's health and their future through a blatant disregard for noise regulations in Anjuna and Vagator is deplorable and a direct attack on their rights. The bedrock of our society is the education and well-being of the next generation, and we are committed to fiercely safeguarding this at all costs

— Peter F Borges, Chairperson Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights