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'Can't declare minorities at district level,' SC on plea seeking minority status for Hindus

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday reiterated that religious and linguistic minority status has to be decided state wise, and orally observed that it is difficult to entertain a prayer to identify religious and linguistic minorities at the district level.

A bench headed by justice UU. Lalit expressed its reservation to entertain a plea seeking to declare Hindus as minority in states where they are out-numbered by other communities.

The bench, also comprising justice S Ravindra Bhat, pointed to produce concrete examples where Hindus are being denied the benefits of minority status in states where they are numerically less. Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who filed another similar petition in the matter, submitted before the bench that Hindus are minorities in some states. The bench replied, "Theoretically you're right, but if the Supreme



Court has said it had to be state-wise, why should we interfere?"

It may be noted that in the case of TMA Pai and others vs State of Karnataka (2002), the Supreme Court had held that minorities must be identified at the state-level.

Upadhyay had also filed a petition challenging the provisions of National Commission for Minorities Act 1992 and National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act 2004 and sought minority status for Hindus in certain states/UTs.

The bench told the counsel that it is generally saying that Hindus must be declared as minority, which the court cannot declare due to absence of statistics for every particular state and every particular religion.

The top court reiterated its query and asked the counsel to give concrete examples of cases where Hindus are denied the protection of Article 30 in states where they are in a minority.

After hearing the arguments, the bench scheduled the hearing in the first week of September.

5G ROLL OUT LIKELY IN A MONTH: CENTRE

New Delhi: The country is likely to witness the roll out of the much awaited high speed 5G mobile services in about a month's time.

"In about a month, 5G mobile services will roll out in the country, which will have multiplier effects on the development of all sectors. A 6G Technology Innovations Group, has also been set up, which is working towards the development of indigenous 6G stack," said Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications, while addressing the inaugural event of International Telecommunication Union's Regional Standardisation Forum (RSF) for Asia and Oceania region on Monday.

He said that the government is promoting the indigenously designed, developed and manufactured advanced telecom technology, and as a result, India today has a strong home-grown 5G mobile communications ecosystem. "By the end of this year, we are likely to see indigenously developed, and manufactured 5G stack, getting deployed, in rolling out 5G network in India. Our engineers have developed a set of 5G standards, which will facilitate the spread of the 5G network in rural areas," he said.

Talking about the Centre's initiatives to address the issues concerning digital divide, the minister said that the steps include taking optical fibers to all 6 lakh villages of the country, and also cover all these villages with 4G mobile communications.

He informed that around 1,75,000 villages are already provided with the optical fibre, while around 5,60,000 villages have 4G mobile facilities. A multi-billion-dollar, comprehensive plan has been made, which will ensure optical fibre and mobile communications in all six hundred thousand villages by 2025.

Talking about the positive, and forward-looking environment created by telecom reforms in the country, the Minister said: "As a result, the recent 5G spectrum auction in India has fetched bids of 20 billion dollars. This very well reflects the confidence and sentiments of the Indian telecom industry."

JEE-Main result out, 24 students score 100 per cent marks

New Delhi | Agencies

The National Testing Agency on Monday declared the final result of engineering entrance exam JEE-Main, in which 24 students have secured 100 per cent marks. More than 9 lakh students appeared in the JEE-Main exam conducted in two sessions- from June 24 to June 30 and from July 25 to July 30. Apart from India, other countries or foreign cities where these exams were conducted are Doha, Dubai, Kathmandu, Muscat, Riyadh, Sharjah, Singapore, Kuwait, Lagos, Colombo, Jakarta, Vienna, Moscow, and Bangkok. It is worth mentioning that students who perform well in JEE-Main will be able to appear for JEE Advanced. Students securing a good rank in JEE Advanced will get admission in reputed engineering institutes of the country including IITs across the country.

"To make the examination system transparent, the question paper along with the answer key and the recorded responses were displayed on the website for verification by the examinees. The revised answer key was published on the website after being verified by the subject experts," said Sadhna Parashar, Senior Director (Examination), NTA.

A control room was opened in the NTA campus, where virtual observers were deployed to oversee the live coverage of all examination centres in India. Live surveillance was done through CCTV to prevent malpractices in the examination. NTA has also made arrangement for live viewing of remote location and recording of CCTV system of all examination centres located at NTA Control Room. About 35,000 cameras were installed per shift.

Along with the release of the result, the



National Testing Agency said that during the examination, jammers were installed at all the centres to prevent malpractices like copying through mobile or any other electronic device by the examinees using the mobile network. A total of about 29,000 jammers were installed per shift of all the 14 shifts. The examinations were conducted with precautions related to COVID-19. The commercial arm of ISRO, NewSpace India Ltd plans to transfer the SSLV technology for production in the private sector after a couple of successful missions.

The Indian space agency said the EOS-02 satellite is an experimental optical imaging satellite with high spatial resolution. The objective is to realise and fly an experimental imaging satellite with short turnaround time and showcase launch on demand capability.

Launch of small satellites will be a dominant factor in the global space sector with about 7,000 satellites expected to be up in the sky by 2027, VK. Saraswat, member, Niti Aayog had said at a space seminar.

In all, about 7,000 small satellites are expected to be launched between 2018 and 2027 with a total value of \$38 billion, Saraswat said.

'Drop everything against him': SC to Patna HC on judge who fast-tracked POCSO cases

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Patna High Court to drop all disciplinary proceedings against a suspended Additional Sessions Judge from Bihar for deciding POCSO cases within days. A bench of Justices UU Lalit and Ravindra Bhat told the counsel representing the high court that "Our sincere advice is to drop everything. If you don't want to, we'll go threadbare into it." The bench said unless there are allegations of corruption and malafide, only then disciplinary action is justified. Advocate Gaurav Agarwal, representing the high court, submitted that he would inform the high court.

The bench noted that there shouldn't be an over zealousness to take action against the judge, as it would send a bad message to other judicial officers, who are performing their duties efficiently,

and also anything against the judicial officer would be a reflection on the high court as well. It said that the judge was asked to submit his written statement in defence within 10 days, after receiving the memorandum dated August 5, 2022, containing articles of charge along with enclosures, which was served upon the petitioner judge.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the petitioner judge, submitted that his client is willing to submit the statement of defence. The bench noted that the high court should consider the suspended judge's written statement. After hearing arguments, the top court scheduled the matter for further hearing on August 18. The high court's counsel submitted that an appropriate decision, after considering the entirety of the matter, including the petitioner's written response, would be taken within two days.

On July 29, the top court issued notice to the Registrar General and the state government on the claim by Shashi Kant Rai that his suspension order and the pending disciplinary proceedings against him recorded no reasons. Rai had moved the top court through advocate Nitin Saluja.

Rai, an Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADJ) in Araria, sought quashing of the non-speaking suspension order dated February 8, issued by the Patna High Court and the purported disciplinary proceedings as mentioned therein, being malicious, illegal, and arbitrary. In the previous hearing, the top court observed that the approach of a judge - who sentenced a convict to capital punishment within four working days and decided a POCSO case and awarded life term to the convict within a working day - cannot be termed commendable.

RJD ready for every political war in Bihar, says party state chief

Team Absolute | Patna

Amid speculation that Bihar's Janata Dal-United might separate from the NDA in Bihar, RJD state President Jagadanand Singh claimed that his party is ready for every war. He, however, denied any kind of pact with JD-U at this juncture.

"We have not given any proposal or invitation to Nitish Kumar to join the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar. We have called for the meeting on Tuesday to prepare plans for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 Vidhan Sabha election. We are ready to fight any war," Singh said. Apart from the RJD, the JD-U and the HAM also announced meetings of their legislators on Tuesday.

JD-U state President Umesh Kushwaha said: "Tomorrow's (Tuesday) meeting is being held to take the feedback of our MLAs, MLCs and MPs about the current situation." Interestingly, JD-U national President Lalan Singh said: "We have called a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the situation arising due to the R.C.P. Singh episode. Nitish Kumar will be chairing the meeting and legislators and MPs will put their points." Jitan Ram Manjhi, the patron



of Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) is the only leader who claimed that what would be the decision taken by Nitish Kumar, his party will support him. HAM is with Nitish Kumar and JD-U. However, he also said that the NDA is intact and Nitish Kumar will rule the state.

Meanwhile, a JD-U MLA said: "Our top leadership has asked every MLA to reach Patna by 8 a.m. on Tuesday. At present, we do not know what will happen in the meeting but I expect that a big political storm will come up after the meeting. CM Nitish Kumar and national President Lalan Singh will be expected to take a big decision that decides the fate of the NDA in Bihar."

UP MINISTER SENTENCED TO 1-YEAR JAIL, LATER GETS BAIL

Kanpur: Rakesh Sachan, cabinet minister in the Yogi Adityanath government, was sentenced to one year of imprisonment with a fine of Rs 1,500 in an Arms Act case after he surrendered before a court on Monday.

He was later granted bail on a bond of Rs 50,000.

On Sunday, police launched a probe into his 'disappearance' from the courtroom after his conviction. Sachan was held guilty two days ago in an Arms Act case lodged against him on August 13, 1991, for possession of an illegal rifle. Soon after, Sachan allegedly ran away from the courtroom with a copy of the order.

The additional chief metropolitan magistrate court's reader, Kamini, had filed a complaint with police alleging Sachan had taken away the file while fleeing.

The minister while being taken to the court said he was appearing before the court despite not being given any notice, adding the case against him is bogus.

"I am doing so because media painted me like an absconder, someone who took away the file. Whatever the court will decide I will abide by it," he said.



SC NOTICE TO CENTRE ON PLEA FOR LAW TO CONTROL 'POPULATION EXPLOSION'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre on a plea seeking a central law to control the "population explosion" in the country. Seeking the government's response, a bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer and JK Maheshwari tagged the petition with a similar plea filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Upadhyay. The Public Interest Litigation (PIL), filed through advocate Ashutosh Dubey, sought direction from the Centre to control the population explosion in order to secure the basic rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Constitution. "Population explosion is also the root cause of the pitiable condition of our International Ranking. We are ranked 103rd in the Global Hunger Index, 43rd in Suicide Rate, 168th in Literacy Rate, 133rd in World Happiness Index, 125th in Gender Discrimination, 124th in Minimum Pay, 42nd in Employment Rate, 69th in Rule of Law Index, 43rd in Quality-of-Life Index, 51st in Financial Development Index, 177th in Environment Performance Index, 139th in GDP Per Capita," the plea said. It said that the Centre passed its obligation on states through "Population Control & Family Planning" is mentioned in concurrent list. Hence the Centre can make law for rules and regulations and policies to control population explosion, which is the biggest menace to democracy and socio-economic development. It has not even drafted a Bill till date," the plea stated.

Calcutta HC directs ED to be party in PIL on assets of 19 Trinamool leaders, ministers

Kolkata | Agencies

A division bench of the Calcutta High Court on Monday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to be a party in a PIL regarding the assets and property details of 19 heavy-weight leaders, including seven current ministers in West Bengal.

The division bench of Calcutta High Court's Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajarshi Bhardwaj gave this directive acting on a PIL filed in 2017 by one individual, Biplob Chowdhury, questioning the spectacular growth in assets of 19 Trinamool legislators, parliamentarians and ministers of the state government.

In the PIL, Chowdhury quoted the affidavits filed by these leaders with the Election Commission of India (ECI) while filing their nominations for various elections that showed the inflation in the assets of these leaders over the years.

The PIL also includes the names of two deceased ministers of the West Bengal cabinet, namely former state panchayat minister Subrata Mukherjee and former state cooperation minister Sadhan Pandey.

The existing ministers of the state government named in the PIL include state municipal affairs minister and Kolkata mayor Firdah Hakim; state education minister Bratya Basu; state forest minister Jyotipriyo Mullick; state law minister Malay Ghatak; state cooperation minister Arup Roy; state disaster management minister Javed Ahmed Khan; and minister of state for panchayat affairs Seuli



Saha.

The list also includes names of the West Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee and Lok Sabha member from Barrackpore Arjun Singh, who has recently joined Trinamool Congress from the BJP.

The other prominent names in the list of 19 include Trinamool Congress mayor of Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Gautam Deb and ruling party MLAs Madan Mitra and Swarnakamal Saha, among others. The list also includes the names of former state finance minister and current principal financial advisor to the state government, Amit Mitra.

The development comes at a time when former heavyweight Trinamool Congress leader and minister, Partha Chatterjee and his close aide, Arpita

Mukherjee, are in judicial custody over their alleged links with the multi-crore West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) recruitment irregularities scam. The ED has already recovered several crores of rupees from the residence of Arpita Mukherjee.

According to the BJP state spokesman in West Bengal Samik Bhattacharya, Trinamool Congress will not be able to describe this development as the conspiracy of the Union government and the BJP, since the division bench of the Calcutta High Court has directed that the ED will be a party in the PIL. "We welcome the decision," he said.

Till the report was filed not a single Trinamool Congress leader was willing to make any comment on this development.

'Attack on states' authority': Punjab CM opposes Electricity Amendment Bill

Chandigarh: Opposing the Centre's introduction of the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2022 in the Lok Sabha without even consulting states, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday termed the move as an attack on the constitutional rights of the states.

"Through such nefarious designs, the Union government is weakening the foundations of the federal structure," he said. Mann said this is another attempt made by the Centre to undermine the authority of the states, and categorically said the Union government should not consider the states as puppets.

States will not sit silently against this attempt of the Centre to dilute the federal spirit of democracy, he added.

The Chief Minister said the states will fight from the road to Parliament to protect their rights. He said the Union government should have consulted the states before introducing any Bill related to the power sector.

However, instead of consulting, this Bill is being imposed on the states, which is a direct attack on the federal structure, he said.

Questioning the Centre's intentions, the Chief Minister said when the states provide electricity to their residents on their own, then why has their feedback not been sought while introducing a new Bill.

Citing the example of Punjab, he said farmers in the state are being given free electricity for agriculture. Likewise, Mann said free power supply is also provided to domestic consumers and if the Centre is amending the Bills as per their own conditions, the farmers and other sections will get a big blow as states like Punjab will not be able to continue such pro-people initiatives.

Warning the Centre to desist from playing with fire, the Chief Minister urged it to not repeat the previous mistake of implementing draconian three agricultural laws.

He asked the government to reconsider its decision of introducing the Electricity Amendment Bill as the people of the country will never tolerate such unilateral decisions.

Mann demanded that the Central government should take feedback of the states before enacting any law in the power sector, which will directly affect every citizen of the country.



OVER 47 HRS LOST IN RS DUE TO INTERRUPTIONS; FOUR GOVERNMENT BILLS PASSED

'Achhe Din' have arrived in Odisha, says Amit Shah

► DUE TO FACE-OFFS BETWEEN THE OPPOSITION AND THE GOVERNMENT, OVER 47 HOURS WERE LOST WHILE THE BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED FOR MORE THAN 35 HOURS IN THE 257TH SESSION OF RAJYA SABHA THAT HAD COMMENCED ON JULY 18.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Due to face-offs between the Opposition and the government, over 47 hours were lost while the business

was conducted for more than 35 hours in the 257th session of Rajya Sabha that had commenced on July 18.

The House had 16 sittings. However, more than 47 hours were lost due to interruptions, "which is a sad reflection on the functioning of the Upper House of Parliament", said the outgoing Chairman, M Venkaiah Naidu on Monday.

"The session was characterised by regular and continuous disruptions, which deprived members of the opportunity to discuss matters of urgent public importance and seek the accountability of the executive through questions," he said.

Of the 235 starred questions admitted, only 61 could be answered orally, and the Question Hour could not be taken up on 7

days. Only 25 matters could be raised by members with the permission of the chair and only 60 Special Mentions could be made, during the entire session.

The House discussed the issue of rising prices of essential items in the form of a Short Duration Discussion which lasted for more than 4 hours in which 33 members participated in the debate.

Only 4 government bills were considered and passed during the Session.

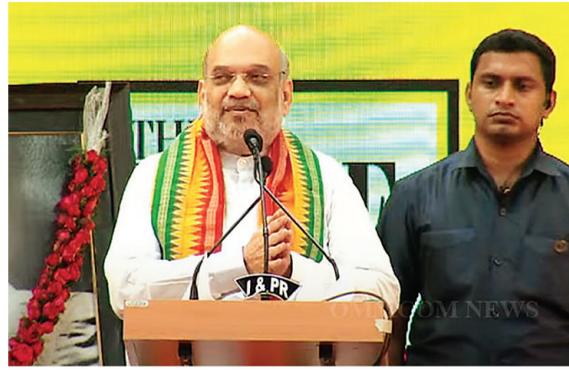
At total of 27 Private Members' Bills were also introduced and only 1 Private Member's Bill regarding 'Right to Health' could be partly discussed during the entire Session. No Private Members' Resolutions could be taken up.

► THE 'ACCHE DIN' (GOOD DAYS) HAVE ARRIVED IN ODISHA WITH PEOPLE FROM THE STATE OCCUPYING TOP POSTS IN THE COUNTRY LIKE NEVER BEFORE, UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH SAID ON MONDAY.

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

The 'achhe din' (good days) have arrived in Odisha with people from the state occupying top posts in the country like never before, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday.

He said this while addressing the 75th anniversary of an Odia daily newspaper in Cuttack. Justifying his statement, he said Droupadi



Murmu, born in a poor tribal family of the state, is now the "Mahamahim Rashtrapati".

"Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and MoS Bishweswar Tudu are also

from Odisha," he said.

"Odisha had never got such high representation since independence," Shah said. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central government in association with the Odisha gov-

ernment is making all efforts for the development of the state, he said. The Home Minister said there is immeasurable potential for development in Odisha as the state has long coastline, business tradition, work force and mineral resources. Addressing the event, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the role of media in a democratic society can hardly be overemphasised.

"It should endeavour to uphold our great cultural heritage and moral values and promote national integration and communal harmony. Media should discharge its duty without any fear or favour," Patnaik said. "Media runs on the basis of people's trust. It is therefore expected that the media should prioritise the real issues of people rather than politics," he said.

"Whether it is print or electronic or social media, it is the duty of every media house to maintain dignity and keep the secular principles in mind," he added.

CAG audit of GST finds instances of double payments due to lack of monitoring

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even after four years of implementation of GST, a proper system of review and post-audit of refunds had not been effectively institutionalised so that the department may rectify mistakes in time, a report by government auditor CAG said, noting that the audit noticed 410 instances of double payments, amounting to Rs 13.73 crore.

Moreover, the audit observed 1,686 compliance deviations in 1,438 cases, out of 7,560 cases were examined in detail, amounting to Rs 977.54 crore, constituting a deviation rate of 22 per cent.

Irregularities noticed were relatively higher in four categories like

ineligible credit of duty paid goods in stock without documents, irregular claim on unavailed credit on capital goods, ineligible credit on inputs or input services in transit, and irregular claim on closing balances.

"Considering that the department had verified 79 per cent of these claims, the deviation rate suggested that the verification process carried out by the department suffered from inadequacies. Out of 1,438 cases, where audit noticed irregularities, 1,132 cases had been verified by the department, and the department did not point out irregularities amounting to Rs 735.69 crore," the report said. Audit analysed the data of Public Financial Management

System (PFMS) relating to GST refunds pertaining to the period from July 2017 to September 2019 (Pre-automation) received from 34 Commissionerates and followed it up with substantive audit of the payment process.

It noticed 410 instances of double payments owing to lack of reconciliation and monitoring by the Department amounting to Rs 13.73 crore, said the report.

Audit also examined compliance to the provisions of the CGST Act, associated rules, procedures, etc. with respect to a risk-based sample of 12,283 refund cases processed by the Central tax authorities.

"Audit noticed 522 cases where excess or inadmissible refund of Rs

185.28 crore was sanctioned due to various reasons such as incorrect computation of Adjusted Total Turnover, consideration of ineligible accumulated ITC, claims which were time-barred etc," said the report. The CAG audit report observed that though the department had identified the top 50,000 cases for verification as a priority for 2018-19, the exercise was not yet completed, and the department was yet to verify 8,849 cases. "The rate of recovery of detected irregularities was low. Cross jurisdictional issues and lack of co-ordination in Central Tax jurisdictions in some zones impeded verification and initiation of recovery actions," said the audit report.

NIA conducts searches in J&K's Doda in JEI terror financing case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

► THE NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (NIA) ON MONDAY CONDUCTED SEARCHES AT PREMISES OF SIX SUSPECTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR'S DODA DISTRICT IN CONNECTION WITH THE JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI (JEI) KASHMIR TERROR FUNDING CASE.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted searches at premises of six suspects in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district in connection with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI) Kashmir terror funding case.

This organisation was declared an unlawful association in 2019, but it continued to raise funds in various forms on the pretext of charitable purposes, and these funds were allegedly being diverted to terrorist

organisations, such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba etc. for promoting terrorist activities in the Kashmir Valley as well as the rest of India, an NIA official said. The case was registered suo-moto on February 5, 2021. The NIA had earlier filed charge sheet against four persons in the case.

"Searches conducted on Monday have led to the recovery of incriminating literature, receipts of funds raised by JEI Jammu and Kashmir, bank and property related documents, and electronic devices," the NIA official said.

Stolen from TN over 50 years ago, Parvati idol traced to New York auction house

The Tamil Nadu Police's Idol Wing have traced an idol of Goddess Parvati that was stolen from a temple in the state in 1971 to the Bonhams auction house in New York, officials said on Monday.

Chennai | Agencies

The Tamil Nadu Police's Idol Wing have traced an idol of Goddess Parvati that was stolen from a temple in the state in 1971 to the Bonhams auction house in New York, officials said on Monday.

According to the police, the Parvati idol was part of five idols that were burgled from the Nandanapureswarar temple at Kumbakonam on May 12, 1971. Police have now commenced the process to retrieve the idol and bring it back to India under the UNESCO's World Heritage Convention 1972.

Talking to IANS, DGP, CID-Idol Wing Jayanth Murali, said: "We sought the help of an archaeologist who said that the photograph of the idol of Parvati that was kept at the French Institute of Pondicherry and the idol of Parvati on sale at Bonham's auction house is the same. This means that the idol of Parvati at Bonhams belongs to the Nandanapureswarar temple at Kumbakonam."

Following the complaint after they were stolen in 1971, temple trustee K. Vasu, in 2019, lodged another complaint and said that he had seen the idols in 1971 when they were in public

worship, and after that, he had not seen them. In the complaint, Vasu said that he had seen the locks of the temple broken while reaching there for worship and then two trustees of the temple had complained to the Nachiarkoyil police and the inspector had visited the temple.

Vasu also said that no FIR was lodged then and hence he was filing the complaint. He filed the complaint with the Special Officer, Idol Wing, S.G. Pon Manickavel, and a case was registered in 2019. After tracing one, senior officers told IANS that they are trying to trace the remaining four idols.

Khatushyam stampede: Raj govt announces compensation for kin of deceased, SHO suspended

► RAJASTHAN GOVERNMENT ON MONDAY ANNOUNCED A COMPENSATION OF RS 5 LAKH EACH TO THE KIN OF THE DECEASED WHO DIED IN A STAMPEDE AT KHATUSHYAM TEMPLE IN SIKAR DISTRICT.

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan government on Monday announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased who died in a stampede at Khatushyam temple in Sikar district.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has ordered an inquiry into the incident. Divisional Commissioner Vikas Sitaram Bhale will investigate



the entire matter.

According to sources, police personnel were not deployed to con-

trol the huge crowd on 'Ekadashi'.

SP Kunwar Rashtrideep has suspended Khatu SHO Riya

Chaudhary for the negligence.

Three women died and four others sustained serious injuries when a stampede broke out at Khatushyam temple in Sikar, Rajasthan on Monday morning.

The accident took place at 5 a.m., when the crowd of devotees had increased significantly for darshan on the occasion of 'Ekadashi'.

It is being said that around one lakh people were present outside the gate at that time. Devotees were in line since Sunday night and as soon as the doors of the temple opened in the morning, the crowd went berserk, resulting in the stampede.

Meanwhile, as the investigation is underway, the district administration has refused to treat the accident as a stampede. Sikar Collector Avchal Chaturvedi said that the accident was reported due to the pressure of the crowd while opening the gate of the entrance.

FORMER UP MP SENTENCED TO LIFE TERM IN TRIPLE MURDER CASE

Jaunpur: A court in Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur on Monday sentenced to former Machlisahr MP Umakant Yadav to a life term in a 27-year-old triple murder case.

Seven others in the case have also been awarded life term. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on the former MP.

The case dates back to February 1995, when constables Ajay Singh, Lallan Singh and another person were killed in firing in a bid to rescue Raj Kumar Yadav, who was lodged in the lockup of the Shahganj Government Railway Police in Jaunpur.

Giving details of the incident, the government advocate said that constable Raghunath Singh, posted in Shahganj GRP, had lodged an FIR that in February 1995, armed with rifle, and pistol, Umakant Yadav came to the GRP post along with his associates. Umakant Yadav forcibly tried to free Raj Kumar Yadav, who was in the lockup. He opened fire and apart from Ajay Singh and Lallan Singh, one other was killed in the firing.

Nitish Kumar foiled BJP's 'Eknath Shinde plan' in Bihar: JD-U leader

Patna | Agencies

While Janata Dal-United reached the stage where it planned to break away from the NDA in Bihar, the BJP leadership activated the "Eknath Shinde plan" to sabotage the Nitish Kumar government but the Chief Minister spotted it within time and changed the entire game, a JD-U leader claimed.

The claim by a party leader, who was speaking on the condition of anonymity, came a day after JD-U national President Lalan Singh said that Nitish Kumar and the JD-U was targeted with the "Chirag model" during the 2020 Assembly election and as a result, the party only secured 43 seats. The reference was to how the Lok Janshakti Party of Chirag Paswan fought elections outside the NDA, but only in the seats that the JD-U was contesting.

According to the party leader: "This time, the Chirag model was activated through RCP Singh. The saffron party wanted RCP Singh to stay in the JD-U and work like Eknath Shinde. Lalan Singh's statement about the Chirag model was actually the Eknath Shinde model in Bihar. Everyone knows who was behind the conspiracy to remove Uddhav Thackeray in Maharashtra."

"Nitish Kumar smartly assessed the situation of Bihar and he was minutely observing the activities of RCP Singh.



When he thought that the time had come to end the climax, he asked JD-U state President to serve the notice to RCP Singh and asked to clarify the 40 bigha lands obtained by him and his family in the last 9 years. Following that development, RCP Singh resigned from the primary membership of the party and leveled sensational allegations against Nitish Kumar and national president Lalan Singh. He even claimed that the JD-U is a sinking ship."

The party insider said that BJP started the plan to change the Chief Minister ever since its top leadership included only R.C.P. Singh in the Narendra Modi government. At that time, there was a buzz that there were several JD-U MLAs in touch with RCP



Singh and he might become a rebel. "Nitish Kumar realised the threat and started surgical operations on two fronts. One he had given complete authority to Lalan Singh to evict every sympathiser of RCP Singh either out from the party or take away the responsibility in the organisational structure. Many leaders in the organisation became loyalists of Nitish Kumar. "The situation was such that none of the MLA or MLC openly went into the events where R.C.P. Singh was the chief guest in Bihar. Nitish Kumar then opened another front in his own hand and forced the BJP central leadership to send a leader in Patna. Due to the strong stand of Nitish Kumar, Dharmendra Pradhan came to Patna on that occasion to discuss the issue.

20 ANDHRA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS FACING CRIMINAL CASES

Amaravati: As many as 42 per cent of the Members of the Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh, are facing criminal cases, a recent study has shown. The study also noted that 75 per cent of the 48 MLCs whose records were analysed, are crorepatris or own assets over Rs 1 crore.

The study is based on an information furnished by MLCs ahead of the MLC polls held from time to time.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), and Andhra Pradesh Election Watch stated on Monday that they had analysed details of 48 out of the 58 sitting MLCs.

"Ten MLCs have not been analysed as their affidavits were unavailable. Eight nominated MLCs are not required to submit their affidavits, hence their information on criminal, financial and other details are not available in the public domain," an ADR release stated.

Of the 48 MLC affidavits analysed, 20 MLCs or 42 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves while 3 MLCs or 6 per cent are facing serious criminal cases. One MLC has declared case related to attempt to murder, under IPC Section 307, and one MLC has declared case related to crimes against women.

At least 13 out of 26 MLCs from YSRCP, 6 out of 13 MLCs from TDP, and one out of the 4 Progressive Democratic Front MLCs have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits. The study also noted that 75 per cent, or 36 of the 48 MLCs are crorepatris.

While 22 MLCs hail from the ruling YSRCP, the opposition TDP has 11 crorepatris in the Upper House. The TDP's Lokesh Babu is the richest of the lot with declared assets exceeding Rs 369 crore. Independent member P. Raghunath Varma declared lowest total assets of Rs 1,84,527.



INVESTMENT OF ONE AND A HALF THOUSAND CRORES IN ELECTRIC VEHICLE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR PROPOSED IN MP

▶ Will extend full cooperation for expansion of running units and new investment: CM
▶ Chouhan called on by Eicher Company MD



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was today called on by Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles Limited MD Vinod Aggarwal and informed about the proposed investment of Rs. 1,500 crore in Madhya Pradesh. Automobile industry is already operated by the company in Pithampur and Bagroda. The company has set up 8 manufacturing units, providing direct and indirect employment to more than 32,000 people.

Chouhan assured the company's MD Aggarwal that he would get full cooperation from the state government. All necessary facilities will be provided as per the pre-scribed policy. Such industries are the need of the day

and a large number of youth will also get employment.

Chouhan was apprised about the new proposal in the electric vehicle sector by Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle Limited Managing Director Vinod Aggarwal at Kushabhau Thakre Auditorium. He apprised about the project proposal prepared for capacity expansion of the existing units of the company. Handing over a copy of the proposed project to CM Chouhan, he informed that the first unit was set up by Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle Limited in the state in the year 1986. Presently 8 units are running at Pithampur and Bagroda. Materials are supplied to all

the units of the company by 110 auto component units of Madhya Pradesh. In order to expand the existing capacity of the units, new product manufacturing is proposed. The work is being done as per the company's upcoming strategy in the Electric Vehicle sector. The units are running smoothly due to the provision of necessary facilities by the state government. The details of the proposal of the company were given by Principal Secretary Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Sanjay Shukla. The company's Chief Operating Officer Rajendra Singh Sachdev and Vice President Nitin Nagda were also present.

NIA ARRESTS 2 ACCUSED PERSONS IN JMB BHOPAL CASE

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had on Sunday arrested two Bangladeshi nationals in connection with the JMB Bhopal case. The arrested persons have been identified as Hamidullah alias Raju Gaji alias Muffakir and Md Sahadat Hussain alias Abidullah.

They were found to be involved in propagating the ideology of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and motivating the youth to carry out jihad against India.

"Both were held in Bhopal in the case relating to the arrest of six active cadres of JMB, including three illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, from Aishbagh," the NIA said.

The case was initially registered on March 14, and was re-registered by the NIA on April 5. Earlier, seven accused had been arrested in the case.

Raju Gaji and Sahadat Hussain are highly radicalised individuals who were involved in propagating jihad by posting hateful and incriminating materials online on various social media groups to radicalise others, the NIA said.

They were close associates of earlier arrested accused persons in the case and were found using encrypted apps to communicate with their associates in India and Bangladesh.

CM joins "The Shahi Sawari of Lord Pashupatinath" in Mandsaur

▶ CM PULLED THE CHARIOT OF SHAHI SAWARI
▶ PERFORMED WORSHIP RITUALS AFTER DARSHAN AT PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday performed worship rituals after having a darshan at Lord Pashupatinath in Mandsaur. In the month of Shravan-Bhadra, Lord Pashupatinath went out in a palanquin to give darshan to the people, Chouhan also joined "The Shahi Sawari." The Chief Minister pulled the chariot of "The Shahi Sawari" and walked along with the Sawari. Before joining the, Lord Pashupatinath was worshipped by the priests of the temple.

The tricolour flag was presented to CM Chouhan by public representatives and administrative officials in the premises of Lord Pashupatinath Temple. In-charge of the district and Minister for Industrial Policy and Investment



Promotion Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon, Minister for Finance, Commercial Taxes, Planning, Economics and Statistics Jagdish Deora, Minister for New and Renewable Energy and Environment Hardeep Singh Dang, MP Sudhir Gupta along

with public representatives of Urban and Panchayat Raj institutions and administrative and police officers were present. On the arrival of Chief Minister Chouhan, people's representatives and administrative officers warmly welcomed him.

Chief Minister plants saplings

■ Chouhan plants saplings with the daughters of Bhopal connected to the programming of Azadi Satellite
■ Planted Banyan, Neem and Gular saplings with 15 girl students of Maharani Laxmibai Girls Higher Secondary School

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings in the Smart City Garden along with the daughters of Bhopal who contributed to the programming of Azadi satellite rocket. Students of Class 10th and 12th of Maharani Laxmibai Girls Higher Secondary School, BHEL Barkheda, Bhopal have made a special contribution in programming the country's smallest satellite rocket SLB, which took off from Sri Harikota. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Nancy, Shaista, Priyanka and Niharika of class 12th and Priya, Shivangi, Ayushi, Sejal, Sneha, Prachi, Bipasha, Purvi, Chanchal, Amrita and Garima of class 10th planted Banyan, Neem and Gular saplings. CM Chouhan interacted with the girl students about their schooling, studies, interest-training in programming and the experience of joining ISRO's campaign. These daughters



of simple families of Bhopal are proficient in information technology and robotic technology. In the programme of ISRO in the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, these girl students were selected upon programming from the software of the satellite company "Space Kids" Chennai, affiliated to NITI Aayog. Special training was provided to the girl students. The selected students did programming under the guidance of senior teacher Jitendra Pal Singh Chouhan. In the 75th year of independence, 750 daughters contributed in the programming of Azadi Satellite, in which 15 daughters of Bhopal participated. Chouhan, in a discussion with the media representatives at Smart City Garden, said that this activity in the

Amrit Mahotsav of Independence will boost the interest of the daughters towards science, technology and mathematics and they should also acquire proficiency in it, this programme is very important for this purpose. While greeting, extending good wishes and blessing the daughters, CM Chouhan wished them bright future.

Banyan has religious medicinal value. According to Ayurveda, the treatment of many diseases is possible with the help of Banyan leaves, bark etc. Consumption of its decoction boosts the immunity. Similarly, Neem abounding in antibiotic elements is known as the supreme medicine. Gular is an excellent medicine, which is also useful from the point of view of Ayurveda and environment.

CHIEF MINISTER CONGRATULATES PV SINDHU

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan congratulated PV Sindhu on winning the gold medal in the competition Women's Singles Badminton in Commonwealth Games-2022. Chouhan said that PV Sindhu has once again raised the flag of India in the world.

PROF. RAMSHANKAR IS VC OF SN SHUKLA UNIVERSITY

Bhopal: Governor Mangubhai Patel has appointed Prof. Ram Shankar of the Department of Political Science, Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur as the Vice-Chancellor of Pt. SN Shukla University, Shahdol.

The tenure of Prof. Ramshankar as Vice-Chancellor will be for a period of 5 years or the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier, from the date of assumption of office.

Deck up city squares with tricolour: Singh

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh reviews "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Decorate the squares in the cities with the tricolour. There must not be a single house in which the tricolour should not be waving. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh gave these instructions in the review of "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign in Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in Mantralaya.

With the aim of bringing awareness to the citizens about the "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign, Minister Shri Singh said that Prabhat Pheris should be taken out in every city on one day. Play the tricolour song on LED screens and in promotional vehicles. Put up hoardings and flexes related to the tricolour campaign in cities, this builds up an atmos-



phere. Singh said that cultural programmes full of patriotism should be organised in every city.

In these, information should be given about the sacrifices and dedication of the immortal martyrs. Singh said that the availability of tricolours should be ensured as per the demand of the city. Encourage every household to put up the tricolour

and take a selfie with it and upload it on www.harghartiranga.com.

Commissioner Urban Administration and Development Nikunj Shrivastava informed about the preparations for "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign. During this, Additional Commissioner Satendra Singh and other officers were present.

"Nabaghunjar/Nabagunjara" is IGRMS' Second Exhibit of the Week for August

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under its Latest and popular online series entitled 'Exhibit of the Week' the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) has put on display "Nabaghunjar/Nabagunjara" collected from 2013. The Community of Folk, Odisha. It's Measurement Height- 32.5 cm and width- 41 cm, displayed in the audience as the second Exhibit of the month of August, 2022 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that In mythology, Nabagunjara is a creature formed by the fusion of nine different animal species. It is regarded to be a form assumed by Lord Vishnu. This object represents the figure of a wooden Nabagunjara that evident one of the highly skillful craftsmanship deriving from the state Odisha.

Nabagunjara characterizes the presence of a rooster as its head, elephants, tigers, and horses as its feet, and a raised human arm holding a wheel as its fourth limb. Furthermore, the creature has its neck resembling a peacock while the back is portrayed like the hump of a Bull. The waist portion features the lion and the tail as a serpent.

The word "Naba" means Nine, "Gun" means quality, and "Jara" means old, and the metaphor of which



represents the nine qualities of pride and admiration. Rooster has the quality of leadership and makes people vigilant and awaken, Peacock symbolizes beauty while the hump of a bull illustrates the quality of purity and devotion. The body of a lion depicts majesty while the leg of an elephant stands for the quality of stability. The leg of a tiger represents fast and swiftness, and the leg of a horse qualifies as gentleness. Finally, the human hand with a wheel is set to project the quality of a spiritual quest while the snake-like tail reckons a quality of a balanced decision. According to the Hindu epic of Mahabharata, when Pandavas was in Vanaprastha, Arjuna encountered a strange creature fused with nine different animals.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

NueGo, India's first premium electric inter-city coach services brand, on Monday announced the launch of its operations by commencing its services on the Bhopal-Indore route. Aimed at the new age traveler, NueGo, the flagship inter-city pan Indian electric mobility coach brand of GreenCell Mobility, will deliver an easy booking experience, exceptional ride quality and in-cabin experience for the inter-city travellers while ensuring a safer and greener ride. NueGo services will be available at a special inaugural offer of INR 349/per seat on the Bhopal-Indore route.

NueGo coaches are fitted with innovative technology and offer end to end convenience for inter-city travellers with coaches being run on an hourly basis between Bhopal-Indore. In Bhopal, the route will be along ISBT, Bhopal



Railway Station, Lal Ghati, Sehore, while in Indore the coaches would be taking the route through Star Square, Radisson Square, Vijay Nagar and Sarwate bus stand.

A customer centric brand, NueGo coaches go through 25 stringent safety checks including mechanical and electrical inspections. The coaches are sanitized

before every trip and coach pilots go through breath analyzer tests. NueGo services feature live coach tracking, drop point geo-location, and monitored in-coach CCTV surveillance. These electric coaches can run 250 kilometers in a single charge, with air meters in, in traffic conditions. These coaches have already completed two lakh kms of road trails

through the months leading upto the launch of the services.

NueGo has well trained & courteous staff, offers premium lounges in selective cities, and will offer customer assist & luggage management services. In addition, the services will offer curated F&B menu at the lounges and on board with on-time performance.

Speaking on the occasion, Satish Mandhana, Director, GreenCell Mobility said, "NueGo aims to promote usage of sustainable public transportation with zero tail pipe emission on the inter-city routes. NueGo will provide a holistic travel experience with its World Class electric coach services." NueGo services offer the "Travel First Class" experience with focus on Safety, Punctuality, and convenience for inter-city travellers. NueGo services will soon be available on the Delhi-Chandigarh and Delhi-Dehradun routes.

14 Cars Swept Away, 50 Picnickers Rush to Safety After Sudden Surge in Khargone River Water

▶ Police reached the spot and pulled out 10 cars and SUVs with the help of tractors of local villagers. The cars, however, failed to start due to technical glitches as water had entered the vehicles

Team Absolute | Khatrgone

At least 14 cars were swept away while around 50 people ran for safety to higher places in a forest in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district due to sudden rise of water in a river after rains, police said on Monday.

The people, including women and children, all from Indore district, were on Sunday evening enjoying a picnic near the Sukdi river in Katkoot forest under Balwada

police station limits, Additional Superintendent of Police Jitendra Singh Pawar said. Following rains in the area, the river water level suddenly rose.

The picnickers rushed to higher places in the forest to save themselves, leaving their cars and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) behind, the official said.

At least 14 cars, including some SUVs, were swept away in the waters, he said. After being alerted, police reached the spot and pulled out 10 cars

and SUVs with the help of tractors of local villagers. The cars, however, failed to start due to technical glitches as water had entered the vehicles, the official said. The picnickers were later sent to their homes in other vehicles, he said. Three other cars were swept away to far off places, while one was stuck near a bridge pole, he said. Local police have been asked to put up a board in the area, informing about the danger of sudden water surge at such places, the official said.

ADMINISTRATORS APPOINTED

Bhopal: For the convenience of administrative work in the newly formed Nagar Parishad Bargawan and Sarai in Singrauli district by the state government, Sub-Divisional Officer (Revenue) Deosar has been appointed as Administrator till the completion of general elections or the new parishad takes charge.

The Administrator will discharge all the powers and duties of the parishad.

Swear-in ceremony of 16 new district panchayat members in Ratlam

Team Absolute | Ratlam

The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected president, vice-president, and other 15 members of District Panchayat was held here at the MLA auditorium located on Sailana road in Ratlam on Sunday.

During the ceremony, newly elected Lala Bai took oath as president of district Panchayat while Keshuram Ninama took charge as vice-president besides, and 15 other newly elected members took their oaths. Following the oath-taking ceremony, the first convention of district Panchayat was held where chief guests addressed the convention. Notably, out of a total of 16 members, 9 women have been elected to reserved seats for women in civic body elections. The post to District Panchayat President (Ratlam) was reserved for women belonging to the



SC category, on which Lalabai, hailing from Bhuteda village of Jaora tehsil has been elected to the head post. During which, Jaora MLA Rajendra Pandey Ratlam, local MLA Chaitanya Kashyap, and Ratlam Rural MLA Dilip Makwana also marked their presence. Two BJP-supported District Panchayat members Satyanarayan Patidar and Nathulal Gamad were disappointed over being 'ignored' in the event, on being informed, district panchayat CEO Jamuna Bhide accorded a warm welcome by presenting bouquets.



EDITOR'S SPECS

RBI's rate hike focused on inflation

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee last week raised the benchmark interest rate for a third straight meeting as policymakers battle to rein in inflation that has persistently remained at or above the prescribed upper tolerance threshold for six months. The 50 basis points raise takes the policy repo rate to 5.4%, and, more significantly, to a level last seen in the pre-pandemic second quarter of fiscal 2019-20, when a growth slowdown and retail inflation of about 3.2% warranted a rate cut. As the MPC's Jayanth Varma had pointed out in June, when the MPC had recommended a 50 basis points increase, the impact of the 90 basis points total increase from May still left the real policy rate at the time lagging behind the RBI's 100 basis points increase in retail inflation projection for the year from 5.7% to 6.7%. It is only now that the cumulative increase totals 140 basis points, and puts the central bank slightly ahead of the curve. Still, as Governor Shaktikanta Das acknowledged, consumer price inflation, even if off April's eight-year high, remains 'uncomfortably high' with inflationary pressures broad-based. And with the MPC's own forecasts for the second and third quarter pegging retail price gains well above the upper tolerance mark of 6%, at 7.1% and 6.4%, respectively, the rate setting panel had little option but to continue the withdrawal of monetary accommodation to prevent inflation expectations from getting unmoored and stymieing growth by retarding consumption.

From an external sector and exchange rate perspective as well, globalised inflationary surges are prompting policy tightening in advanced economies that is in turn roiling currency markets including appreciably weakening the rupee and adding imported inflation to the mix. Noting that 'successive shocks to the global economy' had led multilateral institutions including the IMF to lower their global growth projections and 'highlight the rising risks of recession,' Das remarked, "disquietingly, globalisation of inflation is coinciding with deglobalisation of trade".

Das's confidence in the 'resilience' of the economy's fundamentals notwithstanding, it is probably apposite for the MPC to hereafter heed Varma's exhortation by 'providing projections of the future path of the policy rate'. This would help anchor price gain expectations firmly and surely enhance the RBI's inflation-fighting credentials.

'MOVE AWAY FROM LUTYENS ZONE SILOS, SOFT OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE INDIA'S TRUE GLOBAL POTENTIAL'

India needs to come out of the "silos" of the "Lutyens Zone", reverse its penchant for adopting the "soft option" on a plethora of issues and align itself with the changes in the "policymaking matrices" in countries like the US, Russia and China to ensure that the benefits of the rapid economic growth of the past few years are not "cast away", says noted academic and strategic analyst Madhav Das Nalapat in his visionary new book, "75 Years of Indian Foreign Policy."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

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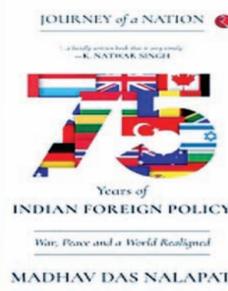
The book, published by Rupa under the broad title "Journey of a Nation", also warns against "feeding the fringe" as this "seldom makes for good politics, as this group is impossible to satisfy unless one completely surrenders to their demands at the expense of the rest of society."

"The policymaking matrices in the US, Russia, Australia, Japan and even China have changed. The same needs to happen in India. These changes need to be comprehensive rather than, as has been the tradition in the Lutyens Zone, segmented into silos, with action by one leading to a dilution in the effectiveness of the action taken by another," says the book, which is sub-titled "War, Peace and World Realigner" adding that what is required are effective steps from the defence, home, commerce and finance ministries in this direction.

"The higher reaches of the government need to set a correct direction for our policymaking matrix rather than working towards all-round control," writes Nalapat, who was appointed India's first professor of geopolitics and subsequently the UNESCO Peace Chair by Manipal University and has previously edited The Times of India, and before that Matrubhumi.

Lamenting that those who have led India "have almost always pulled away from exploiting the consequences of a breakthrough," Nalapat writes that the 1974 Pokhran "peaceful nuclear explosion" ought to have, "in rapid succession, been followed up my more, rather than waiting until 1998 for another PM to find the resolve to go forward with another round of tests."

Noting that after the Pokhran tests, "there



was a flurry of interest in India that, for some time, was reflected even in the growth of exports of manufacturing -- a country that could make a nuclear bomb could be depended upon to make the lathe", the author decries that even Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister at the time, declined to follow up on Pokhran II.

"There was a moratorium on further tests and India locked itself within most of the bounds of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons although it was not a binding document." "Avoiding risk and looking for the soft option has been the cause of much of the pain that India and its people have endured as a consequence of defective (or at best inadequate) policy structures. Ensuring that the country gets the worst rather than the best of both worlds has become an art form in the Lutyens Zone," Nalapat asserts, adding that the 75th anniversary of Independence "has brought with it another opportunity for the country to propel itself forward and escape from the suboptimal achievement levels that it continues to be mired in."

Much might be made of 'soft power', what is often disregarded is that "to be effective, soft power must be based on a strong foundation of 'hard power' -- the tools which do serve as sticks and carrots in international relations, such as explicit promises of trade incentives and threats of economic sanctions or military action", the author maintains.

India's hard power, he writes, "has grown with an increase in its economic heft and

kinetic capabilities, and it is not an accident that India's image has grown with it. Given the interdependence of other economies with India's in this modern reality and the impact of other countries on it, policy needs to walk on two legs foreign and domestic. The two need to be in balance, as a lack of symmetry in objectives would lead to complications that affect national life."

"Foreign policy must promote the objectives of domestic policy, which would include economic growth, consequently improving living standards, rather than the other way around. Domestic as well as domestic opportunities need to be identified and seized, and in this process, foreign policy plays an indispensable role," Nalapat writes.

Unlike in the past, the geopolitical opportunity now provided to India by global events "should not be missed again. Countries need to be evaluated in practical terms and treated accordingly. A productive foreign policy that will help actualise the potential dividends for India is necessary. What may appear to be hard choices for our nation's foreign policy now may, in actuality, be the best course of action for the future of the nation," the author adds. Going back into history, Nalapat points out that the rise of the UK as the pre-eminent global power of its time was not the result of a conscious strategy implemented from the top but rather, was the consequence of its ruling elite giving its citizens the freedom to think and act. "A collection of individual actions,

discoveries and conquests coalesced into the British Empire. Centralised states, such as Spain and France, during that time had no chance of matching the success of the British Empire. An increasing number of people from the lower levels of society found their way to the middle, and some even discovered pathways to the top of the food chain.

"Only that society is healthy where a middle class grows proportionately to the lower classes -- a middle class from which several manage to migrate upwards in terms of income and achievement. An all of government approach is indeed the panacea," Nalapat contends.

In India's case, "it is not known whether every element in the government accepts that policymakers need to get over the delusion that balanced relationships should always be the goal, even when such a stance may be in opposition to the national interest," the author asserts. In this context, Nalapat cautions that any measure or messaging "that widens the fringe in any section of the population, shrinking the moderate middle in the process needs to be avoided and, indeed, resisted by policymakers. That is why it is important to classify certain crimes, such as killing an individual for eating the meat of certain types of the bovine population, as terrorist acts."

"In the first place, democracies should not use the bludgeon of law to effect lifestyle changes related to diet, dress or sexual orientation," Nalapat writes, pointing out that while some countries do ban particular types of dress, lifestyle or diet (often on pain of death), this does not seem to be "garnering the attention that India has from some members of the international community for hate crimes based on the opposition to the choices of some citizens." "In a smart world," Nalapat concludes, "smart policy is needed, and citizens look to such an unprecedented situation with hope. If the chance for a generation of rapid economic growth, and the benefits this brings, is cast away, historians in India might forgive those who are in power. History will not."

international

Truce between Israel, Palestinian militants holds; Gaza crossings reopen

Tel Aviv | Agencies

An Egypt-brokered ceasefire to halt a flare-up in fighting by Israel and Palestinian militants was holding on Monday, with crossings into the besieged Gaza Strip also reopening.

An Israeli army spokesperson said no new rockets had been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire to end three days of violence that Palestinians said left more than 40 dead took effect late Sunday, reports dpa news agency.

The Israeli army had not attacked any new targets in the coastal enclave, the spokesperson added. Israel on Monday also announced the re-opening of border crossings into the Mediterranean coastal strip for humanitarian deliveries. The Israeli military had launched the "Breaking Dawn" military operation on August 5 with airstrikes against Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip.

Two military chiefs were killed during the operation. The group, closely linked to Iran, is classified as a terrorist organization by the US and European Union. Israel Defense Forces said the group had been planning a major attack along the border involving anti-tank missiles and so pre-emptive action was taken



by launching a wave of strikes against Islamic Jihad positions in Gaza. Tensions began to rise with the arrest of an Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank, Bassem Saadi, on August 1. Since August 5, Palestinian militants have

fired more than 1,000 rockets at Israeli settlements, according to the Israeli military, with some 200 hundred of them falling short and hitting the Gaza Strip. In Gaza, 44 people have been killed and

360 injured, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Among the dead were said to be 15 children and four women.

The Palestinians blamed the Israeli strikes. Israel said misguided jihadi rockets had caused the civilian casualties.

There have been no reported deaths in Israel, with the Iron Dome defence system intercepting most of the rockets.

After assessing the security situation, the Erez border crossing and the Kerem Shalom goods crossing were open again, Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced Monday.

The first fuel tanks and humanitarian supplies passed through the border in the morning, according to a spokesperson.

The power supply in Gaza had been reduced from 12 to four hours on August 6 due to a lack of fuel. The Palestinian Health Ministry had warned of major impacts on medical services. Around 2 million people live in very poor conditions in the territory on the Mediterranean Sea.

Hamas seized power in 2007, prompting Israel to tighten a blockade of Gaza, a move that is also supported by neighbouring Egypt.

Both Israel and Egypt justify the measure with security interests.

US-led chip alliance not aimed at excluding China: S Korea

Seoul | Agencies

South Korea is reviewing its possible participation in the US-led semiconductor alliance from the perspective of national interest and has no intent to build an exclusive grouping against China, the industry minister said on Monday.

Industry Minister Lee Chang-yang made the remarks amid concerns that South Korea's possible joining of the "Chip 4" could cause friction with China, its largest trading partner, if it develops into an exclusive grouping against Beijing.

The Chip 4 is an envisioned alliance of semiconductor powerhouses tentatively involving the U.S., South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, widely considered a grouping against China and aimed at countering Beijing's influence in global supply chains. "We will decide (whether to join the Chip 4) purely from economic and strategic perspectives for the national interest. We don't have a plan to exclude a certain country or make an exclusive grouping," Lee told reporters.

The minister said his country will continue to seek cooperation in the chipmaking sector with China at "various levels," reports Yonhap news agency. South Korea has decided to join a preliminary meeting of the Chip 4 that is expected to take place at the end of August or in early September. At the upcoming meeting, Seoul plans to express its opinions about the "desirable" direction in which the Chip 4 should go forward, Lee said. Touching on exports of power plants, the minister said there has been "some progress" without going into details. "The government plans to set up a task force to discuss sales strategies of power plants, and start with the Czech Republic and Poland (for nuclear energy sales) in the global power plant market," Lee said.

Truss, Sunak clash over cost-of-living crisis

London | Agencies

Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, the two contenders vying to replace UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, have clashed over the cost-of-living crisis.

Truss or Sunak will be elected as Conservative Party leader on September 5, the day the Commons returns from its summer recess, and therefore also become Prime Minister, reports dpa news agency.

Johnson continues to serve in a caretaker capacity in the meantime, after resigning earlier this year.

Allies of Truss, the incumbent Foreign Secretary, have insisted she is committed to helping families struggling with soaring bills as the leadership contenders clashed again over the cost-of-living crisis.

The former Chancellor has launched a fresh attack on Truss's plan for tax cuts in an emergency budget describing it as a "big bung" for large businesses and the better off which would do little to help those most in need over the coming winter. However, Northern Ireland

Secretary Brandon Lewis, who is backing the Foreign Secretary, said they would look to do "whatever we can" to help people under pressure from rising inflation.

Truss's team was forced on the defensive after she suggested at the weekend that there would be no "handouts" if she won the race for No 10, as the seat of government is known, and that her priority was reducing the tax burden.

Her supporters insisted that her comments had been misinterpreted and that she was not ruling out further direct support for families struggling with mounting energy bills.

But Sunak said her plans to scrap the national insurance hike, which he brought in as chancellor to fund the NHS and social care, would leave someone on the national living wage less than 60 pounds a year better off while pensioners would not get a penny. Writing in The Sun, he said that her proposed cut in corporation tax would do nothing to help small businesses and



would simply put money back in the coffers of the biggest companies with the largest profits.

With the Bank of England forecasting inflation is set to hit 13 per cent, with average household energy bills predicted to reach almost 4,000 pounds, Sunak said his rival's measures "won't touch the sides." "Families are facing a long, hard winter with rising bills. Yet Liz's plan to deal with that is to give a big bung to large businesses and the well-off, leaving

those who most need help out in the cold," he said.

"These tax cuts simply won't touch the sides. We need clear-eyed realism, not starry-eyed boosterism. That means bolder action to protect people from the worst of the winter."

Former Conservative party co-chairman Oliver Dowden, who is backing Sunak, said that while Truss was putting her emphasis on tax cuts, the former chancellor accepted the need for "bold, big interventions." "We need to be realistic and honest with people about the scale of the challenge that we're facing," he told Sky News.

"Both with the scale of inflation that's coming down the line, something we haven't seen for almost 40 years and with the fact that energy bills are going to go up, possibly towards 4,000 pounds." "There is no doubt that we do need an intervention of a considerable scale to deal with this." However, Lewis defended

Truss's approach, insisting she wants to put more money in people's pockets.

"We will look to do whatever we can to help people, that's what an emergency budget is about," he told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme. "She's willing to do more to help people but her focus is around doing it in a way that puts more money in people's pockets, creating a high-growth economy with higher wages, more people in work. "So rather than having handouts, what we do is have a low-tax economy that's driving growth and therefore with people having more money in their pockets, they're better placed to deal with some of the challenges that we see." Lewis said it was still possible deliver tax cuts while dealing with inflation.

"We want to do both, want to make sure we're getting on top of inflation and you can't get on top of inflation whilst still putting more money in people's pockets," he told Times Radio. "I think it's a false premise to argue that you can't deal with inflation whilst making sure that people are better off at the same time."



MAHA CABINET EXPANSION LIKELY ON TUESDAY, AT 11AM: SOURCES

THE MUCH-DELAYED CABINET EXPANSION OF CHIEF MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS-LED MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY AT 11AM

Zafar Alam Khan

The much-delayed cabinet expansion of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis-led Maharashtra government is likely to take place on Tuesday. The official function will take place at the Raj Bhavan in Mumbai at 11am. CM Shinde is likely to induct 15 more ministers and deputy chief minister



Devendra Fadnavis is expected to keep the crucial Home portfolio.

Shinde gave indications to the effect in Nanded where he is on a tour on Monday, saying that "you will come to know soon" and the names of the ministers shall be finalised by latter this night or Tuesday. More ministers may be inducted Tuesday - a day ahead of the Monsoon Session of Maharashtra Legislature which is expected to start from Wednesday.

Shinde and Fadnavis took oath on June 30 - a day after the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi regime headed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray crashed - and they have been running a two-man government for the

past 40 days. The duo had a meeting on the issue on Monday - a couple of days after they had gone to New Delhi to meet the Bharatiya Janata Party top leaders - to finalise the thorny cabinet expansion issue. The new cabinet comes 40 days after the BJP and Shiv Sena formed a new government under Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Sources said the BJP MLAs who will take oath as ministers tomorrow are Chandrakant Patil, Sudhir Mungantiwar, R Vikhe Patil, Girish Mahajan and Suresh Khade. From Team Eknath Shinde's camp, the MLAs are Uday Samant, Gulabrao Patil and Sandipan Bhumare, sources said.

ED REGISTERS MONEY LAUNDERING CASE IN TET SCAM INVOLVING 7,800 CANDIDATES

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED), on August 8, registered a case of money laundering related to the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) scam in Maharashtra. The scam is said to have been uncovered in December last year when thousands of TET candidates were accused of paying cash in return for higher marks and even procured fake certificates. According to the Maharashtra State Council of Examination (MSCE), as many as 7,800 candidates were allegedly involved in the scam of manipulating the TET results.

The case, which was first registered with Pune Police cyber, is also being investigated by the Economic Offence Wing (EOW) in Maharashtra. So far, Pune Cyber has arrested 22 people associated with the alleged scam. The list of arrested people in the case includes MSCE commissioner Tukaram Supe and Pritesh Deshmukh, director of GA Software, the private company which conducted the exam.

Among the 7,800 candidates, two names that are being highlighted are Heena Kausar Abdul Sattar Shaikh and Uzma Nahid Abdul Sattar Shaikh, daughters of Shiv Sena MLA Abdul Sattar Abdul Nabi. Notably, Abdul Sattar was a minister in the former Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government, however, he switched sides when a majority of Sena leaders sided with Eknath Shinde. Currently, the Thackeray faction has launched an offensive against Abdul Sattar and is demanding an investigation into the matter.

A father of seven, Abdul Sattar is a three-time MLA from Aurangabad's Sillod in Maharashtra and has a number of educational institutions under his jurisdiction. Out of Abdul Sattar's seven children, four of his daughters teach at family-run educational institutes which are affiliated to the Zilla Parishad in the state.

Sattar, however, has denied the allegations about the involvement of his daughters in the scam stating that they did not qualify in the TET exams and that he has documents to prove the same. The TET exam is conducted under the Right to Education (RTE) Act to appoint teachers, in government-run schools, based on their scores in mathematics, science and language skills.

RAUT GETS 14 DAYS' JUDICIAL REMAND

A Special PMLA Court here on Monday sent Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut to a 14-day judicial custody till August 22, eight days after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged money-laundering case.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A Special PMLA Court here on Monday sent Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut to a 14-day judicial custody till August 22, eight days after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged money-laundering case.

PMLA Court Special Judge M.G. Deshpande granted Raut judicial remand after the ED informed that it did not require his additional custody for the probe into the Rs 1,034-crore scam.

On July 31, the ED had raided Raut's residence in Bhandup, detained him and arrested him in the wee hours of August 1 in connection with the alleged money-laundering case emanating from the redevelopment project of the Patra Chawl, Goregaon, by Guru Ashish Construction Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of the HDIL.

On August 6, the ED interrogated the MP's wife, Varsha Raut for around 10 hours in the same case in which it had earlier arrested his close associate, Pravin Raut, a former director of the Guru Ashish Construction Pvt. Ltd.

Sanjay Raut, 61, was earlier sent to a four-day ED remand which was extended by three more days till August 8, followed by the two-week long judicial custody granted on Monday. While ordering judicial custody, Special Judge Deshpande took cognisance of the MP's medical records pertaining to his heart ailments and permitted him home-cooked food along with his medicines as pre-



scribed by the doctor.

In April the ED had attached properties belonging to Varsha Raut and Pravin Raut and two others, worth around Rs 11.15 crore as part of its probe.

They included plots belonging to Pravin Raut in Palghar, Raigad, and a flat belonging to Sanjay Raut's wife in Mumbai, and properties she held jointly with another associate, Swapna Patkar.

On July 1, Sanjay Raut was grilled for over 10 hours by the ED and then summoned again on at least two occasions, but he skipped the same citing the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament.

Eknath Shinde visits Maharashtra only for photo-ops:

Don't know who is real CM, says Aaditya Thackeray mocking Shinde-Fadnavis govt

Thackeray said the verdict in Shiv Sena's battle in the Supreme Court against the rebel MLAs will have an impact not just on the party but on the entire nation adding that CM Eknath Shinde visits Maharashtra only for photo-ops.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena MLA former minister Aaditya said on Monday that it is difficult to understand who is the real chief minister in the dispensation.

Addressing party workers at Matoshree, Thackeray said the verdict in Shiv Sena's battle in the Supreme Court against the rebel MLAs will have an impact not just on the party but on the entire nation.

"A question that is asked is whether an elected government exists (in the state) or not. In the jumbo cabinet of two people, it cannot be understood who the real chief minister is," Thackeray said. "The temporary chief minister we have...Temporary because the government will collapse," Thackeray said, adding that Shinde "sometimes" comes to Maharashtra from Delhi, tours places, gets photographs clicked and then goes back to the national capital. Thackeray said there was no accountable government in the state at a time when it has seen heavy floods in many parts, leaving people distressed. Thackeray

launched a scathing attack on Eknath Shinde, claiming the Maharashtra chief minister visits the state only for photo-ops and alleged that in the jumbo cabinet of two people, it cannot be understood who the real chief minister is. Addressing Shiv Sena supporters in Matoshree, Aaditya Thackeray said, "The CM stays in Delhi most of the time and comes here for photo-ops."

"The question that is being asked is whether an elected government exists or not. In the jumbo cabinet of two people, it cannot be understood who the real chief minister is," he added.

"This is a fight about what's right and what's wrong. It is not about Shiv Sena or Maharashtra. What the apex court decided will be applicable for the next 20-30 years and so all of you should remain with truth, as we believe in Satyamev Jayate," he further said.

Incidentally, the expansion of the Maharashtra cabinet will take place tomorrow and as many as 14 ministers are likely to take oath, over a month after Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis were sworn in as CM and Deputy CM.

Shinde has made seven visits to New Delhi in the last one month, and with every visit there was talk that the ministry expansion was round the corner.

Ajit Pawar, Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly, said Shinde had promised a ministerial berth to every MLA who joined him. "Now Shinde is not able to fulfil his promise, hence the delay in cabinet expansion. The chief minister should also reveal what led to the delay," Pawar said.

Pawar also said there has been no invitation to him so far from the government for Tuesday's ministry expansion. It is clear that not all of the 40 rebel Sena MLAs who are in the Shinde group will get the ministerial berth, he added.

Heavy rainfall in Sindhudurg, other parts of south Konkan

Heavy rain warnings for parts of Vidarbha; red, orange alerts issued for several districts

A number rivers in the two districts have swollen and the waters have entered agricultural fields and also affected houses

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The southwest monsoon has become active over Maharashtra again after a gap of two weeks, this time bringing extremely heavy showers to south Konkan region, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday.

The state's coastal districts, mainly Sindhudurg and parts of Ratnagiri, received more than 200 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am on Monday, as per the IMD data.

Many villages and hamlets in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri have become inaccessible because of the connecting roads getting inundated, according to locals. A number rivers in the two districts have swollen and the waters have entered agricultural fields and also affected houses, they said.

"Some tehsils in Sindhudurg district received more than 250 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours, including Lanja where 290 mm precipitation was recorded, the highest in the state," a MeT official said.

In the neighbouring Kolhapur district, Gaganbawda tehsil recorded 190 mm rain and Shahuwadi witnessed 90 mm downpour, the official said.

Compared to this, central Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha regions received moderate rainfall over the last 24 hours, she said.

In the second and third weeks of July, Marathwada and Vidarbha had wit-



nessed heavy rains, which claimed many lives and damaged crops.

The weather department has issued red and orange alerts for parts of Maharashtra's Vidarbha region warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall for the next five days, an official said on Monday. The regional meteorological centre in Nagpur has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy showers in parts of Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Gondia on Monday and Tuesday, the official said. Similarly, heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely at one or two places in Gondia, Nagpur, Wardha, Washim and Yavatmal districts of Vidarbha with an orange alert from Monday to Wednesday, the official said.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall along with thunderstorm and lightning may occur at one or two places in Nagpur, Bhandara, Akola, Buldhana, Washim, Amravati, Yavatmal and Wardha districts of Vidarbha in the next five days, he said. As per the forecast released at 1 pm, thunderstorms with lightning are very likely at isolated places over Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Nagpur and Bhandara. Light to moderate rainfall is very likely at many places in Akola, Washim; few places in Yavatmal and Amravati and isolated places in Bhandara, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Nagpur and Wardha districts, it stated. There was also a possibility of intense spells of rainfall at isolated places over Chandrapur and Gadchiroli.

As per official data, in the last 24 hours up to 8.30 am, Nagpur had recorded 108.7 mm rainfall, followed by Wardha with 100.4 mm, Gadchiroli with 83.4 mm and Yavatmal with 61 mm.

CM SHINDE SEEKS CENTRE'S AID IN AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION SECTORS

Maharashtra CM has sought Centre's support in the implementation of NEP and for agriculture sector. CM even highlighted the steps taken by the state for the implementation of NEP.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday urged the central government to increase the procurement limit for the minimum support price (MSP) be increased to 50 per cent of the production, and also sought its support in the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP).

Speaking at the Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog in New Delhi, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shinde highlighted the steps taken by the state for implementation of the NEP, and said his government was fully committed to effective rollout of this education policy. He also said that the cost norms need to be revised to boost the horticulture sector.

"In the mission for integrated development of horticulture, cost norms fixed in 2015 have not been changed. Project cost is significantly increasing due to the rise in prices of cement, iron and other raw material and it is no more affordable to farmers," he said.

He added the procurement limit for the MSP be increased to 50 per cent of the production. On the steps taken by the state government for implementation of the NEP, he said the state has made substantial progress in achieving universal access to elementary education.

"The state is fully committed to effective implementation of the NEP and has taken definitive steps in this direction. The gross enrolment ratio of Maharashtra has improved steadily in the last decade. The state is also promoting online and distant learning programmes," he said.

To make higher education affordable to everyone,



the state government is providing scholarships to the needy students from backward castes and economically weaker sections, he said, adding that Maharashtra will achieve the target of 50 per cent gross enrolment ratio well before 2035.

Mumbai police take three on remand in loan app scam case

The Mumbai Police have taken three fraudsters who were recently arrested by the economic offence wing (EOW) of Odisha crime branch on transit remand, in connection with an illegal loan app scam case, officials said on Sunday.

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

The Mumbai Police have taken three fraudsters who were recently arrested by the economic offence wing (EOW) of Odisha crime branch on transit remand, in connection with an illegal loan app scam case, officials said on Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Nitin Mallik of Delhi, Rakshith, and Sushanth of Karnataka. The officials of VP Road police station in Mumbai have taken Nitin on remand while the SDJM Court here on Saturday allowed the West Region Cyber Police Station, BKC Bandra, to take Rakshith and Sushanth on remand, an EOW official said.

On July 13, the EOW of Odisha police had arrest-

ed Mallik from Hari Nagar police station area of New Delhi while Rakshith and Sushanth were held from Karnataka on June 10.

The accused were the directors of different illegal shell companies. The shell companies were used to transfer money from the bank accounts attached with the fake loan apps to the accounts of Chinese nationals through different channels, an official said.

The officials also said the shell companies of Rakshith and Sushanth were used to make threatening and humiliating calls and send obscene messages to victim persons who had availed loans through illegal loan apps and their contacts through a call centre from Bangalore.

Similarly, Mallik with the connivance of 'Chinese masterminds' used to purchase and run virtual phone numbers of different service providers to be used for running and facilitating the lending and recovery through different loan apps.

Nitin Mallik was in direct and regular touch with at least three Chinese nationals and used to get a huge salary for this job, the EOW officials claimed.

Mumbai police take three on remand in loan app

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

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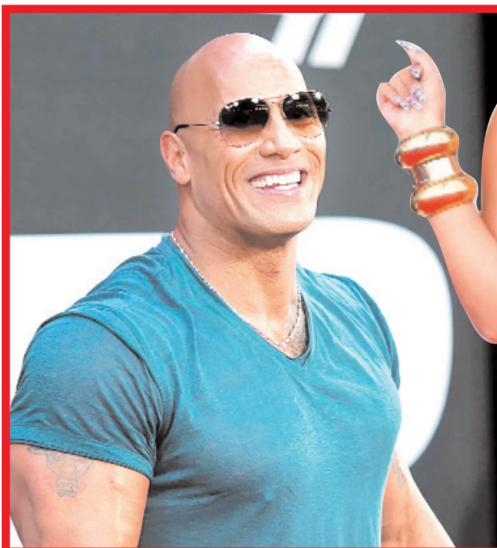
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MAHARASHTRA MONSOON SESSION OF LEGISLATURE TO BEGIN WEDNESDAY

Mumbai: Maharashtra on Monday issued a notice announcing that the monsoon session of the state legislature will be held from August 10 to 18.

The Maharashtra legislature secretariat has cancelled the public holiday on August 9 for preparations ahead of the monsoon session. The secretariat, in an order issued on Monday, has cancelled all holidays of employees between August 9 and 18 and has asked them to be present in office.



Dwayne 'The Rock' ridiculed after he says he'd be Megan Thee Stallion's pet

Los Angeles | Agencies

In a new interview, the actor eagerly said that he would be the 'Sweetest Pie' rapper's pet, reports aceshowbiz.com. Dwayne and Kevin Hart did an interview to promote their new movie 'DC League of Super-Pets'. During the interview, which was uploaded to the actor's Instagram page, Dwayne excitedly unveiled that he's willing to be Megan's dog. The actors were asked by the interviewer: "If you could be any celebrity's pet, who would you be?" Without skipping a beat,

Dwayne responded that his ideal owner would be hip-hop star Megan, prompting his co-star Kevin, who said that he'd love to be Denzel Washington's pet, to wince and cringe ever-so-slightly. In response, the interviewer said: "Oh, that's a good one. Why Megan Thee Stallion?" Reacting to the question, Dwayne, who tied the knot with Lauren Hashian in 2019, coyly said: "Oh, we don't need to talk about that." Shortly after, social media users reacted to The Rock's quick response.

"That response was fast as hell. He's been holding that in for a while!" one person commented on his post, with another said: "He been waiting his whole life to be asked that question lmaooooo." "He ain't take no time to say it" a third added. 'DC League of Super-Pets' is an animated film about the adventure of four-legged friends of legendary superheroes. Alongside Dwayne and Kevin, the movie boasts such A-listers as Kate McKinnon, John Krasinski and Keanu Reeves in the voice cast.



JANE FONDA SAYS JLO HELPED RESURRECT HER ACTING CAREER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jane Fonda has credited Jennifer Lopez for resurrecting her career after she went 15 years without landing a role. The 84-year-old activist and fitness guru made the admission while speaking about her decades long career as an actress. Despite her iconic status, Jane said it wasn't until her role alongside J-Lo in the 2005 film 'Monster-in-Law' that her career again got off the ground, reports aceshowbiz.com. Fonda deemed the movie the "only smart thing" she has ever done in her work career even though it was sneered at by the critics. Before it, she had not starred in a movie since 1990 when she played the title character in "Stanley and Iris" alongside Robert De Niro. The two-time Academy Award winner was quoted by Daily Mirror as saying: "The biggest stroke of luck was getting the role in 'Monster-in-Law' at a point in my career when I had been out of the acting business for 15 years or more." She went on to say, "It was with Jennifer Lopez, and it was a great comeback for me. I was almost 65 years old when I got this script out of the blue. It was the only smart career thing I ever did. I thought, 'People are going to come to the movie to see J.Lo, but they'll rediscover Fonda', and that's what happened." After the role alongside Jennifer, Fonda landed parts, including that of Nancy Reagan in 'The Butler' and Grace Hanson in Netflix's 'Grace and Frankie'. Fonda has also said that she feels more youthful aged 84 than she ever did in her 20s. She admitted that she felt "lost" when she was younger and was "very unhappy, old and didn't feel like I would live for very long".

Nicolas Cage didn't want to play himself in his action-comedy movie

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Nicolas Cage wasn't very keen on portraying himself in the action comedy movie 'The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent', which will soon drop on OTT. The movie directed by duo Tom Gormican and Kevin Etten is a sincere, authentic, and hilarious love letter to the actor, and gives an entertaining take on the actor's life. Talking about his initial reluctance to play the role, Nicolas said: "I had no interest in playing myself in a movie. But then I received a very nice letter from Tom, and I read his script. The first act really terrified me, and by the time I got to acts two and



three, I thought Tom is taking us on an adventure that is really quite exciting." The movie revolves around a fictionalised version of the actor who is forced to live up to his own legend, channelling his most iconic and beloved on-screen characters in order to save himself and his loved ones. He further shared how Tom Gormican's intriguing and off-kilter ideas drew him in: "I call Tom 'The Mind' because the film really is his fantasy, culled from perceptions in the media and on the internet, as well as blips in my personal life that have gone public. It's mixed with knowledge of interviews I've done and things that have always interested me and drew me down this path. Essentially, the film is an imagination based on Tom's interpretation of what my life might be like." 'The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent' will be available to stream on OTT platform Lionsgate Play from August 12.

DOLLY PARTON EXCITED TO LAUNCH NEW ROLLERCOASTER AT DOLLYWOOD

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Dolly Parton is launching a new roller coaster at Dollywood. The 76-year-old country icon opened the amusement park in her native Tennessee back in 1986. She announced that a brand new ride called The Big Bear Mountain will be launching in 2023 at a reported cost of \$25 million, reports aceshowbiz.com. Alongside a video teaser of the new ride, the Dollywood company tweeted: "Join Ned Oakley in Spring 2023 on our largest family adventure yet: Big Bear Mountain. This multi-launch coaster contains 3,990 ft. of track, expanding Wildwood Grove with a six-acre ride. Prepare for things to get BIG by watching our exclusive first look at ride animation." According to a press release, the Big Bear Mountain ride will feature "three separate launches, multiple air-time hills, high-speed carousel turns, and tunnels, including a pass behind a waterfall" and the 'Jolene' hit-maker took to social media herself to express her "excitement" that fans will be able to travel the Smoky Mountains themselves via the ride while referencing her 1994 song 'Smoky Mountain Memories'.



Jessica Chastain meets Ukrainian President in Kiev

Los Angeles | Agencies



Actress Jessica Chastain met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev amid the ongoing Russian invasion. Zelensky, a former actor and comedian, posted a photo on his official Telegram account showing him and the actress in the presidential palace on Sunday, reports nypost.com. "American actress Jessica Chastain was in Ukraine yesterday. For us, such visits of famous people are extremely

valuable," Zelensky wrote. "Thanks to this, the world will hear, know and understand the truth about what is happening in our country even more," the post said. Chastain also visited the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital, Ukrinform reported. The images showed the actress wearing all black, with her red hair pulled into a loose ponytail, smiling while posing with Zelensky in front of a Ukrainian flag. According to nypost, another shot showed Chastain looking concerned while sitting next to Zelensky at a table during what appeared to be an intense conversation.



Shawn Mendes celebrates his 24th b'day in Miami

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Shawn Mendes had an absolute blast on his 24th bday. The Grammy Award nominee, who turned a year older on Monday, kicked off his birthday at a Nightclub in Miami. Mendes had an "amazing time" partying with the 'Blinding Lights' hitmaker The Weeknd during the Dawn FM artist's surprise performance, reports 'People' magazine. "Shawn was in amazing spirits," a source told 'People' adding that he "looked super happy to be there, relaxed and just enjoying the environment". He hung out with friends in the DJ booth until The Weeknd arrived, during which he and DJ Kaytranada joined the artist onstage. Mendes was also photographed showing off his physique as he hit the beach in a pair of red swim trunks. He shared photos on Instagram of himself soaking up some sun with friends on the back of a yacht. 'People' further states that "The Wonder" artiste recently cancelled his world tour to ground himself and focus on his mental health last month shortly after postponing three weeks of shows.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Scarlett Johansson



CWG 2022

Sharath Kamal, Nikhat Zareen named flag-bearers for CWG closing ceremony

Birmingham | Agencies

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has selected table tennis ace Achantha Sharath Kamal and boxer Nikhat Zareen as India's flag-bearers for the closing ceremony of the 2022 Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

An IOA statement said on Monday that gold medalists in wrestling and weightlifting too were considered to do the honours but the contingents had left for India after the conclusion of their events.

"A shortlist of flag-bearers was drawn up by IOA secretary-general Rajeev Mehta, acting president Anil Khanna, and India's Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games chief de mission Rajesh Bhandari, with gold medalists from the wrestling and weightlifting teams also considered. The final decision was made by Mehta and Khanna. The fact that the wrestling and weightlifting teams have already left for India was also factored into the final stage of decision-making," the IOA



statement said.

IOA acting president Anil Khanna said, "It is with great pleasure we announce Achantha Sharath Kamal and Nikhat Zareen as our flag-bearers. Sharath has served table tennis brilliantly all these years and his medals, including a mixed doubles gold, at Birmingham 2022 speak of the class and

quality he brings to the highest stage along with his longevity.

"Zareen, the reigning world champion and India's gold medalist in the light flyweight boxing category at these Games is one of our best talents who continues to go from strength to strength, inspiring many, including young girls in India," he added.

SINDHU BAGS MAIDEN COMMONWEALTH GAMES SINGLES GOLD WITH COMMANDING PERFORMANCE

Birmingham | Agencies

PV Sindhu claimed her maiden women's singles gold medal in the Commonwealth Games defeating Michelle Li of Canada, the 2014 champion at Glasgow, in the final in straight games here on Monday.

Sindhu played aggressively, controlled the rallies well and did not give her opponent many chances as she won 21-15, 21-13 in the final at the show court in Hall No. 5 at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC).

"I was waiting for this gold for a long time, so I am super happy," said Sindhu in her on-court comments after receiving her first to acknowledge the sparse crowd.

This is Sindhu's second medal of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games after winning a silver in the Mixed Team competition. She had won gold and silver in Gold Coast.

This year, Sindhu had won the Syed Modi International



for the second time in January and then claimed the 2022 Swiss Open, defeating Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan in the final in straight games. She then won the Singapore Open title, beating Asian champion Wang Zhiyi of China in the final. In between, she also won bronze in the Badminton Asia Championships. On Monday, Sindhu start-

ed well and took an early lead in the first game, moving Michelle around with precise strokes. She was aggressive and made very few unforced errors.

Sindhu went up 3-1 and maintained her lead throughout the game and though Michelle caught up with her at 5-5, Sindhu surged ahead again and always maintained a 2-3 points advantage. She went into the break at 11-8,

mixing her smashes and half-smashes with disguised drop shots to keep the Canadian world No 13 -- the 2014 women's singles champion at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games -- on the back foot and struggling to keep up.

The Canadian played a superb cross-court smash but made an unforced error playing a tight drop, and that remained her story in the entire match.

Sindhu extended the lead to 18-14 and had her first game point at 20-15 which she converted easily to win the first game.

The second game went on similar lines as Sindhu took an early lead and Michelle Li played a bit more aggressively, creating some good opportunities but also making some unforced errors.

A shot sent wide after a good rally by Michelle Li gave Sindhu the match point and the 27-year-old from Hyderabad converted it with a fine smash to bag her maiden gold medal in singles in the Commonwealth Games.



ACHANTA SHARATH KAMAL WINS GOLD, SATHIYAN CLINCHES BRONZE IN MEN'S SINGLES TABLE TENNIS

Birmingham | Agencies

Veteran table tennis player Achantha Sharath Kamal on Monday won his fourth medal of the 2022 Commonwealth Games by clinching the gold medal in men's singles event in Birmingham.

Sharath defeated England's Liam Pitchford 11-13, 11-7, 11-2, 11-6, 11-8 to win his second men's singles gold medal in the Commonwealth Games, 16 years after he won in the event in Melbourne 2006 edition.

Earlier in the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Sharath won a gold medal in the men's team event, and followed it up with a silver in men's doubles and another gold in mixed doubles.

He will also be India's flag-bearer in the closing ceremony of the multi-nation event.

In the first set, Sharath had a game point but Pitchford, ranked 20 in the world, kept his cool to make a comeback and took the first game 12-10. Sharath got back to win-

ning ways by taking the second set 11-7. His experience of playing in high-pressure matches came to the fore as he took third game 11-2.

After taking the fourth game 11-6, Pitchford tried to pull back desperately with successive points. But Sharath eventually won the gold medal with a solid forehand to give India its 21st gold in the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Joining Sharath on the men's singles podium was Sathiyana Gnanasekaran, who won the bronze medal after overcoming England's Paul Drinkhall 11-9, 11-3, 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 10-12, 11-9 in a thrilling match.

The match started with Sathiyana winning the first three games easily. But Drinkhall ensured it was not a cake walk for the Indian paddler as he went on to win the next three games. The final game went right down the wire, but Sathiyana came back from 8-9 down to prevail over the local favourite in the end to win his first singles medal in the Commonwealth Games.



TABLE TENNIS: SHARATH KAMAL-SREEJA AKULA WIN MIXED DOUBLES GOLD

Birmingham | Agencies

India's Sharath Kamal and Sreeja Akula won the gold medal in the mixed doubles table tennis event at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, here on Sunday.

The India duo of Sharath and Sreeja, with a solid combination of experience and youth, beat Javen Choong and Karen Lynne of Malaysia 11-4, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6 to win the elusive gold medal. This was India's 18th

gold in Birmingham and fifth of the day after medals in boxing and athletics. This was also Sharath Kamal's third medal at the CWG 2022 after a gold in men's team event and silver in men's doubles alongside Sathiyana Gnanasekaran.

This was Sharath Kamal's first ever gold-medal win in a mixed doubles event in his illustrious career while for young Sreeja, she had bagged the prestigious medal in her maiden appearance at the CWG.

Wrestlers Dahiya, Phogat, Naveen win gold as India surge up in the table

Birmingham | Agencies

Olympic silver medallist Ravi Kumar Dahiya, star woman grappler Vinesh Phogat and 19-year-old wrestler Naveen claimed gold medals as the Indian juggernaut gathered pace on the shoulder of the mighty wrestlers as athletes Avinash Sable and Priyanka Goswami broke new grounds at Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games here on Saturday. Fellow wrestlers Pooja Sihag and Pooja Gehlot bagged bronze medals in their respective weight divisions while in lawn bowls, the Men's Fours, who emulated their women counterparts by reaching the final, had to be satisfied with a silver medal as they lost to Northern Ireland in the summit clash.

The Indian medal haul has been going at a slow but steady pace in the absence of shooting and archery and some unexpected performances in table tennis and badminton got a leg-up with the wrestlers adding three



more gold to the three they won on Friday. India are now placed fifth in the table behind Australia, England, Canada and New Zealand.

Boxer Jaismine lost in the semifinal and had to be satisfied with a bronze medal in the women's Lightweight (over 57kg-60kg) as did Muhammed Hasamuddin in Men's Featherweight (over 54kg-57kg) as he lost to Joseph Commye of Ghana 1-4 on points in the semifinals. Three boxers, world champion Nikhat Zareen, Nitu and Amit Panghal made it to the final and will be hoping to add more gold to the Indian tally.

The five medals in wrestling, two in athletics, two in boxing, and one in lawn bowls boosted India's tally to 36 -- 12 gold, 11 silver, and 13 bronze with many more set to be added in the next two days.

The day belonged to the wrestlers, especially Ravi Dahiya, Vinesh and Naveen who bagged three gold medals on Saturday.

Dahiya, a three-time Asian champion and a bronze medallist in World Championship, outclassed his Nigerian opponent Welson Ebikewenimo 10-0 on points in the Men's Freestyle 57 kg final. He started cautiously but got into his own after the referee gave him a warning for being too defensive. He claimed eight points in the next two minutes to seal victory.

Vinesh Phogat was also impressive in her win. The experienced wrestler completed a hat-trick of gold medals at the Commonwealth Games, by beating Sri Lanka's Chamodya Keshani Maduravalage Don in the

women's women's 53 kg final.

Earlier, Priyanka Goswami and Avinash Sable started the day for India with two unexpected silver medals. Priyanka became the first Indian woman race walker to win a silver medal in the Commonwealth Games when she finished second behind her Australian opponent in the women's 10 km walk.

Sable was even more awesome as he beat the Kenyan hegemony in the men's 3000m steeplechase, becoming the first non-Kenyan to win the medal at the Commonwealth Games since 1994. He finished the race in 8:11.15 between two Kenyans.

Indian lawn bowlers continued to make history as the Men's Fours added a silver to the historic gold medal won by the Women's Fours a couple of days ago. The quartet of Chandan Kumar Singh, Dinesh Kumar, Navneet Singh, and Sunil Bahadur put up a good fight but went down 5-18 to Northern Ireland at the Royal Leamington Spa.

LAKSHYA SEN GETS INDIA'S 20TH GOLD MEDAL AFTER BEATING NG TZE YONG IN MEN'S SINGLES BADMINTON

Birmingham | Agencies

Shuttler Lakshya Sen clinched India's 20th gold medal in the 2022 Commonwealth Games after beating Malaysia's Tze Yong Ng 19-21, 21-9 and 21-16 in the men's singles final on Monday.

In his debut outing in the multi-nation event, Lakshya, 20, came back incredibly well after losing the first set to become the fourth Indian shuttler to win a gold medal in men's singles category after Prakash Padukone (1978), Syed Modi (1982) and Parupalli Kashyap (2014).

It also means that India have first and third podium finish in men's singles badminton after Kidambi Srikanth clinched bronze medal after defeating Jia Heng Teh of Singapore 21-15,

21-18. Earlier in the day, badminton ace PV Sindhu won her maiden gold medal in women's singles, defeating Michelle Li of Canada 21-15, 21-13.

In the first set, Lakshya brought out his trademark flick shots to take a 7-6 lead. But Tze Yong took a two-point lead at mid-game interval and continued to lead by one and three points before Lakshya levelled it at 18-18. But Tze Yong came back to take first set 21-19 as Lakshya was on backfoot.

In the second set, Tze Yong continued to completely dictate terms with a 8-6 lead as Lakshya started to run out of ideas. But suddenly, Lakshya hit three straight points to enter the second set mid-game interval leading by two points.

Errors continued to come for

Tze Yong as Lakshya won 12 of the last 13 points to be in lead at 18-9 and eventually took the second set 21-9 in a sensational comeback. In the decider set, both Lakshya and Tze Yong were tied at 3-3.

From there, Lakshya hit several body smashes and forced Tze Yong to make errors for taking a four-point lead at mid-game interval. Lakshya got a five-point lead with a blazing smash down the line and Tze Yong hitting straight on net.

An amazing jump smash winner from Lakshya and Tze Yong hitting one wide put the Indian on the verge of winning the gold medal.

He duly finished off the match in his favour with a cross-court drop to seal a come-from-behind win in an hour and 20 minutes.

CRICKET: INDIA CLINCH SILVER MEDAL AFTER LOSING TO AUSTRALIA BY NINE RUNS



Birmingham:

A captain's knock from Harmanpreet Kaur and some terrific bowling as well as fielding performance wasn't enough

for India to get the gold medal in 2022 Commonwealth Games at Edgbaston on Sunday. Harmanpreet made 65 off 43 balls and also shared a 96-run stand for third wicket with Jemimah Rodrigues. But the inability of recovering from losing a flurry of wickets taken by Ashleigh Gardner and Megan Schutt meant India clinched the silver medal in their maiden outing in the multi-nation games, losing by nine runs, the exact same margin by which they had lost the 2017 ODI World Cup final to England at Lord's.

Brief Scores: Australia 161-8 in 20 overs (Beth Mooney 61, Meg Lanning 36; Renuka Singh 2-25, Sneha Rana 2-38) beat India 152 all out in 19.3 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 65, Jemimah Rodrigues 33; Ashleigh Gardner 3-16, Megan Schutt 2-27) by nine runs

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty win gold medal in badminton men's doubles

Birmingham | Agencies

India's men's doubles badminton pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty on Monday won the gold medal in the 2022 Commonwealth Games after defeating England's Ben Lane and Sean Vandy 21-15 and 21-13.

Through their straight-sets victory in the gold-medal match, Satwik and Chirag added another Commonwealth Games medal to their kitty after the silver medal in the last Games in 2018 Gold Coast. They also became the first Indian pair to claim the gold medal in men's doubles category at the Commonwealth Games.

The victory also meant that India has now won three gold medals and sixth overall in badminton at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Earlier on Monday, ace shuttler PV Sindhu and rising youngster Lakshya Sen clinched the gold medal in women's singles and men's singles competitions respectively.

Satwik and Chirag were part of the Indian team that won the historic Thomas Cup title earlier this year in Bangkok. They were also a part of the mixed team event at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, where India finished with a silver medal after losing to Malaysia in the final.

The match was off to a tight 5-5 start in the first set. But from there, it

was one-way traffic as Satwik and Chirag began to dominate the England duo, forcing them to run out of ideas and take the first set 21-15.

In the second set, just like the first set, things were even at 7-7. But Satwik and Chirag took a slender lead at the mid-game interval with 11-10 in the second set.

From there, the Indian duo built their lead quickly as the local England duo had no answers to questions asked by Satwik and Chirag. Eventually, Satwik and Chirag sealed the second set at 21-13 to fetch India their third successive gold medal from badminton on a medal rush Monday.



INDIAN MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM SETTELES WITH SILVER

Birmingham: The Indian men's hockey team came up with a disjointed and spirited performance as it went down 0-7 to world No. 1 Australia in the final at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

The Indians, who had reached the final for the first time since 2014, had to be satisfied with the silver medal as they found the Aussies too strong to handle and quietly accepted the spanking, coming close only on a few occasions to trouble the Aussie goalkeeper. Nathan Ephraums (14th, 42nd min) and Jacob Anderson (22nd, 27th min) scored a brace each for Australia while Blake Govers (9th min), Tom Wickham (22nd) and Flynn Ogilvie (46th min) contributed one goal each to the Kookaburras' score. Australia have never lost the final since the sport was introduced at Kuala Lumpur in 1998. This is India's third defeat in the Commonwealth Games men's hockey final. The Aussies went on the attack from the start and earned two penalty corners in the first few minutes of the first quarter. The Indian defenders stopped them on both occasions but once Blake Govers converted the penalty corner, the floodgates seemed to open as Australia led by two goals at the end of the first quarter and 5-0 at halftime.



SHEHNAAZ GILL UNFOLLOWS SALMAN KHAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shehnaaz Gill is one of the leading actresses in the entertainment industry. She rose to fame from the reality show, Bigg Boss 13, hosted by Salman Khan. Salman Khan and Shehnaaz Gill share quite the bond and it has been on display on multiple occasions.

Recently, reports were rife that she is very much a part of Salman Khan's upcoming film Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali which is now titled Bhaijaan. Although the Punjabi heartthrob never issued an official statement regarding the same, it was said that Shehnaaz also started shooting for the movie.

But as per the latest reports, it has been said that Shehnaaz Gill has unfollowed Salman from her Instagram account which sparked buzz about Shehnaaz not being a part of the film anymore.

However, a source close to the development clarified to an entertainment portal that, these are merely rumours and she is very much a part of the film.

Ever since its inception, be it for title change or actors leaving the film midway, the flick has been grabbing attention. Earlier, Ayush Sharma also left the project due to alleged creative differences with the production house.

The film is being helmed by Farhad Samji, and also stars Jassie Gill, Siddharth Nigam and Raghav Juyal, and Pooja Hegde in key roles.

PC shares an adorable picture of her cute little family

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas are now embracing their newfound parental status. Malti Marie Jonas Chopra was born to the couple via surrogacy in January of this year. While the actress has been careful not to reveal the identity of her baby, she just shared a sweet family photo on her Instagram story with her husband Nick and daughter Malti Marie. A heart emoji covers the baby's face, as expected. The family of three can be seen lounging inside a pool in the shot, which PeeCee shared.

On January 22, Priyanka and Nick announced the news on Instagram, along with a photo of their baby, who had spent 100 days in the NICU. "We are overjoyed to confirm that we have welcomed a baby via surrogate. We respectfully ask for privacy during this special time as we focus on our family. Thank you so much," at the time, the pair issued a joint Instagram message. Meanwhile, Priyanka's mother, Madhu Chopra, hinted recently in an interview with a leading news portal that the couple will be sharing their baby's face soon. Malti Marie Chopra Jonas, Priyanka's kid, is named after her mother, Madhumalti Chopra, or Madhu Chopra. In response, Madhu stated that it was a wonderful surprise and that she first found out about the name on the day of the Naam-Karan, and she felt honoured.



Sara Ali Khan says "Jet Lag is real"

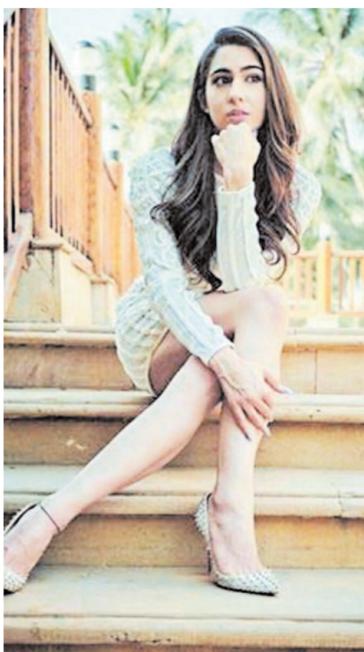
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sara Ali Khan is one of the most promising young actors in Bollywood. She is one of the few new-gen actors who has shone and proven her flexibility right from the start. Sara, aside from being an actor, enjoys travelling, as seen by her numerous posts on social media. She frequently takes her admirers on virtual tours of the exotic places she has visited. Meanwhile, in her most recent video, the actress appears to be jet-lagged as she travels from one time zone to another within the United States.

Sara posted a video to her Instagram stories of herself standing with her bags as she landed in Atlanta, Georgia.

She is seen sipping coffee from her coffee mug while wearing a green co-ord outfit. Sara, who shared the video, wrote: "I truly 'woke up' like this... Jet Lag is real." After a few hours, Sara again shared a video from Pleasanton, California in the same outfit and pillow in her hand. She captioned the video "Many hours later... Clearly, I'm loyal to the pillow and the outfit #traveldiaries." Sara recently travelled to Florence, Italy, with her mother, actress Amrita Singh, and famous stylist Tanya Ghavri. She posted a photo with her brothers Ibrahim and Jeh, as well as her father, Saif.

She wrote in the caption, "Keeping up with the Pataudi's..."



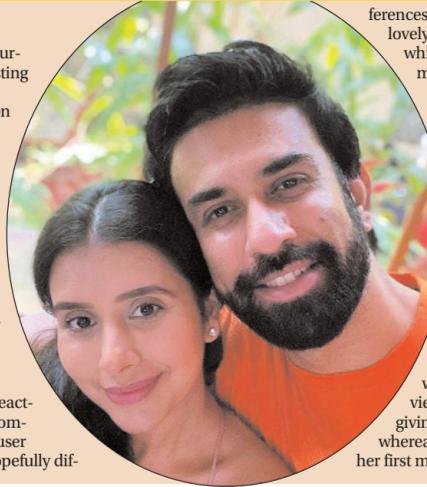
Rajeev shares happy selfie with Charu amid divorce rumours

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On Sunday, Rajeev Sen surprised everyone by posting a picture with his estranged wife Charu Asopa on his social media handle amid the separation rumours.

Rajeev Sen took to his Instagram handle on Sunday and uploaded an adorable selfie with his estranged wife Charu Asopa, which took everyone by surprise. He captioned the picture with a rose emoji. The new picture has left fans perplexed as they wonder if the duo are back together.

Soon after the picture went viral online, netizens started reacting to it, as evident from the comments section. An Instagram user wrote, "God bless you both hopefully dif-



ferences sorted out for the sake of your lovely little angel and yourselves too", while another one commented, "Be mature guys differences sab m hote h.... these r the chapters of life u have to read each and every page" and many dropped hearts to the post.

For the unversed, Rajeev and Charu had tied the knot on June 7, 2019. Later, on November 1, 2021, they had embraced parenthood for the first time with the arrival of their baby girl, Ziana. Everything was going well between them. However, on June 7, 2022, Charu had sent a legal notice to Rajeev to part ways amicably. During an interview, Charu accused Rajeev of not giving enough time to the family, whereas Rajeev blamed her of hiding her first marriage.



Katrina Kaif's upcoming shoot location shifted

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A few days back, a massive fire broke down at the Chitrakoot ground. At the ground, set of Luv Ranjan's next yet-untitled starring Ranbir Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor was mounted. Right next to the set of director Luv Ranjan's film Beside it, Katrina Kaif's Merry Christmas was being shot.

However, owing to the tragedy that took place, producer Ramesh Taurani has now shifted the shoot location. Confirming the same with an entertainment portal, producer Ramesh Taurani told, "The fire and police department has sealed the studio. We have dismantled the set from there and will be shooting our film at another studio". The film will now be shot at Vrindavan studios in Mumbai.

Directed by Sriram Raghavan, Merry Christmas also stars South actor Vijay Sethupathi in the lead. The film is likely to hit theatres next year.



Kartik Aaryan celebrates friendship day with pet Katori

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kartik Aaryan celebrated Friendship Day in the sweetest way imaginable on social media on Sunday. On Instagram, the 'Dhamaka' actor shared a sweet reel video with the caption, "Its

#TeraYaarHoonMain day. Happy Friendship day."

In the video, the 31-year-old actor can be seen playing with his beloved dog Katori, with the song 'Tera Yaar Hoon Main' from the film 'Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety' playing in the background.



Chahatt Khanna