

# absolute india

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## Amrit Mahotsav: 75th anniversary of India's Independence

Mysuru: Students with Tri color flags during Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav as part of 75th Independence day celebrations, in Mysuru.

# THE GROWING CYBER THREAT TO INDIA FROM FAR EAST

In an article in June, a well-known website called Threat Post said that Radware, through a new advisory, pointed out that a hacker group called Dragonforce Malaysia, with the help of several other groups, was indiscriminately scanning, defining and denigrating several websites in India. It was also said to have launched off-service attacks. It called its campaign "OpsPatuk". Advanced threat actors were involved in these attacks. The group's intention was to breach the network and leak sensitive data.

Dragonforce Malaysia is an anonymous hacker group. It is associated with political goals. Their social media channels and website forums are open. Thousands of people follow and watch it. In the past, this Malaysian group has launched attacks against organisations and government entities in the Middle East and Asia. Its favourite target has been Israel and it has carried out several serious attacks on Tel Aviv and Israeli organisations.

Like Anonymous and Low Orbit Ion Cannon, Dragonforce weapons its own open source DoS tools -- Slowloris, DDoSTool, DDoS-Ripper, Hammer, and more -- in choreographed, engaging website defences. Experts say that this group is not sophisticated, but seeing its attacks, it seems that it would be foolish to consider it a childish and amateurish group. Dragonforce Malaysia and its allies have proved their ability to adapt and evolve with the threat landscape over the past year.

Dr Shujaat Ali Quadri | New Delhi

Around 2,000 Indian websites were hacked in June-July 2022 alone. This is one of the most serious cyber attacks on India in the recent past. Following this, Amit Wadhwa, DCP of Ahmedabad's Cyber Police, wrote a letter to the Indonesian and Malaysian governments as well as to Interpol. In this letter, two cyber groups 'Dragonforce Malaysia' and 'Hacker Indonesia' were held responsible for hacking 2000 websites of India, while handling electronic gadgets sitting in Indonesia and Malaysia. Both these groups also appealed to the rest of the hacker groups of the world to hack the websites operating from India. These groups also put the personal information of suspended Bharatiya Janata Party leader Nupur Sharma on the website. Apart from the Andhra Pradesh Police, the personal information of many leaders of India was also made common. This was the first open case of hatred

towards India and cyber attacks from these two Muslim-majority countries of the Far East. Obviously, this development occurred after that irresponsible statement of Nupur Sharma and Muslim groups from Indonesia and Malaysia carried out these cyber attacks in retaliation.

The International Institute for Counter Terrorism (IICT) released the report titled 'Islamic State's Support to Hacktivists in Southeast Asia'. It said that hacktivism activities have increased in Southeast Asia, including website defacement, distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks and information leaks. One group using this tactic is the United Cyber Caliphate (UCC), which operates with the support of the Islamic State (IS) terror group.

IS has increased cyber activity in Southeast Asia because of loss of its core territory in Iraq and Syria because of its physical expansion into the region. Presence of poverty, unemployment and salafi ideology in Southeast Asia has led to IS finding supporters in this region. This is

enough to incite bigotry among the youth of this area.

The report says that cyber development in Southeast Asia has been rapid but cyber security is weak. Taking advantage of this, any knowledgeable person can use this area for cyber attacks. With the increasing societal reliance on connection techniques and the presence of a group of hacktivists, these elements will pose a real threat for years to come. Considering all the facts, it is known that the Far East has now become a new ground for cyber attacks against India. Statements like that of Nupur Sharma also help such groups to rationalise their activities and influence vulnerable youths. The growing hatred for India in the Far East, the rise of new cyber hacktivists, and support for Islamic State make up a worrisome combination. This is a new front where India will have to wage a new war.

*(The author is a known expert of Cyber Security and Information Warfare and holds a PhD in Artificial Intelligence)*

## Pak to attend counter-terror drills in India for 1st time



Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan has confirmed that it will attend the international counter-terrorism exercises in India later this year despite simmering tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. The counter-terrorism exercises are scheduled to be held in October in Manesar, Haryana, under the banner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), The Express Tribune reported.

Pakistan and India are part of the regional body that also includes China, Russia and Central Asian Republics (CARs).

While Pakistan and Indian military contingents have taken part in counter-terrorism exercises together, this will be the first time that Pakistan will be attending such drills in India, The Express Tribune reported.

At the weekly briefing, Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Asim Iftikhar confirmed Pakistan's participation.

"Yes, there will be exercises under the ambit of SCO RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure)," the spokesperson said, adding that India was chairing the SCO RATS this year. "These exercises are scheduled to be held

There was renewed optimism for a possible breakthrough when there was a change of government in April in Pakistan. There were quick exchanges between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, but things could not move further.

The two leaders will have at least two opportunities in the coming weeks for possible interactions. Both Modi and Shehbaz will be first attending the SCO summit in Samarkand and then the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session.

in India in Manesar in October, and as Pakistan is a member, we will participate," he confirmed. "At what level, I think when we approach that, we will let you know," the spokesperson added.

The move will be seen as significant given the deepening tensions between the two countries. Pakistan downgraded its relationship with India after New Delhi revoked the special status of the illegally occupied Kashmir region in August 2019.

Since then, there has been no structured dialogue between the two sides though backchannel talks did produce a renewal of ceasefire understanding in February last year.

The truce is still holding but there is no progress or indication of any thaw in the relationship. In fact, backchannel talks have met a dead end with both sides sticking to their respective positions, The Express Tribune reported.

## The Academy calls 'Laal Singh Chaddha' a 'faithful Indian adaptation'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan's latest release 'Laal Singh Chaddha', which is a remake of the iconic Hollywood film 'Forest Gump', got a thumbs up from The Academy. The official Twitter account of The Academy, which recognises excellence in the motion picture arts and sciences, shared a video compilation of snippets from 'Forest Gump' and the Aamir Khan-starrer.

A tweet from The Academy called the Bollywood film a "faithful Indian adaptation".

"Robert Zemeckis and Eric Roth's sweeping story of a man who changes the world with kindness receives a faithful Indian adaptation



in Advait Chandan and Atul Kulkarni's 'Laal Singh Chaddha' feat. Aamir Khan in the role made famous by Tom Hanks," read the tweet.

The Academy's twitter handle also mention the number of Oscars nominations 'Forest Gump' had. '1994's 'Forrest Gump' was nominated for 13 Oscars including six wins for: ac Best Actor (Tom Hanks) ac Directing (Robert Zemeckis) ac Film Editing (Arthur Schmidt) ac Best Picture (Wendy Finerman, Steve Tisch and Steve Starkey, Producers) ac Adapted Screenplay (Eric Roth)". Released on August 11, 'Laal Singh Chaddha' also stars Kareena Kapoor Khan, Naga Chaitanya and Mona Singh.

## WOMEN'S T20 CRICKET SUCCESS IN CWG COULD ENABLE GAME'S ENTRY INTO LA OLYMPICS

Niharika Raina | New Delhi

The debut of women's T20 cricket at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham had all the ingredients for why it could lead to the games entry into the Olympics, especially in the 2028 edition at Los Angeles, 128 years after it featured for the first and last time -- albeit only for men -- in an Olympics at Paris 1900.

Women's T20 cricket in the Commonwealth Games had all the limelight to itself, especially with no men's event in the competition. The last time cricket was in the Commonwealth Games, it was a men's List A event in the 1998 edition in Kuala Lumpur. The Edgbaston Cricket Ground, the host to women's T20 event at Birmingham, and women's cricket



have some history between them. In 1973, it hosted the first-ever women's Cricket World Cup final between England and Australia, two years before the men's Cricket World Cup came into frame.

Cut to the present, and with the Edgbaston crowd treated to enthralling cricketing action which concluded in Australia taking the gold medal, it could well be the time which could push cricket's entry into the Olympics arena. With the International Cricket Council (ICC) invited to give a presentation on the sport's inclusion, the rollicking action which happened from July 29 to August 7 in the Commonwealth Games will be very fresh in the minds of the observers on what cricket can bring to a multi-sport event.



# CULTIVATION OF MAIZE, MUSTARD, MOONG TO BE PROMOTED: ICAR

Chandigarh | Agencies

Cultivation of maize, mustard, and moong need to be promoted in a big way across the country and this must be accompanied by adoption of modern technology in the agriculture sector, said Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Deputy Director General A.K. Singh on Saturday.

Favouring that the crop diversification must be promoted in a big way, Singh at an ICAR consultation meeting here, said instead of focusing on wheat and rice, cultivation of 3Ms -- maize, moong and mustard -- should be promoted as it can help the country attaining self-sufficiency and enhancing the income of the farmers.



participation of policymakers, industry players and farmers, among others.

R.G. Agarwal, Chairman of the Dhanuka Group, emphasised the

need for the adoption of integrated crop management practices, usage of modern technology and quality agri-inputs.

Earlier setting the tone for meeting, Rajbir Singh, Director ICAR-Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ATARI) said: "This is the first time a national-level consultation meeting is being organised in association with a private sector and hope the recommendation from here would help farmers overcoming the issue of pest and various crop diseases."

Alluding to the need for adopting integrated pest management, Subhash Chander, ICAR-NCIPM Director, said, "Farmers would benefit immensely by adopting integrated pest management techniques and it needs to be adopted in a holistic manner."

Sujay Rakshit, ICAR-IIMR Director, said the diversification of crops is the need of the hour and cultivation of short duration crops will also help farmers in a big way.

# Intelligence Bureau issues 5 fresh alerts ahead of I-Day

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) has issued five fresh alerts, warning of a possible terror strike in the national capital and several cities, ahead of the Independence Day.

The IB had earlier warned about a possible terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir by IS-affiliated new terror outfit Lashkar-e-Khalsa.

First alert: The law enforcement agencies have been warned that terrorists could use IEDs during the flag hoisting ceremony which will be held on August 15 at the Red Fort.

A lot of drones might enter several cities including Delhi from Pakistan border through Punjab.

This was learnt during the questioning of terrorists who were arrested in the recent past. A few terrorists had even claimed that a lot of drones had entered India through Punjab. Second alert: Through drones, a lot of



arms and explosives such as AK-47, hand grenades, pistols and gun-powder have been sent. In the recent past, BSF officials had also intercepted such a delivery in Punjab.

Third alert: The police have been told to stay prepared to avoid lone wolf types of attack which could take place in the national capital. Through lone wolf attack, a single person may carry out attack using big vehicles, sharp edged weapons and arms. Big vehicles could be used to mow down a lot of people.

Fourth alert: With the changes in technology, the terrorists may attack the Red Fort through flying objects which could be in the form of

flying kites. Due to this, it has been suggested to put a complete ban on flying objects near Red Fort.

Fifth alert: A directive to keep an eye on Baisakhi festival has been issued. The security agencies have said that terrorists may carry out attack using festival items. Sikhs For Justice, Jaish-e-Mohammed, IS Khorasan module may carry out the attack.

Last week, the agencies had said that Lashkar-e-Khalsa had been specially formed by the IS to carry out terror activities in India.

Afghan fighters are part of Lashkar-e-Khalsa group which recently has been created.

# 'Thoda Intezar Ka Maza Lijiye': Tejashwi's retort to BJP on 10 lakh job promise



Patna | Agencies

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday responded in kind to the BJP's "Kya Hua Tera Vaada" jibe over his RJD's 10 lakh job promise.

After returning from Delhi, the RJD leader said: "We are committed to give jobs which

we have promised to the people of Bihar but what about you (Narendra Modi government). You have promised 2 crore jobs per year. Where are 16 crore jobs in the last 8 years?"

To the BJP leaders like Giriraj Singh, Sanjay Jaiswal, Tar Kishore Prasad, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Sushil Kumar Modi and others, who had raised the 10 lakh job promise during the 2020 Assembly election, asking "Kya Hua Tera Vaada", Tejashwi Yadav replied: "Thora Intezar ka Maza Lijiye." He had earlier said that the Bihar government under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will have bumper recruitment in the next one month after the vote of trust is done.

"We have discussed the cabinet expansion with the top leaders of the Mahagathbandhan including Lalu Prasad Yadav, Sonia Gandhi, Sitaram Yechury, Dipankar Bhattacharya and we are working on it," Tejashwi Yadav said.

The cabinet expansion is expected to take place on August 16 and all seven parties will be adjusted in the cabinet. Sources have said that the Nitish Kumar government has set a formula of one minister for every four MLAs. As per this, the RJD will get 18 ministers, the JD-U 12, the Congress 4, the CPI-ML 3, the HAM 1, the CPI-M or the CPI will get 1, and one Independent will be accommodated.

# MURMU TO ADDRESS NATION ON EVE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

New Delhi:

President Droupadi Murmu will address the nation on the eve of the 75th Independence Day on August 14.

This will be her first address after assuming the office of the President.

The address will be broadcast from 7 p.m. on the entire national network of All India Radio (AIR) and telecast over all channels of Doordarshan in Hindi followed by the English version.

The broadcast of the address in Hindi and English on Doordarshan will be followed by broadcast in regional languages by regional channels of Doordarshan.

The AIR will broadcast regional language versions at 9.30 p.m. on its respective regional networks.



# 'One MLA, One Pension' will save Rs 100 crore: Punjab CM

Chandigarh | Agencies

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said the notification implementing 'One MLA, One Pension' will not only reform the political system but also expected to save around Rs 100 crore during his party's current tenure.

Governor Banwari Lal Purohit gave nod to the gazette notification of 'One MLA, One Pension' amendment.

In a statement, the Chief Minister said in the last 75 years, the elected representatives have turned into political executives by drawing extravagant salaries and pensions from the state exchequer.

He said the entire burden of the pension facility extended to these leaders is met by taxpayers. "Their money is misused to fill the pockets of these leaders instead of being used for public welfare."

He said it is also a humble tribute by his government to the great



freedom fighters and iconic heroes of Indian independence movement who had laid their lives for the nation to create a society based on equality.

Mann said his government will make every possible effort to cherish their aspirations and restore the glory of state as 'Rangla Punjab'.

"The politics is service of people," he said, adding while doing it there is no need for the huge pensions for the MLAs and that too for every term.

He said the MLAs have entered politics willingly to serve the people and they have no moral responsibility to claim multiple pensions in exchange for this service.

# SHAH FAESAL APPOINTED DEPUTY SECRETARY IN TOURISM MINISTRY

New Delhi:

Shah Faesal, who had resigned from the IAS to join politics, has been appointed Deputy Secretary in the Tourism Ministry. In an order issued two days ago, the Department of Personnel and Training appointed Faesal in the Tourism Ministry. Recently, Faesal had given an application seeking reinstatement in the services, which was accepted by the Union government. After two months, the Central government has given this responsibility to Faesal.

Faesal had topped the IAS examination in 2010. After resigning from the services in 2019, Faesal had floated the Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement party.

However in 2020, Faesal quit politics and started giving



# Cong Presidential poll process set to begin this month, no clarity on Rahul's role

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress Presidential poll process is set to get underway this month but there is no clarity yet on Rahul Gandhi, who demitted his office in 2019, re-assuming the charge.

Apparently, Congress is contemplating other names as well.

However, sources said that former party President Rahul Gandhi has lined up a series of meeting with state units. He also plans to visit every district in the country in the run-up to the general elections. The plan is yet to be finalised.

Besides Rahul Gandhi, another name doing rounds is Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. It is being said that he is not keen on leaving the state. But



Rahul Gandhi's insistence on a non-Gandhi taking over the position has left the party in a dilemma. Leaders close to Rahul Gandhi have been trying to convince him to re-assume the post. The Congress Working

Committee members have appealed many times to Rahul Gandhi to take over as the president of the party, but he has been reluctant. Senior Congress leader Ambika Soni said: "All the members were unanimous that Rahul

Gandhi should take over as president of the Congress party." The CWC has given the go-ahead to the internal elections of the party.

The CWC had approved the organisational elections and the schedule has been decided.

The election of the PCC President, Vice President, Treasurer, and PCC Executive and AICC Members by the PCC general body is scheduled to be over by August 20.

The election of the AICC president is slated to be held between August 21 and September 20.

The election of CWC members and other bodies by AICC members during the preliminary session (date to be announced later) will preferably be held in September-October.

# SONIA GANDHI TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID AGAIN

New Delhi:

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday tested positive for Covid-19 and is in isolation as per protocol.

"Congress President Smt Sonia Gandhi has tested positive for Covid-19 today. She will remain in isolation as per Govt. protocol," informed party's general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh in a tweet. Earlier, she had tested positive for the virus in June. On Wednesday, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also announced that she had tested positive for Covid infection, for the second time in three months.

Meanwhile, India on Saturday reported 15,815 new Covid infections and 68 deaths in the past 24 hrs, as per Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's data on Saturday.



# J&K GOVT SACKS BITTA KARATE'S WIFE, SYED SALAHUDDIN'S SON FROM SERVICE

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday sacked four officials, including JKLF terrorist Bitta Karate's wife and the son of Syed Salahuddin, the chief commander of Hizbul Mujahideen.

The action has been taken under article 311 of the Indian Constitution. Those sacked are -- Dr Muheet Ahmad Bhat (Scientist-D in post-graduate Department of Computer Science, University of Kashmir), Majid Hussain Qadri, (Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, University of Kashmir), Syed Abdul Mueed, (Manager IT, JKEDI) and Assabah-ul-Arjmand Khan, (Publicity officer in Directorate of Rural Development, Kashmir). Arjmand Khan is the wife of JKLF terrorist, Bitta Karate who is facing trial for the murders of Kashmiri Pandits. Syed Abdul Mueed is the son of Hizbul Mujahideen chief, Syed Saluhuddin.

# India logs 15,815 new Covid cases, 68 deaths

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In the last 24 hours, India reported 15,815 new Covid-19 cases and 68 deaths, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

With the new fatalities, the nationwide death toll now stands at 5,26,996.

The active caseload marginally declined to 1,19,264, accounting for 0.27 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

The recovery of 20,018 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,35,93,112. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.54 per cent.

While the daily positivity rate also declined to 4.36 per cent, the weekly positivity rate stood at 4.79 per cent.

Also in the same period, a total of 3,62,802 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 87.99 crore.



As of Saturday morning, India's Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 207.71 crore, achieved via 2,75,92,966 sessions. Over 3.97 crore adolescents have been administered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.

# NIZAM-ERA BUS STEALS SHOW AT TSRTC PARADE

Hyderabad | Agencies

A Nizam-era bus, manufactured by Albion company of the UK, was the centre of attraction at the bus parade organised here on Saturday by the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).

The red-color bus, which was part of the first fleet of 27 buses introduced by the Nizam State Rail and Road Transport Department (NSRRTD) in 1932, was repaired and decked up for the occasion with the national flags.

The 19-seater bus, with the destination 'Nanded' displayed prominently on the front, led the parade on Tank Bund in the heart of the city. This antique bus is a prized possession of the TSRTC and is displayed outside Bus Bhavan, the head office of the corporation.



The buses which were part of the parade included the current luxury fleet of Garuda and Rajdhani.

Organised as part of the ongoing celebrations to mark 75 years of India's independence, the parade highlighted the long history of the corporation. The parade, comprising

music bands and motor-cycles, was flagged off at Rotary Park at the Vivekananda Statue and concluded at the Ambedkar Statue. Hundreds of TSRTC employees carrying national flags on their two-wheeled participated in the parade.

# Woman gang-raped in Assam; 1 held

Guwahati | Agencies

A woman has been allegedly raped by four persons including three minor boys on the outskirts of Assam's Morigaon town, the police said on Saturday.

The incident took place around 10 days ago.

Morigaon district Superintendent of Police (SP) Aparna Natarajan told IANS that of the four accused, at least three are juvenile.

The victim has alleged that the entire act on a mobile phone. One accused has been apprehended by the police on Saturday and he is being questioned. Another accused is absconding and the police are looking for them.

Meanwhile, the police are also conducting operations to identify the other two accused. According to police



sources, the victim's husband lives in Arunachal Pradesh, and there was uneasiness in the family once the woman informed them about the incident. The case was reported late due to the family dispute. It was also reported that the incident took place at a cremation ground. Natarajan, however, said this could not be confirmed as of now. The police officer also said that they have been investigating whether the video that was shot by the accused was circulated or not.

“ True patriotism hates injustice in its own land more than anywhere else.”



Clarence Darrow

# absolute india

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NTA SAYS, CANDIDATES WHO MISSED EXAMS IN PHASE 2 TO BE ALLOWED IN PHASE 6 FOR

## CUET 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Testing Agency on Saturday said that candidates who could not take the CUET UG exams in the second phase will be allowed in phase six.

In a statement, the NTA said: "Those candidates who could not take the examination in Phase 2 conducted on 04, 05, and 06 August 2022 either due to technical reasons or due to cancellation of the Centre, will be allowed to appear in Phase 6 which will be held from 24 to 30 August 2022."

Information regarding the cities and dates of examinations will be sent on Saturday and the Admit cards will be released on August 20.

The National Testing Agency is conducting Common University Entrance Test [CUET (UG)] - 2022 from July 15 onwards at 489 examination centres located in 259 cities across the country and nine cities outside.

Phases 1, 2, and 3 involving about 6.31 lakh candidates are now over. Admit Cards for the candidates who



will be appearing for the fourth phase scheduled on August 17, 18, or 20 are being released.

A total of 3.72 lakh candidates will be appearing in Phase 4. Most of the candidates have been given cities of their choice.

However, there are about 11,000 candidates who could not be given their choice and have been moved to

Phase 6. Their examination will be held on August 30. They have also been intimated about their city of examination and exact date.

Some of the candidates who were originally scheduled to take the Examination in Phase 3, on August 7, 8, 10, were informed through their Admit Cards that they will be taking the Examination on August 21, 22,

and 23. Their Admit Cards mentioning the centres of examination will be released on August 17. However, their dates and cities of exams are being given.

NTA with the support of UGC and AICTE has increased its capacity by adding more centre capacity and new institutes are also added as Examination Centres so that the quality of Centre is enhanced and it adds to the experience of candidate in taking the examination.

It has also been decided to station additional technical manpower by deploying the faculty of Associate Professor Level as Technical Observer at every Centre to ensure smooth running of the examination.

NTA said it has also received some e-mails regarding digital glitches faced by individual candidates during previous phase as well as requests for change of date, centre, city and re-examination. Such requests are being examined on case-to-case basis using Audit trail of individual candidates and report of the centres.

The requests, if found feasible, the candidates will be appearing on August 30.

## ISI LURING SIKHS WITH MONEY TO SPEAK IN FAVOUR OF PAKISTAN



Here are some people and what they said in favour of Pakistan --

Simpal Singh (Member of National Commission for Minorities):

"We being a minority in Pakistan consider

New Delhi | Agencies

To save its reputation at the international level in the context of injustice meted out to minorities in the country, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is luring Sikh people with money to speak in favour of the country, sources said.

ISI is also planning to lure Indian Sikh leaders by providing them a hefty amount to speak in favour of Pakistan.

The agency has till now taken only few leaders into confidence, which mainly include members of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

Lured by money, these Sikh leaders have started making statements in favour of Pakistan.

ourselves lucky that we are living in a country where people belonging to minority communities get more hospitality and are safer than any other country in the world.

Founder of Pakistan Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his historic speech on August 11, 1947 had assured the minorities in the country by saying that 'You are free to go to your religious places and also free to go to the mosques'.

The minorities in Pakistan are enjoying their religious freedom and every government tries to ensure our rights according to the Constitution.

The Kartarpur Corridor is a splendid example of the respect minorities get in this country. Being a minority, we have special rights on many aspects and enjoy special respect in the society.

Minorities are given importance in Pakistan and I am the biggest example of this."

## NEW NITISH GOVERNMENT FORMED IN BIHAR TO CONTINUE ALLIANCE WITH PFI, SDPI: BJP CHIEF

Patna: BJP's Bihar state President Sanjay Jaiswal on Saturday alleged that the JD-U and the RJD formed the government to make their continue their alliance with the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).



"We have witnessed many incidents like the madarsa blast of Munger or the blast in Chapra. The SP of Saran claimed that the explosion took place in Chapra due to crackers. The present government is hiding facts about anti-national activities and incidents.

"The present government is trying to suppress the probe of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). They have broken the government in Bihar and this will boost the morale of terrorists. They have changed the government in Bihar which gives encouragement to terrorists," Jaiswal alleged.

Former Industry Minister Shah Nawaz Hussain, while referring to the incident in Patna's Danapur area, where a group of miscreants attacked two gym trainers, said: "The people of Bihar should be alert about strongmen. The 'Jungle Raj' started in Bihar and batons started coming out on the streets of Patna."

However, it was reported that the incident was the outcome of the accused's personnel enmity with the victims.

## Centre notifies appointment of 20 judicial officers, six advocates as judges to various HCs

► EIGHT JUDICIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED AS ADDITIONAL JUDGES TO THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT ARE: RENU AGARWAL, MOHD. AZHAR HUSAIN IDRISI, RAM MANOHAR NARAYAN MISHRA, JYOTSNA SHARMA, MAYANK KUMAR JAIN, SHIV SHANKER PRASAD, GAJENDRA KUMAR, SURENDRA SINGH-I, AND NALIN KUMAR SRIVASTAVA.

► ACCORDING TO THE NOTIFICATION, SIX JUDICIAL OFFICERS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AS ADDITIONAL JUDGES TO THE KARNATAKA HIGH COURT: ANIL BHEEMSEN KATTI, GURUSIDDIAH BASAVARAJA, CHANDRASHEKHAR MRUTYUNJAYA JOSHI, UMESH MANJUNATHBHAT ADIGA, AND TALKAD GIRIGOWDA SHIVASHANKARE GOWDA.

► TWO JUDICIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED AS JUDGES TO THE HIMACHAL PRADESH HIGH COURT ARE: SUSHIL KUKREJA AND VIRENDER SINGH. TWO JUDICIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED AS JUDGES TO THE ORISSA HIGH COURT ARE: GOURISHANKAR SATAPATHY AND CHITTARANJAN DASH.

► FOUR ADVOCATES APPOINTED AS JUDGES TO TELANGANA HIGH COURT ARE: ENUGULA VENKATA VENUGOPAL, NAGESH BHEEMAPAKA, PULLA KARTHIK AND KAJA SARATH.

► TWO ADVOCATES APPOINTED AS ADDITIONAL JUDGES OF THE TELANGANA HIGH COURT ARE: JAGANNAGARI SREENIVAS RAO AND NAMAVARAPU BALESHWAR RAO.

► TWO JUDICIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED AS ADDITIONAL JUDGES TO THE GAUHATI HIGH COURT ARE: SUSMITA PHUKAN KHAUND AND MITALI THAKURIA.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central government has notified the appointment of 20 judicial officers and six advocates as judges and additional judges to six high courts. A statement from the Centre said: "In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (1) of Article 217 and Clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to appoint judges/additional judges to high courts as per the list attached."



## Telangana minister opens fire in air to launch freedom rally

Hyderabad | Agencies

A Telangana minister on Saturday opened fire in the air to inaugurate a freedom rally as part of the ongoing celebrations to mark 75 years of India's Independence.

Excise, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Srinivas Goud took the self-loading rifle of a policeman to fire two rounds in the air to launch the rally in Mahabubnagar town.

The rally was organised from Zilla Parishad Grounds to Clock Tower in the town. To the surprise of everyone gathered at the starting point of the rally, the minister took the firearm of the constable standing next to him and opened fire.

The video of the minister firing in the air went viral on social media. Some netizens asked if the minister would be booked under Arms Act.

The minister has reportedly resorted to this for the second time in three days. His action triggered a row as some people say a misfire could have led to tragedy as a large



number of people were present around the minister.

It was immediately not clear if the bullets fired were real or dummy bullets used for celebrations.

Freedom rallies were organised in various parts of the state on Saturday ahead of Independence Day.

Ministers, MPs, state legislators, other public representatives and police and civil officials, employees and citizens from various walks of life participated in the rallies.

Greater Hyderabad Mayor Gadwal Vijalaxmi led a freedom rally on Tank Bund in the heart of Hyderabad. Holding national flags, officials and employees of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) participated in the rally.

## MOHAN BHAGWAT, RSS LEADERS PUT TRICOLOUR AS DP ON SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

New Delhi: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat, Sangh leaders and RSS have removed the display picture of their official social media accounts and replaced it with Tricolour.

The RSS on Saturday shared a 48 second video on its official Twitter account in which Bhagwat and other Sangh officials can be seen hoisting Tricolour on different occasions.

The move comes in the wake of questions being posed by Congress and other opposition leaders to RSS in context of the Tricolour.

On the occasion of 75th anniversary of the Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had appealed to all countrymen to change their DP on social media and put Tricolour on it.

Making a big issue out of the appeal of the prime minister, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had said, "Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is being run by those, who (RSS) didn't hoist Tricolour for 52 years."

## SRI LANKA ALLOWS CONTROVERSIAL CHINESE SHIP TO VISIT PORT

Colombo | Agencies

Amidst controversy and a diplomatic tussle between India and China, Sri Lanka on Saturday announced that it has allowed controversial Chinese vessel 'Yuan Wang 5' to dock at the island's southern-most port, the Chinese-run Hambantota.

The Foreign Ministry announced that it has given permission for the vessel to be docked at the port on August 16.

Described as a research and survey vessel, but alleged to be a spy ship, the Chinese vessel was originally planned to reach Hambantota on August 11 but its arrival was deferred following Sri Lanka's requested to postpone the arrival indefinitely.

When Sri Lanka requested a postponement of the arrival, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin protested and charged halting

of the vessel from entering the Hambantota Port was "completely unjustified" and accused India, claiming "certain countries" put pressure on Sri Lanka, claiming "security concerns".

On July 12, diplomatic clearance for the Chinese vessel to make a call at the Hambantota Port from August 11-17, for replenishment purposes, was conveyed by the Foreign Ministry to the Chinese Embassy in Colombo.

But following concerns by India and other political parties and experts, the Ministry communicated to the Chinese mission to defer the ship visit.



## Centre honours MVA proposal, names Flamingo turf Thane Creek as Ramsar site

► The third Ramsar site in Maharashtra -- Thane Creek -- is spread over an area of 6,521.08 hectares, including 1,691 hectares which turn into a pink riot during the annual migration of these majestic birds. This year, it attracted over 125,000 Lesser Flamingos and Greater Flamingos from Gujarat, Iran and Africa.

► Ramsar sites are wetlands of global significance with the aim to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.

► The state has two other Ramsar sites -- the Nandur Madhmeshwar forest in Nashik (8,001 hectares) and the Lonar Lake in Buldhana (427 hectares).

► The first international Ramsar Conference was held in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, which took major decisions on conservation and preservation of global mangroves or wetlands for their environment complementary uses.



Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The Centre on Saturday accorded 'Ramsar' status to the sprawling Thane Creek area -- the annual abode of the pink Flamingos -- making it the first Indian wetland site of international importance located within a metropolitan region and the largest of its kind in the state, as per a notification issued on Saturday.

The proposal was made last year by the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and sent in February 2022 following a report of the State Mangrove Cell, with the Centre's announcement coming 48 hours before the 75th Independence Day of India.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav, made the announcement after the Ramsar Convention conveyed its decision to add 11 new sites on Saturday.

The Ramsar status will attract domestic and global tourists for bird-watching, boost environment conservation efforts and give a fillip to tourism, job opportunities etc., as Thane Creek gets catapulted onto the global tourist map.

In October 2021, the state government had sought an area of around 65 sq km in Thane Creek for the Ramsar site, of which 17 km falls in the reserved forest area and the remaining as environmentally sensitive area.

As per an action plan decided at the conference, each country was asked to identify globally important mangrove areas and declare them as Ramsar sites, which could include creeks, rivers, lakes, ponds, swamps, seashores or even paddy fields.

India, which became a signatory and one of the Contracting Parties in February 1982, presently has 75 Ramsar sites - the highest in south Asia - covering over 1.33 million hectares, with the maximum 14 in Tamil Nadu, compared to the 244 locations worldwide.



## Maharashtra Sees 2,040 Covid-19 Cases, One Death, 2,048 Recoveries

**Coronavirus figures of Maharashtra are as follows: Positive cases 8070258; fresh cases 2040; death toll 148168; recoveries 79,10,243; active cases 11847; total tests 8,36,13,679.**

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

Maharashtra on Saturday reported 2,040 Covid-19 cases and one death, which took the tally in the state to 80,70,258 and the toll to 1,48,168, an official said.

Maharashtra had reported 1,975 cases and five deaths on Friday, he added.

Mumbai Circle led with 1,222 new cases, followed by Pune Circle (312), Nagpur Circle (184), Nashik Circle (138), Kolhapur Circle (72), Latur Circle (61), Akola Circle (32) and Aurangabad Circle (18), he said. The lone fatality occurred in Navi Mumbai, which is part of the Mumbai Circle, the official said. The recovery count increased by 2,048 in the last 24 hours and

reached 79,10,243, leaving the state with 11,847 active cases, he said.

Mumbai accounted for 4,624 active cases, followed by 2,118 on Pune and 1,401 in Thane, as per state health department data. So far, 8,36,13,679 samples have been examined for coronavirus in Maharashtra, including 34,186 in the last 24 hours, the data revealed.

The recovery rate was 98.02 per cent, the fatality rate was 1.83 per cent and the positivity rate stood at 5.96 per cent, as per data. Coronavirus figures of Maharashtra are as follows: Positive cases 8070258; fresh cases 2040; death toll 148168; recoveries 79,10,243; active cases 11847; total tests 8,36,13,679.

## 'You keep yourself busy in kite-flying:' Devendra Fadnavis takes dig at opposition that criticize Maharashtra govt over portfolio allocation

**Team Absolute | Nagpur**

**▶ "YOU KEEP YOURSELF BUSY IN KITE-FLYING, WE WILL ALLOCATE THE PORTFOLIOS AND IT WILL BE DONE SOON," MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS TOLD THE REPORTERS IN NAGPUR IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY. NOTABLY, AFTER 41 DAYS, CM EKNATH SHINDE EXPANDED HIS TWO-MEMBER MINISTRY AS HE INDUCTED 18 MINISTERS. HOWEVER, PORTFOLIOS ARE YET TO BE ALLOCATED TO THESE MINISTERS.**

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday took a jibe at those who have been criticizing the state government over the delay in the distribution of portfolios to ministers.

"You keep yourself busy in kite-flying, we will allocate the portfolios and it will be done soon," Fadnavis told the reporters in Nagpur in response to a query.

Eknath Shinde and Fadnavis were sworn in as chief minister and deputy chief minister of Maharashtra respectively on June 30 following the resignation of Uddhav Thackeray due to a rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks. After 41 days, CM Shinde expanded his two-member ministry as he inducted 18 ministers - nine each from his rebel Shiv Sena group and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). With this, the strength of the Maharashtra ministry has now gone up to 20, less than half the maximum allowed strength of 43. However, portfolios are yet to be allocated to these ministers, which is attracting criticism from the opposition parties. Earlier in the day, Shiv Sena MP Priyanka

Chaturvedi took a dig at the Maharashtra cabinet over the delay in portfolio allocation. "The unconstitutional government in Maharashtra is collapsing under its own weight of contradictions and expectations. MLAs not sworn in as ministers are angry, those who took oath as ministers are still without portfolios. Maharashtra suffers. Rebel in haste, repent at leisure," she tweeted. On Friday, Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Ambadas Danve of the Shiv Sena said there is a tug of war in the Shinde-led Maharashtra government over the allocation of portfolios.

"Even three days after the Cabinet expansion, a tug of war is going on over portfolios," said Danve, who belongs to the Sena faction led by party president Uddhav Thackeray. He further said that people wonder whether a government exists in the state. "There was a government of two people (CM Shinde and his deputy Devendra Fadnavis) in the state for a long time and all the portfolios were with the Chief Minister. Even today people doubt whether there is a government in the state," he said while talking to the media in Nanded.

## REBEL IN HASTE, REPENT AT LEISURE: SENNA LEADER'S LATEST ON MAHARASHTRA CABINET

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

Days after Maharashtra's new cabinet members took oath, Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi on Saturday yet again targeted the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government. In her latest attack, Chaturvedi said that the new ministers - who have been sworn in - are still without portfolios.

"The unconstitutional government in Maharashtra is collapsing under its own weight of contradictions and expectations," Chaturvedi tweeted. She further said that "MLAs not sworn in as ministers are angry, those who took oath as ministers are still without portfolio."

"Maharashtra suffers. Rebel in haste, repent at leisure," the Shiv Sena MP wrote, taking a fresh jibe. Chaturvedi has been hitting out at Shinde and Fadnavis

ever since the Uddhav Thackeray government collapsed due to the revolt by Shinde, once said to be close to Thackeray. Maharashtra saw a lapse of 40 days between the swearing in of new ministers and Shinde and Fadnavis taking oath after Uddhav's resignation. In these 40 days, Chaturvedi and other leaders had taken multiple swipes, and even shared memes on the 'two-member cabinet' in the state.

On Tuesday, a total of 18 ministers took oath in the state in the Shinde-Fadnavis balancing act, which came after multiple Delhi visits by the two leaders. Nine members from each side have been sworn in. The state cabinet has a total of 43 berths and more members are set to be added later. Some reports have suggested that Sanjay Shirsat - one of the Sena rebels - was unhappy at not being included.

## Maharashtra BJP keeps caste factor in mind to name state party officials

Bawankule belongs to the OBC Teli community, which has a sizeable population in some pockets of Maharashtra, while Shelar is a Maratha by caste.

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

Caste arithmetic is the centre of the BJP's organizational changes in Maharashtra. On Friday, the party appointed Chandrashekhar Bawankule as the state party chief, while MLA Ashish Shelar was named the new chief of the Mumbai unit.

Party chief JP Nadda issued a note announcing the appointments. Bawankule belongs to the OBC Teli community, which has a sizeable population in some pockets of Maharashtra, while Shelar is a Maratha by caste.

BJP sources expressed surprise over the names chosen

for the top posts. The new office-bearers were appointed after Mangal Prabhat Lodha, the outgoing president of the Mumbai BJP unit, and Chandrakant Patil, the exiting state party chief, were inducted as ministers in the Shinde-Fadnavis government. "It was natural for the party leadership to appoint leaders from within the party. However, the names that were doing the rounds for the two posts are vastly different from the ones that have been finally chosen. This is yet another shock to us after Devendra Fadnavis was relegated to the number two post as the deputy chief minister in the Eknath Shinde-led government," said a senior BJP leader. Shelar's new charge has come for the third time. "Shelar was strongly expecting a cabinet berth in the new government or appointment as the Maharashtra BJP unit president. This decision seems to be a compromise leader," said the source.

wins. But now, the BJP is in power again, and he still has been asked to take up the old post that he has already held. In the given circumstances, it would appear that he has not really moved up the ladder," said a person close to Shelar.

Another senior BJP leader also expressed surprise about Bawankule's appointment. "In the 2019 assembly polls, Bawankule was denied the ticket despite his bright prospects. The leadership's decision sent out a wrong message, leading to the Teli community turning against the BJP and the party losing a dozen seats in Vidarbha," said another party source, adding that to repair the damage, Bawankule was given the MLC ticket and has now been made the party state president.

"However, he is not the charismatic leader who can influence voters across the state. This decision seems to be a compromise leader," said the source.

## COPS RESCUE MINOR GIRL FROM KIDNAPPERS

**Mumbai:** A 12-year-old girl was rescued from a group of three kidnapers in Wada taluka of Palghar district, a police official said on Saturday.

The girl was abducted by three persons in a car while she was returning from school on Friday evening, said Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil.

"After the girl's parents filed a complaint with Wada police station, several teams were formed to rescue the child and nab the culprits. We found out she was being kept in a farmhouse in Wada. The child was rescued in the early hours of Saturday and was reunited with her parents," the SP said. "One of the abductors, identified as Sameer Thackeray (30), has been arrested, while a hunt is on for his two associates. Our probe has found the child was abducted as the accused wanted to settle scores with her parents, who are school teachers," he said.

## Pawar slams induction of tainted ministers in Shinde govt

Several tainted ministers were inducted in the state govt. Many have not liked this decision. Even some persons in the Shinde-Fadnavis govt have not liked the decision to induct these persons, he said



**Team Absolute | Pune**

Senior Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar on Saturday criticized the induction of "tainted" ministers in the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra and said some persons in the ruling dispensation have not liked their inclusion.

Eighteen ministers were inducted in the government on Tuesday, over a month

after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took oath on June 30.

"Several tainted ministers were inducted in the state government. Many have not liked this decision. Even some persons in the Shinde-Fadnavis government have not liked the decision to induct these persons," Pawar

claimed. Queried on Rupee Cooperative Bank shutting down, Pawar said efforts were taken to save it but its licence was cancelled on August 8.

"There are five to seven such banks in Pune district. We have requested veteran cooperative banker Vidyadhar Anaskar for sug-

gestions. Banks in Maharashtra must not face difficulties," he said.

Replying to a question on the status of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, which comprises the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress, Pawar said "the right to take final decision on MVA is reserved with Sonia Gandhi, Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray".

## Four killed after SUV hits stationary truck in bid to save stray cow

**The accident took place at Kisan Nagar under the jurisdiction of Saoli police station on Chandrapur-Gadchiroli highway late Friday night, police said. Four persons, including a couple, were killed & another one was injured in Maharashtra's Chandrapur**

**▶ IT HAPPENED AFTER A SUV RAMMED INTO STATIONARY TRUCK WHILE TRYING TO SAVE COW SITTING IN MID OF ROAD**

**▶ ACCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT KISAN NAGAR ON CHANDRAPUR-GADCHIROLI HIGHWAY AT FRIDAY NIGHT, SAID POLICE**

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

Four persons, including a couple, were killed and another one was injured after their sports utility vehicle (SUV) rammmed into a stationary truck while trying to save a cow sitting in the middle of a road in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, police said on Saturday.

The accident took place at Kisan Nagar under the jurisdiction of Saoli police station on Chandrapur-Gadchiroli highway late Friday night, they said.

Pankaj Bagde (26), a disc jockey (DJ) from Gadchiroli district, had gone to Chandrapur in the SUV along with his friend Anup Tadulwar (35) to buy some DJ material.

Tadulwar's wife, brother-in-law and a friend were also travelling with them, assistant inspector of Saoli police station Ashish Borkar said.

"On the return journey after buying the material, the driver lost control over the vehicle while trying to save a cow sitting in the middle of the road. The SUV hit a truck parked on the road, killing four of the occupants on the spot," he said. After being alerted, police personnel rushed to the spot and took the injured person to a hospital in Saoli tehsil.

Besides Bagde and Tadulwar, the latter's wife Maheshwari (24) and Manoj Tirthgiriwar (29) were killed in the accident. The injured person was identified as Surendra Masram (23), he said.

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

The Maharashtra government on Saturday cleared the Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) former Mumbai Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede, who was accused of submitting an alleged fake caste certificate for a government job.

The government order came after the Mumbai District Caste Scrutiny Committee probed the issue for nearly seven months and gave the clean chit to the IRS officer, currently posted in Chennai.

The panel has concluded that Wankhede is not a Muslim by birth and he belongs to the Mahar community which is a Scheduled Caste.

Former Maharashtra Minister and Nationalist Congress Party leader Nawab Malik - currently in custody - had first raked up the issue, along with other activists like Ashok Kamble, Manoj Sansare, and Sanjay Kamble.

According to the official order, it has not been proved that Wankhede and his father Dnyandeve Wankhede had renounced Hinduism to convert to Islam and they both belonged to the Mahar 37 Scheduled Caste, and rejected all the complaints filed against them in the matter.

Soon afterwards, Wankhede tweeted - "Satyameva Jayate" - signifying 'victory of truth', and

said he and his family had undergone a lot of trauma due to the matter.

Lawyer for Ashok Kamble, advocate Nitin Satpute said that Wankhede's caste issue is already under challenge in the Bombay High Court in a writ petition filed last year.

"We had not much expectations from the Caste Scrutiny Committee, have faith in the high court," he said.

"We shall now modify our petition in view of the latest order... It is not final and we shall request the high court to order a full probe into the matter," Satpute added.

According to the order, signed by DCCVC Mumbai President Anita Meshram, secretary Sunita Mate and

member Salima Tadvi, "non applicant Sameer Dnyandeve Wankhede is not a Muslim by birth. It is not proved and the non-applicant and his father Dnyandeve Wankhede renounced Hinduism and duly converted to Islam."

Wankhede had shot into the limelight in 2020 after the probe into the drugs cases arising out of the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput in which several film personalities were targeted.

In October 2021 he carried out the sensational arrest of Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, after a raid on an alleged drug party aboard a cruise ship, though Aryan later got a clean chit from the NCB.

## Consumers must utilise rooftop solar energy scheme for maximum benefit, says MSEDCL chief

**Domestic consumers in Maharashtra get a subsidy of 20-40% and housing societies get 20% for implementing the rooftop solar scheme, the MSEDCL chairman pointed out.**

**Team Absolute | Pune**

Chairman of Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) Vijay Singhal has urged consumers to utilise the benefits extended to them under the rooftop solar scheme. Speaking at an online meeting of representatives of rooftop solar device agencies on Friday, he said that domestic consumers and housing societies get a subsidy for installing rooftop solar energy devices under the scheme.

While the subsidy for domestic consumers (1 kW to 3 kW) is 40 per cent and from 3 kW to 10 kW, it is 20 per cent. Apart from this, housing societies and resident welfare associations (1 kW to 500 kW) get 20 per cent subsidy on the project cost, an official statement said. The rooftop solar energy



scheme is being implemented in Maharashtra in collaboration with the state government's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the MSEDCL. The scheme helps consumers install rooftop solar energy devices which will reduce their electricity bills besides helping them get an additional income. "There is a need for everyone to make a concerted effort to make Maharashtra the number one in the country in installing rooftop solar... The grant process should be expedited by guiding the staff and agency representatives regarding document errors in the process," Singhal said. The MSEDCL chief also directed that a nodal officer should be appointed to solve the problems faced by agencies at the regional level. Around 160 agency representatives attended the online meeting.

## From cycle race to children's Tiranga rally, state celebrates 75th Independence Day

**▶ OVER 50 CYCLISTS PARTICIPATED IN THE RACE IN TALASARI AND MANY OF THEM HAD INDIAN FLAGS ON THEIR CYCLES.**

**Team Absolute | Mumbai**

To celebrate the 75th year of Independence as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign, government authorities in Talasari, Palghar district, Saturday organised a cycle race while school children performed plays.

Over 50 cyclists participated in the race in Talasari and many of them

had Indian flags on their cycles. After the cycle rally, children from Anjali Ramji Khanjode English Medium School performed plays with messages of patriotism and secularism.

"The state government authorities, which included officials from Talasari police and revenue department and local MLA Vinod Nikole from Dahanu and MLA Shrinivas Vanga from Palghar, organised and participated in the events at Palghar," said Satish Shivarkar, senior inspector at Talasari police station.

On August 11, two Tiranga rallies were organised by government servants in Gorai. One of the two rallies were attended by children from St Aloysius High School in Gorai.

"Around 475 children from the school walked on

the streets from their school till Gorai police station with the police and teachers walking alongside them. At the police station, we all stood up for the national anthem. The children also chanted patriotic slogans. Another rally was kept for local residents. About 250 to 300 people from Gorai participated in the rally," said Mandakini Narote, senior inspector of Gorai police station.

On August 9, a free medical check-up was organised for tribals in Gorai who stay in Babarpada, Jamzadpada, Mundapada and Dongripada.

A medical team from Apex hospital checked 60 to 70 women. The tribal people were also apprised about the importance of the Indian national flag.



## CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN WILL HOIST NATIONAL FLAG IN BHOPAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will hoist the Flag in Bhopal on Independence Day - 15th August. Speaker of State Assembly Girish Gautam will hoist the flag in Rewa, ministers at 29 district headquarters and district collectors in the remaining 21 districts.

Ministers Narottam Mishra will hoist the flag in Indore, Gopal Bhargava in Jabalpur, Tulsiram Silawat in Gwalior, Kunwar Vijay Shah Narsinghpur, Jagdish Deora Ujjain, Bisahul Singh Mandla, Yashodhara Rajee Scindia Dewas, Bhupendra Singh Sagar, Meena Singh Mandve Anuppur, Kamal Patel Chhindwara, Govind Singh Rajput Damoh, Brijendra Pratap Singh Singrauli, Vishwas Kailash Sarang Vidisha, Prabhuram Choudhary Sehore, Mahendra Singh Sisodia Shivpuri, Pradyuman Singh Tomar Guna, Om



Prakash Saklecha Chhatrapur, Usha Thakur Khandwa, Arvind Bhadoria Raisen, Mohan Yadav Rajgarh, Hardeep Singh Dang Barwani, Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon will hoist the flag in Mandsaur.

Ministers of State Bharat Singh Kushwaha in Morena, Inder Singh Parmar Jhabua, Ramkhelawan Patel Shahdol, Ram Kishore (Nano) Kavre Panna, Brijendra Singh Yadav Shajapur, Suresh Dhakad Datia and OPS Bhadoria will hoist the flag at Ratlam district headquarters and will read out the Chief Minister's message. District Collectors in remaining 21 district headquarters Niwari, Harda, Satna, Katni, Dindori, Agar-Malwa, Narmadapuram, Khargone, Bhind, Tikamgarh, Dhar, Ashoknagar, Seoni, Neemuch, Umaria, Burhanpur, Alirajpur, Sheopur, Betul, Sidhi and Balaghat Will read out the Chief Minister's message by hoisting the flag.

Business community should contribute maximum to the economy

## Traders will get benefit from the new ideal process of GST registration: Deora

Bogus registration will be banned, freedom from unnecessary documents

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In compliance with the instructions of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Commercial Tax Department has issued the Model Operating Procedure (SOP) to simplify the GST registration process. This will make business easier. Earlier, businessmen were facing problems in getting new GST registration.

Appreciating the departmental officers, Finance Minister Jagdish Deora said that the department is committed to provide facilities to the businessmen in ease of doing business, so that they can contribute maximum in the state's economy.

Commissioner Commercial Tax Lokesh Kumar Jatav informed that by issuing SOP for GST registration, the prob-

lems of businessmen and officers of the department will be resolved.

The officers of the department have been directed to ensure that the documents, as per the nature of business, are attached with the application for GST registration.

Guidelines have also been given regarding how these documents should be verified by the officials themselves from the websites of different departments.

Businesses will not be compelled to submit additional documents. With this, the process of issuing registration will be completed quickly. In the new model process, now GST registration will be issued only on the basis of proof of PAN, Aadhaar, mobile number, mail ID and place of business of the applicant.

According to the new SOP, the officers are constantly being directed to take the process of registration. With the issuance of SOP, on the one hand, uniformity in the process of registration will be ensured in all the offices of the GST department of the state, on the other hand, the requirement of submitting additional documents for verification of registration of businessmen will also be eliminated. Various business organizations and legal organizations had been demanding such a system for a long time. While the new SOP will help stop bogus registration on the one hand, genuine businessmen will get freedom from the demand for unnecessary documents and the process of obtaining registration will be speeded up.

## Beware of fake messages related to disconnection of power connection

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar has said that electricity consumers should beware of fake messages related to disconnection of power connections. Tomar has told people not to fall in the trap of such unknown and clever people and take utmost care. The company neither asks to contact on any mobile number for payment of electricity bills nor is it advised to download any mobile app other than "Smart Bijli App." Only the defaulting consumers are informed by the company about the payment of the outstanding amount through SMS. Electricity distribution

company has also appealed to its power consumers to be alert and stay safe from such cyber criminals.

It is noteworthy that these days the electricity consumers are receiving fake messages, in which it is being said that due to non-updating of the electricity bill payment made by the consumer last month, the electricity department would cut off the power connection of the consumer's house tonight. Along with this, consumers are being asked to contact on a mobile number. On calling this number some consumers are also being pressurized to download a mobile app, so that the device of the subscriber can be remotely under the control of those miscreants.

## Beheading threats for condemning incident of raising 'sar tan se juda' slogans, case filed

When the Hindu leader criticised the Khadwa incident during a show on YouTube, a Muslim youth reportedly threatened him with beheading in the comments section.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In yet more such incident, Ashok Paliwal, a Rashtriya Veer Yuva Manch leader approached the Khadwa police after getting death threats on social media from a Muslim youth.

According to the Hindu leader, a Muslim youth threatened to behead him for condemning Khadwa incident, wherein a group of fanatic Muslims chanted 'gustakh-e-Rasool ki ek hi saza, sar tan se juda sar tan se juda' slogans during the Muharram procession.



Ashok Paliwal was reportedly called as a guest speaker on a YouTube channel to speak about the spate of threats and murders of

Hindus at the hands of Islamists for alleged 'blasphemy.' During the discussion, when Paliwal criticised the Khadwa incident, in

which Islamists raised 'Sar Tan Se Juda' slogans during the Muharram procession, a Muslim youth threatened him with beheading in the comments section. Enraged by this, members of the Hindu organisation surrounded the Kotwali Police Station and staged a demonstration. They urged strict action against the perpetrator. The police, in turn, registered a case against the accused. City Police Superintendent Poonam Chand Yadav assured prompt action in the case. Notably, a video has been doing rounds on social media wherein a group of Muslims taking part in a Muharram procession can be heard chanting 'gustakh-e-Rasool ki ek hi saza, sar tan se juda sar tan se juda.' The incident reportedly took place in Khadwa district on August 10.

Taking cognizance of the video, the Madhya Pradesh police have registered an FIR against as many as 25 people and are trying to nab them.

## SEEPAGE IN MP DAM POSES RISK, PROMPTS EVACUATION

The continued seepage of water from the newly-constructed Karam Dam has prompted the evacuation of 6,000 people from 18 villages, with officials concerned over the risk it poses.



rescue operations. The creation of an alternative passage to release water from dam is underway. Due to some hard rock, digging process is little bit slow, but several teams are trying to make a way to reduce the water as soon as possible," Chouhan said.

The construction of Karam Dam, estimated to be Rs 304 crore, had started around four years ago.

This was the first time that the reservoir of the dam was filled due to heavy rainfall in the western region of Madhya Pradesh, especially Dhar and Indore districts.

In a statement on Saturday, the state's water resources minister, Tulsilawat, stated that the NDRF and an army team had arrived in Dhar to deal with the emergency.

The water from the dam is being safely drained out to lessen the pressure on the reservoir walls, he claimed, and the situation is completely under control.

The press release stated that Silawat is on the dam site keeping an eye on things.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The continued seepage of water from the newly-constructed Karam Dam has prompted the evacuation of 6,000 people from 18 villages, with officials concerned over the risk it poses.

State and Central government experts have been involved to find a solution to protect the dam and to save the lives of the residents of Dhar and Khargone districts.

According to official reports, two Air Force helicopters reached the spot late Friday.

At least three teams of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) and seven from the State Disaster Relief Force

(SDRF) have also been deployed for evacuation operation.

The evacuations started after authorities on Thursday noticed a massive soil erosion on the right flank of the dam due to which the seepage was continuing. The length of the dam is 590 metres and the height is 53 metres and at present 15 mcm water is stored.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Saturday that he has informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi twice about the dam's situation.

He said the only option to save the dam and to protect lives is to create an alternative passage to reduce water from the dam. "I have spoken to Modi twice to inform him about the situation and

## BJYM strips 7 leaders for creating ruckus at Mahakal

BJYM's state unit chief Vaibhav Pawar issued a list of 18 party workers and leaders allegedly involved in the incident, which he said "damaged the dignity of the temple."

- The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) has stripped its Ujjain district unit president.
- On Thursday, police had registered a first information report (FIR) against two persons in connection with the ruckus.
- BJYM's Nagda town president Bhawani Devda was also removed from his post in connection with the ruckus at Mahakaleshwar temple.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) has stripped its Ujjain district unit president and six other office-bearers for allegedly creating ruckus at the Mahakaleshwar temple during the organisation chief Tejasvi Surya's visit there. On Thursday, police had registered a first information report (FIR) against two persons in con-

nection with the ruckus, which took place on Wednesday when Surya visited the famous temple in Ujjain, which is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the 12 'jyotirlingas' in the country.

BJYM's state unit chief Vaibhav Pawar issued a list of 18 party workers and leaders allegedly involved in the incident, which he said "damaged the dignity of the temple". The list includes Amay Sharma, BJYM's district (urban) president,

Narendra Singh Jalwa, its district (rural) president. Both of them were removed from their posts. Besides them, the working committee members Devendra Baghela, Saurav Gauskar, Lakki Gurjar and Shubham Dabbevala were also removed from their posts. BJYM's Nagda town president Bhawani Devda was also removed from his post in connection with the ruckus at Mahakaleshwar temple. Some videos of the incident that went viral on social media platforms showed a large number of BJYM activists following Tejasvi Surya as he entered the temple. They were seen creating a furore after they were stopped by guards from entering the temple's sanctum sanctorum. In some of the clips, they were seen breaking the barricades of the temple's Nandi Grah (hall) and toppling the donation box. Several social media users had criticised the act of BJYM workers in the temple. The temple administrator, Ganesh Dhakad, said they had lodged a police complaint over the incident. Following the complaint by the temple administration, an FIR was registered against two persons, Vikram Thakur and Raghvendra, under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 34 (act done by several persons in furtherance of common intention).

## CHIEF MINISTER PLANTS KARANJ, BANYAN AND GULMOHAR SAPPLINGS



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday planted saplings of Karanj, Banyan and Gulmohar in Smart Garden. Principal Secretary Cottage and Village Industries Smita Bhardwaj and her twin daughters Devyani and Shivrani also participated in the plantation. Commissioner Handicrafts Development Corporation Anubha Shrivastava was also present. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, social workers Sagan Chand, Ashok and Vipin Chandra Surana, residents of Bhusaval in Maharashtra, also planted saplings. Surana brothers are engaged in social service for a long time. Fighters for democracy Surana brothers, who were imprisoned during the Emergency, are on a visit to Bhopal. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, TV journalist Suraj Sharma's daughter Vidhi planted a sapling on her first birthday. After planting saplings, Chouhan also released the book 'Saraswati Rajamani - Ek Bhuli Bisi Jasoos' written by twin daughters Devyani and Shivrani at the age of 10 on Saraswati Rajamani, the 'forgotten heroine' of independence. These girls are studying in class 5th. Chief Minister wished both the daughters for a bright future.

## Union Minister G Kishan calls on Chief Minister Chouhan

### CHOUHAN'S EFFORTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ARE LAUDABLE: REDDY

- Centre will give cooperate fully in the construction of Tagore Culture Hall in Sanchi
- Facilities will also be enhanced in Salkanpur temple complex
- Request to hand over operation of Khajuraho's Shilpgram to Madhya Pradesh government

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has urged Union Tourism, Culture and North East Development Minister G Kishan Reddy to hand over the operation of Shilp Gram of Khajuraho, a World Heritage Monument site of Madhya Pradesh, to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Along with this, he has also urged for more cooperation from the Central Government to increase facilities for tourists at various tourist places of the state. Reddy called on the Chief Minister at his residence on Saturday morning before leaving for Khajuraho.

Reddy praised the special efforts being made by Chief Minister Chouhan for tourism development in Madhya Pradesh. He described the efforts for holistic development of various tourist places in the state as commendable. Reddy said that for the Centre will extend total cooperation for the development of tourism in Madhya Pradesh.

Chouhan said that Shilpgram Kendra is an



important medium to make the future generation aware of cultural traditions. The Madhya Pradesh government wants to make the Shilpgram Kendra located in Khajuraho better as a heritage for the future generations. With the Shilpgram being entrusted in the care of the Madhya Pradesh government, it will be made available on priority for the programmes of the Government of India. At present, the responsibility of operation of Shilpgram is proposed to be given to North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Prayagraj. Shilpgram was built with the purpose of promoting and preserving traditions and cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh. Domestic and foreign tourists visiting Khajuraho, an internationally renowned tourist destination, visit Shilpgram. At present there is an auditorium, exhibition hall, administrative building, MuktaKashi platform etc. in Shilpgram. Expansion of this center on the

remaining vacant land has been proposed. Reddy assured to take necessary decisions in this regard soon. Chief Minister requested the Union Tourism Minister that in the approved project of construction of Tagore Culture Hall in Sanchi Buddhist Indian University of Knowledge Studies, the Madhya Pradesh government is constructing it with its own financial resources. Necessary amount should be provided by the center for this. Union Minister Shri Reddy said that the central government is determined to give full cooperation for the project worth Rs 48 crore 18 lakh.

During the meeting with Chief Minister Chouhan, Union Minister Reddy said that the project to develop places from the point of view of spiritual and tourism will also be implemented soon under the Ramayana Circuit Scheme. This project is worth Rs.69 crore 2 lakh. This project will be helpful in the development of other places of spiritual importance near Chitrakoot Dham.

Chouhan also informed about the project for enhancing tourism facilities in Vijayasan Mata (Bijasan Devi) temple complex at Salkanpur in Sehore district. India Tourism Development Corporation has approved the DPR prepared to increase tourism infrastructure and public facilities in Salkanpur temple. Reddy described all the efforts being made to increase the tourism importance of Madhya Pradesh as commendable. Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture Shiv Shekhar Shukla and Secretary to Chief Minister M Selvendran were also present during the discussion.



# Cardi B's hair growth secret is vegetable water

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Cardi B has tried every hair growth treatment going and she's now revealed the one with the best results. The 'WAP' hitmaker asked fans in a TikTok video this week to guess which vegetable she uses to make her tresses shine, reports

femalefirst.co.uk.

She captioned the clip: "I been using secret vegetable water on my hair.can you guess which vegetable is it? Sheres a clue,I did a tutorial on it about 6 years ago."

The 29-year-old rap megastar previously revealed she also does regular hair masks and drinks alkaline water to boost hair growth. The raven-haired beauty said she feared her hair would fall out after giving birth to her son.

The Grammy winner told her Instagram

followers: "So I've been so consistent with my hair mask routine and drinking alkaline water, and look how much my hair has grown! I was so scared of my hair falling out after my son's birth because I'd been growing it for years now, so I made sure to keep up with it and I actually gain hair"

She also uses other cooking ingredients from her pantry, including mayonnaise and olive oil.

In a video on her Instagram Story from 2020, Cardi could be seen applying a home-

made mask to baby Kulture's curls. As she revealed, she also uses the mixture to keep her own hair "really hydrated".

She said: "This is a hair mask that I am doing for Kulture. I just finished putting argan oil, and I'm gonna put mayonnaise, castor oil, and olive oil. I know it's a lot of oil, but my baby's hair needs to be really hydrated like mine."

She added bananas and eggs to the mask, which are common in DIY hair masks as they have nourishing properties.



## Doing 'bad stuff' on screen is thrilling: Matthew McConaughey

Los Angeles | Agencies

Doing "bad stuff" and acting "depraved" on screen is thrilling for Hollywood star Matthew McConaughey. He says that playing characters that are evil or up to no-good is exhilarating for him. The 52-year-old actor starred as deceiver and sorcerer Walter Padick in 2017 science fantasy Western 'The Dark Tower' while he also played the titular murderer in 2011's 'Killer Joe', reports aceshowbiz.com.

However, he believes such roles are only good for actors who are "calm" in their own lives. McConaughey is quoted by the Daily Star newspaper as saying, "Being bad is the best. It just is."

"It shouldn't be, but getting to do bad stuff or depraved drama. And with no repercussions - in other words, you go home, see your family at the end of the day - you know, I like that."

"I think it's true that you have to be in a calm open space first in your life if you are to do that and I'm glad to say I am certainly there. So beyond that, I feel there is a real freedom to shed light on the shade of a character." The 'Magic Mike' star previously revealed how "no one" wanted to cast him after he rejected romantic comedies. The actor became a Hollywood heartthrob after starring in movies like 'The Wedding Planner', 'Ghosts of Girlfriends Past', and 'How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days'.

However, the actor's plan worked out, as his self-imposed exile resulted in people wanting to get him on board for different projects.

## Drake reveals what he's looking for in a women

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Drake got candid about his dating life in a conversation with Nicki Minaj. He revealed what he's looking for in women. In the premiere episode of Queen Radio on AMP, the new live radio app from Amazon, Minaj didn't beat around the bush as she asked Drake: "Okay, so - who's your girlfriend?"

Drake quickly answered: "I don't have a girlfriend. You know that already."

She didn't stop there and asked about his preference: "So, you still like the big b\*\*tys?"

Drake jokingly flirted with

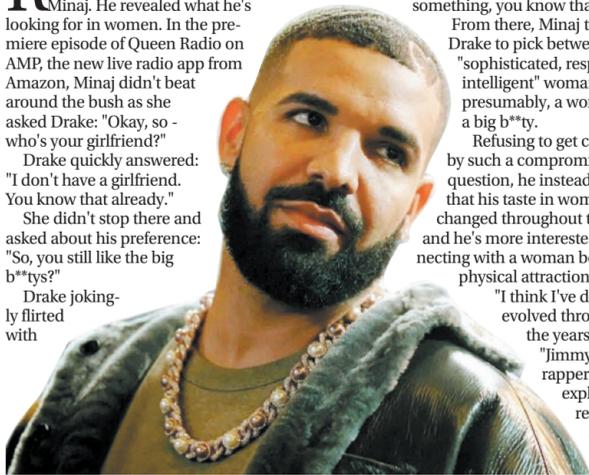
Nicki and said: "I mean, you obviously know you shaped my taste in women at this point."

He added: "They've got to have a big something, you know that."

From there, Minaj tried to get Drake to pick between a "sophisticated, responsible, intelligent" woman and, presumably, a woman with a big b\*\*ty.

Refusing to get captured by such a compromising question, he instead, claimed that his taste in women has changed throughout the years and he's more interested in connecting with a woman beyond physical attraction.

"I think I've definitely evolved throughout the years," the 'Jimmy Cooks' rapper began explaining, reports aceshowbiz.com.



## Idris Elba shares moment when a bat interrupted steamy shower with wife

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Idris Elba has opened up about the horrific time he had during an intimate shower with his wife Sabrina, when he was interrupted by a bat. The 49-year-old actor, who plays the lead in upcoming movie 'Beast', dished on the startling moment that took place when he was filming in South Africa. He went on to admit that was 'horrified' by the unexpected guest, reports mirror.co.uk. The 'Luther' star also confessed that Sabrina, who he married in 2019, has refused to let him live down his initial reaction to the animal and that she 'makes fun of him to this day'. Speaking to Men's Journal, Idris said: "I was shooting in Limpopo. My wife was there and we were going to have some fun in the shower. Some morning romance, you know? She got in, then I followed her and closed the door. But then I looked down and clinging for life to the inside shower door handle was this bat. A tiny, wet bat. I hate bats. It was freaky as f\*\*\*. I jumped out of the shower so fast. My wife makes fun of me about it to this day... You left me in the shower with a bat!" The actor elaborated that he had actually developed a fear of bats in Australia in 2019.



## MEGAN THEE STALLION FLATTERED AFTER DWAYNE JOHNSON SAID HE WANTS TO BE HER PET

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Megan Thee Stallion has been left flattered by Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson's recent statement, who said that he wants to be her pet. The Houston rapstress finally gave her response in a SiriusXM interview, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I mean, that's kind of legendary," the 27-year-old said while laughing. "Like, I'm kind of epic. I used to watch wrestling all the time. Being from Houston and watching The Rock and how famous he is, how much of a mega-star he is and he wanna be my pet? Like, period. Like, we made it. We might be a little famous." The Rock shot his shot with Megan during an interview to promote his new movie 'DC League of Super-Pets'.

During the chat, the 'Red Notice' actor and his co-star Kevin Hart were asked by the interviewer: "If you could be any celebrity's pet, who would you be?" Without skipping a beat, The Rock responded that his ideal owner would be hip-hop star Megan, prompting Kevin, who said that he'd love to be Denzel Washington's pet, to wince and laugh.



## Heidi Klum jokes 'sucking' husband's 'young blood' keeps her youthful

Los Angeles | Agencies

Supermodel Heidi Klum jokes that the secret to her youthful appearance is "sucking" her husband's "young blood". When asked for her anti-ageing tips, the 49-year-old German supermodel, who has children Leni, 18, Henry, 16, Johan, 15, and Lou, 12, with ex-husband Seal, joked that drinking her 32-year-old musician spouse Tom Kaulitz' claret is the reason behind her ageless complexion, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I suck his young blood, is what I'm doing," she laughed.

She added: "Like a vampire."

The former Victoria's Secret Angel said life is too short to worry about sticking to strict beauty regimens - but said applying sun protection is a must. She told E!'s Daily Pop: "I feel like we're never gonna be as young as we are right now, so we might as well live right now. I love to live right now, and for me, that is sun and having fun and, you know, just wear sunscreen." Meanwhile, Klum recently shared the bizarre fact that one of her legs is worth more than the other.



## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lily Rose Depp



## 'TOPS OF THE LINE' SUPPORT ENSURE ATHLETES GET THE BEST FACILITIES

Ajai Masand | New Delhi

When it was launched in September 2014 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, little did one know that the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) would change the face of Indian sports and give wings to the aspirations of hundreds of athletes like never before.

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra clinching the 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold, shuttler PV Sindhu winning successive Olympic medals in 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo, are just a couple of the success stories spawned by the scheme that has given athletes the freedom to pick and choose their training destinations, competitions, coaches and mental trainers who can best serve their ambitions.

TOPS, the flagship programme of the sports ministry, might have had a low-key beginning in 2014 but following its revamp in 2018, which led to the establishment of a technical support team for managing the elite athletes and providing them with holistic support, it has grown from strength to strength and sportspeople now call it the gateway to success.

With a core group of more than 100



athletes across 13 disciplines and the men's and women's hockey teams besides around 300 'development group' athletes across 12 disciplines, the scheme has encompassed not just the most talented athletes vying for medals in events such as the Commonwealth Games, 2023 Asian Games and 2024 Paris Olympics but also those who are potential for the future. One of India's most well-known and respected names in shooting, Mansher Singh, says the TOPS scheme mirrors the intention of the government to support the athletes in every way possible so they can win laurels for the country.

"When I was involved with the team, it was called NSDF (National Sports Development Fund) and they (sportspeople) had a cap on how much funding they could get in a year. I think TOPS now has upped that. It's gone to another level in the sense that there is no such limit. It (funding) now depends upon the athlete's requirement and obviously his profile in terms of winnability at the Olympics, his past performance etc," said Mansher, the Commonwealth Games gold medalist and multiple medal winner at the Asian Games.

TOPS has some of the most unique features, which make it an end-to-end

'one-stop shop' for an athlete committed to his goal of winning medals in major international competitions.

These include a professional set-up which is athlete-centric and involves potential-based selection, data analysis and research, athlete planning and athlete relationship management, international training sessions and visa facilitation support for sportspeople. Each reasonable request made by an athlete is met with a positive and quick response and a top-of-line research support is on hand to track opponent performances. TOPS also provides a dedicated athlete relationship manager as a bridge between SAI and the athlete. So far, the scheme has facilitated around 400 foreign exposures in Olympic disciplines in the last four years. Little wonder, every athlete who represents the country wants to be a part of the scheme, knowing that all his worries will be taken care of once he is part of the programme.

Following his below-par showing in Tokyo, he was dropped from the TOPS scheme and wants to quickly return to the fold with some good performances, which would guarantee him all the facilities required to work towards his goal of an Olympic medal.

## Knockout no. 9 has Vijender's name written all over it: Eliasu on 'The Jungle Rumble'

Raipur | Agencies

Boxer Eliasu Sulley, with eight previous knockouts to his name is looking to carve Vijender Singh's name into his unbeaten record book in the upcoming 'The Jungle Rumble' happening here on August 17.

"I've watched his previous bouts and know what he does best but I'm not worried because knockout no.9 has Vijender Singh's name written all over it. His stature does not bother me, I know the crowd will be behind him at the fight, but I know how to silence them all," said Eliasu Sulley, the opponent from Ghana.

"Vijender has not been in shape, I saw his last fight, I think it's time for him to retire. This fight will be a farewell to him from my side, with a knockout of course," added Sulley.

Vijender, who has been training in Manchester for almost over a year now was not bothered by these comments at all and is just working on the final touches of his preparations.

Vijender who was calmly looking at his opponent had little to add, "He is forgetting



that I have previously dealt with 12 of such boxers in a row who had almost the same things to say to me but we all know how those fights turned out. This is just a stepping stone into a new era in my professional boxing career."

"But everything my opponent is saying is all talk, I am not bothered and it shows that he has not done his background check. I will turn

the tables on the knockout and cannot wait to get into the ring with him."

"I am excited for the people of Raipur to come witness this fight because I have a very strong connection with Raipur. I have always gotten a lot of support from Chhattisgarh since the time I turned professional in 2015 including the CM," Vijender on fighting in Raipur for the first time.

## Canadian Open HALEP TOPPLES GAUFF, HADDAD MAIA EXTENDS RUN

Toronto | Agencies

Two-time major winner Simona Halep continues to find form ahead of the upcoming US Open with a 6-4, 7-6 (7-2) victory over Coco Gauff, clinching her spot in the Canadian Open semi-finals.

Halep defeated 10th seed Gauff, who had beaten Naomi Osaka, Elena Rybakina and Aryna Sabalenka this week, in one hour and 47 minutes, reports DPA.

The Romanian 15th seed was broken five times and sent down eight double faults, but found the edge with speed, finesse and power.

The win means Halep has won the third most matches (36-10) on the WTA Tour this season, behind only top-ranked Iga Swiatek (49) and Wimbledon finalist Ons Jabeir (37).

Halep's improved form comes after she teamed up with Serena Williams' ex-coach Patrick Mouratoglou in April following a difficult 2021 season.

The 2018 French Open and 2019 Wimbledon champion added: "Physically I'm good. Mentally I'm good, so I think it's all positive." Halep, who won the Canadian Open in



2018, has reached the semi-finals for the fifth time in her career where she will take on seventh seed Jessica Pegula.

Pegula got past Yulia Putintseva 6-3, 6-3 in one hour and 21 minutes. Qualifying for the last four at the Canadian Open for the second straight year. Brazilian Beatriz Haddad Maia maintained her Canadian Open run, having ousted Swiatek in the third round and local favourite Leylah Fernandez in the second, with a 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 victory over Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic in two hours and 11 minutes. Haddad Maia became the first Brazilian to reach the semi-finals of a WTA 1000 tournament. She will face Karolina Pliskova in the semi-finals after the Czech 14th seed beat Qinwen Zheng 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

## New Zealand thrash West Indies; clinch T20I series

Kingston (Jamaica) | Agencies

New Zealand middle-order batter Glenn Phillips scored a quick-fire half-century, while opener Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell made useful contributions as the visitors thrashed West Indies by 90 runs in the second T20I here to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series on Saturday (IST).

Phillips first reached the half-century mark off just 31 balls and finally ended up scoring 76 off just 41 balls at a strike rate of 185 as the Black Caps amassed a mammoth 215/5 in their 20 overs, with Hayden Walsh and all-rounder Jason Holder being punished for bowling wayward.

With contributions of 42 and 48 from Conway and Mitchell respectively, New Zealand crossed the 200-run mark, exceeding the 185/5 in the opening game which the visitors won by 13 runs.

This was the highest total by a vis-



iting team against the Caribbean side in T20Is. In reply, West Indies' top order was wiped out in no time and they finally managed a dismal 125/9, with Mitchell Santner (3/15) and Michael Bracewell (3/15) doing

the maximum damage, and not allowing a stable partnership to blossom.

Earlier, Phillips added 71 runs for the third wicket with Conway and another 83 with Mitchell as the visi-

tors went on the rampage, scoring 130 off their last 10 overs.

The final T20I will be played at the same venue on August 14, which will be followed by a three-match ODI series.

### Brief scores

New Zealand 215/5 in 20 overs (Phillips 76, Mitchell 48, Conway 42; McCoy 3/40) beat West Indies 125/9 (Bracewell 3/15, Santner 3/15) by 90 runs.

## Asia Road Racing Championship RAJIV SETHU MAKES INDIA PROUD WITH TOP 5 FINISH

Sportsland SUGO (Japan) | Agencies

Honda Racing India celebrated its best ever performance in the Asia Road Racing Championship 2022 (ARRC). It is the first time that India's solo team secured top 5 position at Asia's toughest road race championship.

Saturday's AP250 race was one of the toughest races of the season with 5 riders crashing out in first lap. Starting the wet 12-lap race 1 from 14th on the grid, Indian rider Rajiv Sethu quickly moved to 6th place after lap 1. From thereon, he continued to maintain his position until he fell in lap 5 due to wet racetrack.

Determined to finish the race, Rajiv challenged himself and immediately re-joined the race to finally cross the chequered line at 5th place.



Masterful race performance by Rajiv in his very first outing at Sportsland SUGO International Circuit resulted in the team real-

izing its next step up by securing top 5 position in the Race 1 of AP250 class and earned 11 points.

## BANGLADESH APPOINT SHAKIB AS T20 CAPTAIN UNTIL 2022 WORLD CUP

Dhaka: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Saturday appointed Shakib Al Hasan as the T20I skipper until the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia later this year.

The BCB announcement brought an end to the uncertainty of the past couple of weeks, when Shakib was told by the board to choose between playing for Bangladesh or keeping his endorsement with a "betting company". After the board's ultimatum, the all-rounder had pulled out of his controversial deal with Betwinner News.

The BCB also announced a 17-member squad for the Asia Cup, which will be played in the UAE from August 27. Apart from Shakib, who returns to lead the team, the squad also sees the return of Mushfiqur Rahim, Sabbir Rahman, Ebadat Hossain and Mohammad Saifuddin. Munim Shahriar, Nazmul Hossain and Shoriful Islam could not make the cut.



## Benzema leads Ballon d'Or nomination, Messi left out

Paris | Agencies

Karim Benzema was among the 30-man list of nominees for the 2022 Ballon d'Or award, which was announced by France Football on Friday, while seven-time winner Lionel Messi was omitted from the list for the first time since 2006.

Messi's arch-rival, five-time winner Cristiano Ronaldo was included, as well as Polish striker Robert Lewandowski, French forward Kylian Mbappe, and Egyptian star Mohamed Salah.

However, another PSG star Neymar also missed out on the nomination which meant that Mbappe will be the sole player on the list coming from French Ligue 1, reports Xinhua. Messi, who won the title last year, had been nominated 15 times in a row since 2006 (except for in 2020 when the award was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The 35-year-old didn't meet his own lofty standards in his first season at PSG, following his shocking move from Barcelona to the French capital last summer. The Argentine star provided 14



assists in PSG's way to a record-equalling 10th Ligue 1 title but scored only six goals in the league, far away from the high expectations from all sides. Benzema, who helped Real Madrid to double championships in La Liga and Champions League, was undoubtedly the favourite for the prestigious award as the organisers announced some changes in March that the award will be given based on performances over the course of a regular football season, rather than a calendar year.

## Ultimate Kho Kho Telugu Yoddhas to face Chennai Quick Guns in campaign opener

Team Absolute | Pune

Telugu Yoddhas - the GMR group owned franchisee, will begin their campaign in the inaugural season of Ultimate Kho Kho against Chennai based Chennai Quick Guns, here on Sunday.

Telugu Yoddhas will be playing the second match of the opening day of the inaugural season. The game will also be a southern derby, as two teams represent two prominent regions of Southern India.

Led by software engineer and Indian Player Prajwal KH, Telugu Yoddhas are expected to start their season with



some prominent Indian Kho Kho players which includes the team's vice-captain, Pratik Waikar and Bojjam Ranjith who were members of the Indian Team that won Gold in SAFF Games 2016. The team also includes Indian players P. Hemachandran, Arun S.A and Aditya Das. The Telugu Yoddhas squad comprises a perfect balance of youth and experience. Khelo India Youth

Games medal winners Arun Ashok Gunki, Adarsh Dattaraj Mohite, Avdut Bharat Patil, Rohan Tanaji Shingade & Dhanush K.C provide the energy as the younger lot in the team. The team also consists of Deepak V Madhav and Prasad Radey from Railways who are the current National Champions. This mix of players will be hopeful to perform well for the Yoddhas in the first season of Ultimate Kho Kho league.

On the other hand, the likes of Mahesh Shinde, Rajvardhan Patil, M Vignesh, Ramji Kashyap in the Chennai Quick Guns squad will be the players to be looked out for.

## Qatar World Cup no event 'for the average fan': Germany coach Flick

Munich | Agencies

Germany coach Hansi Flick has said he will seek advice from his predecessor Joachim Loew ahead of the World Cup in Qatar which according to him won't be a tournament for the average fan.

"I have many acquaintances who would like to fly to Qatar but won't do so for multiple reasons," Flick told the RND publishing house, reports DPA.

"Because they can't afford the steep prices, because the situation for instance for homosexuals is not acceptable, because there are human rights violations, because minorities are excluded."

"It is a pity that this tournament won't be a World Cup for the fans. Football should be there for everyone. Therefore I say: this won't be a World Cup for the average fan."



The Qatar tournament runs November 20 to December 18. The host nation has been criticised for years in connection with human rights violations. Progress has been made but rights groups say that more needs to be done.

The tournament is the first big event for Flick, who was Loew's assistant from 2006 to the 2014 World Cup triumph and then succeeded him last year.

Flick said he would meet Loew before the event where Germany will play Japan, Spain and Costa Rica in the group stage even though he knows "what is important" in the planning stage from his time as assistant.

"It can only be an advantage that I sit down with Jogi again and have an exchange over his impressions and experiences. About what can happen in such a tournament and how he experienced it from the head coach's perspective," Flick said.



## JANHVI KAPOOR REMEMBERS SRIDEVI ON HER BIRTH ANNIVERSARY WITH A THROWBACK PICTURE

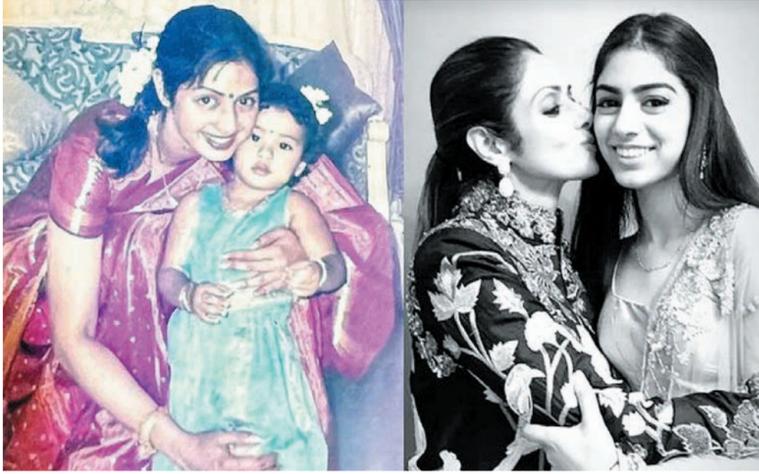
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Janhvi Kapoor, who is quite active on social media, shared yet another post today morning. On the occasion of her late mother's 59th birth anniversary, Janhvi Kapoor shared an emotional post for her. Sharing a throwback picture of herself and her late mother, Janhvi Kapoor wrote an emotional note, and this picture has all our hearts.

Janhvi Kapoor shared a childhood photo with her late mom Sridevi. In the endearing photo, Sridevi could be seen holding her little girl Janhvi. Sharing it, Janhvi wrote, "Happy birthday Mumma I miss you more and more everyday. I love u forever."

The moment Janhvi Kapoor posted this picture, fans took to the comments section to shower all the love. Her friends and family members including Radhika Madan, Maheep Kapoor, Sanjay Kapoor, and Varun Dhawan among others took to the comments section and posted heart emojis.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Janhvi Kapoor's recent release Good Luck Jerry is receiving adulation. She further has Bawaal alongside Varun Dhawan and sports-drama Mr and Mrs Mahi in her pipeline.



## AYUSHMANN KHURRANA EXPRESSES CONCERN FOR MUMBAI FANS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ayushmann Khurrana is one of the most talented actors in the Hindi film industry. He made his big Bollywood debut in 2012 and won millions of hearts through films like Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Bareilly Ki Barfi, Badhaai Ho, Dream Girl, Bala, Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan, and more. Ayushmann is also quite active on his Instagram and often treats his fans with gorgeous shots of him and advice for them.

While we all are enjoying the Mumbai monsoons and the chilly weather out there, Ayushmann Khurrana has a piece of advice for all his fellow fans and followers. Sharing a monochrome picture, the actor wrote, "Inside the airplane. From the creek of the window seat 1A. It's time to mask up again. Suna hai saara Mumbai viral/cold infection se joojh raha hai. In the meanwhile can I have a glass of warm water pls. You may put some kaali mirch too. Kaala dhaaga bhi baandh lo haath paon mein. Nazar lag gayi hai hum sab ko". On the work front, Ayushmann last appeared in Anek, a film by Anubhav Sinha. He will next be seen in Anubhuti Kashyap's 'Doctor G' alongside Rakul Preet Singh. Apart from this Ayushmann will also be a part of the film 'Action Hero'.



## Siddhant, Ananya wraps up the shoot of their upcoming

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Panday won hearts with their chemistry in Shakun Batra's Gehraiyaan. And now, the duo is all set to unite again for Zoya Akhtar's Kho Gaye Hum Kahan. While Ananya Panday wrapped up the shoot for the flick in mid-July, to jump ahead for promotions of Liger, Siddhant Chaturvedi has also wrapped his up shoot today (13 August). Taking to his social media, Siddhant shared a beautiful picture where he can be seen hugging his co-stars Ananya Panday and Adarsh Gourav with a cute smile on his face. The actor added a heartfelt caption -

"and it's a wrap!

#KhoGayeHumKahan

We were young, crazy, and restless. Fun, curious & a millennial mess. It's a story about you & me, and we were just... A bunch of cool kids makin' a film. Thank you @zoieakhtar @reemakagti for the best filming experiences ever.

Thank you guys, it was an honour"

Talking about Kho Gaye Hum Kahan, the film is directed by debutante director Arjun Varain Singh. It is the story of 3 youngsters and how their lives are intertwined with each other. The film is written by Zoya Akhtar, Arjun Varain Singh, Reema Kagti. It is also being produced by Reema Kagti, Zoya Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani, Farhan Akhtar. Meanwhile on the work front, Siddhant will be next seen in 'Phone Bhoor' with Katrina Kaif and Ishana Khatter and 'Yudhra' where he takes on a heavy dose of action.



## LA-based musical twins do a Srivalli cover, Rashmika reacts



Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Rashmika Mandanna has become a national crush after essaying the role of Srivalli in 'Pushpa - The Rise'. Apart from bringing audiences back to cinemas after the pandemic, the Allu Arjun-starrer has spawned a massive fan following for lead actor Rashmika, who has been going places ever since. And now, she's getting noticed in Los Angeles. The actress recently took to her social media to give a shout-out to LA's Bala Brothes, who had posted a cover of the superhit track 'Srivalli' from 'Pushpa - The Rise' on their social media handle. The twins from Singapore, who are trained in Carnatic music and have graduated from the prestigious Berklee College in Boston, were seen singing the song against the backdrop of the Los Angeles sky. Rashmika was quick to respond. Tagging the artistes, the actress wrote: "Love it @thebalabrothers!"

Rashmika's 'Srivalli' character has created a whole new fan base for her. After the release of the song, in fact, the actress became better-known across the country as 'Srivalli'. On the work front, apart from 'Goodbye', also featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Neena Gupta, the crime drama 'Animal' with Ranbir Kapoor, the 'Pushpa' sequel, apart from 'Mission Majnu', opposite Sidharth Malhotra, and 'Varisu' with Vijay Thalappatty. A busy lineup that should keep her in the news well into 2023.



Priyanka pays tribute to Anne Heche

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has paid a heartfelt tribute to actress Anne Heche, who passed away following a fiery car crash.

Priyanka took to Instagram, where she wrote an emotional note for her Heche, with whom she worked with in the series 'Quantico'.

"My heart goes out to Anne Heche's

children, family, friends, and everyone who grieves. It was an honour to have known you and worked by your side. You were a lovely person and an incredible actress. You will always have a special place in my heart."

Hollywood personality Ellen DeGeneres, who dated Anne Heche in

the 1990s, also remembered the late actress.

She tweeted, "This is a sad day. I'm sending Anne's children, family and friends all my love."

Heche, 53, had been coma in the hospital with a severe brain injury after she crashed her car into a Los Angeles building on August 5.



## Danny Boyle saw Anil Kapoor's 'Taal', offered him 'Slumdog Millionaire'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Anil Kapoor revealed that Danny Boyle saw his film 'Taal' and his performance in it that made the Hollywood filmmaker offer him the hugely successful film 'Slumdog Millionaire'.

Anil also shared that he was destined to do this film as it was first offered to actor Govinda and then it came to him.

As the film, which also stars Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Akshaye Khanna, completes 23 years of its release on Saturday, Anil

took to social media to share some pictures from the shoot and pen a note.

"23 years of 'Taal'! I will forever be grateful to have been a part of this iconic movie. In many ways, I was destined to do it, as my role was first offered to Govinda but ultimately came to me." It was Taal that Danny Boyle saw and my performance in it that made him offer me Slumdog Millionaire, I thank my lucky stars for the love and support of the phenomenally talented showman @subhashghai1 saab and for 4 hugely successful milestone films with him!"

'Taal' released in 1999. The musical romantic drama is directed by Subhash Gahi. It was also dubbed in

Tamil as 'Thaalam'.

'Slumdog Millionaire' was nominated for ten Academy Awards in 2009 and won eight, the most for any film in 2008. The British drama film is loosely adapted from the novel 'Q & A' by Indian author Vikas Swarup, telling the story of 18-year-old Jamal Malik from the Juhu slums of Mumbai. Starring Dev Patel as Jamal, and filmed in India, it also stars Freida Pinto. As a contestant on 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', Jamal surprises everyone by being able to answer every question correctly, winning 20 million. Accused of cheating, Jamal recounts his life story to the police, illustrating how he is able to answer each question correctly.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Vedika