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INDIA NAME IS THERE IN EAST INDIA COMPANY AND SIMI AS WELL: PM

Attacking 'INDIA' during a rally, Modi said, "The Congress and its allies tried to change their name. If a generation or a company gets defamed, immediately the company's people start their work by installing a new board. Congress and its allied parties are copying such fraud companies and have changed the name from UPA to I.N.D.I.A. The name was changed so that they could hide the betrayal of the farmers in the name of loan waiver and can hide the matter of kneeling down in front of terrorism."



Team Absolute | Jaipur | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday attacked the Opposition alliance 'INDIA', alleging that India name is also there in East India Company and Student

Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as well. He said that India name is also there in East India Company. "Just as Mahatma Gandhi gave the slogan 'Quit India' for the British in the freedom struggle, similarly slogans like Corruption Quit India, Terrorism Quit India, Familyism Quit India are needed to make a prosperous India," said Modi. "The name India was not used to show devotion to India, but with the intention of looting India. Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) was formed during Congress regime, India was also there in it, but the aim was terrorism. This name was changed to Popular Front of India. New name, same old job. Had it cared about India, it would not have asked foreigners to interfere in India," said Modi. Attacking Congress on the recent

episode of Lal Diary as narrated by its sacked minister Rajendra Gudha, the Prime Minister said, "The Congress government means shop of loot and market of lies. The new product of 'loot ki dukaan' is Lal Diary." Modi further said that ever since the Congress government was formed in Rajasthan, the work of creating hurdles in development is going on. Earlier, in a programme held in Sikar, Modi released Rs 17,000 crore as the 14th installment of the Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. An installment of Rs 2000 was transferred to the accounts of around 9 crore farmers. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot was

also supposed to attend this programme, but he skipped it. The Central government also launched Urea Gold for the farmers. Modi said that the sack of urea which the farmers of the country are getting for Rs 266, is available in Pakistan for Rs 800. It is available in the neighboring country China for Rs 2,100 and in America for Rs 3,000.

NOT NAME, ONLY WORK MATTERS: BJP ON OPPOSITION'S 'INDIA'

New Delhi: Attacking Opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), BJP on Thursday said that only work matters and not the name adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working relentlessly for the growth of India. People of India know what is good for India and who is working for India relentlessly. They know very well that their Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working relentlessly for the growth of this country. "BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said at a press conference at the party headquarters.

'INDIA' not anti-PM but a fight to save democracy from dictatorship: Uddhav

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray reiterated that the national Opposition alliance INDIA is not a crusade against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but a fight against dictatorship to save Indian democracy. "It is not just a question of these parties' survival but that of democracy and independence of all institutions. The prime focus is on Opposition unity and a unified goal to save the country's democracy and its Independence without projecting any particular leader to drive it," said Thackeray. He said that all the Opposition leaders are grounded and nobody is 'dreaming' of leadership as the focus is on the country's future.

PM knows his ideology has burned Manipur: Rahul Gandhi

Opposition leaders from 17 parties all dressed in black clothes on Thursday held a meeting in the chamber of Leader of Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge to chalk out a strategy over their demand for a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a discussion over the situation in Manipur.

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his silence on Manipur violence, saying that he knows that his ideology has "burned" the northeastern state. He also hit out at the RSS and the BJP accusing them of only wanting to grab power without bothering about the pain and sufferings of the people. While addressing the Indian Youth Congress's (IYC) National Youth Convention titled 'Behtar Bharat Ki Bunyad' via video conferencing in Bengaluru from Kerala, the former Lok Sabha MP said, "All of you have seen what has happened in Manipur and what is happening there. And you will be surprised that the Prime Minister has not said a word about Manipur." The Congress leader said that the Prime Minister of the country must speak when a state is burning. "You must have felt that the Prime Minister should have visited Imphal and met people there. If there was any other Prime Minister from earlier times, they would have spoken to the people for sure," he said. Slamming the Prime Minister, Rahul Gandhi said, "All of you are surprised why the Prime Minister is not visiting Manipur or speaking about it. It's because he is the Prime Minister of a select few and the RSS." "He knows that his ideology has burned Manipur. But the pain and sorrow of the people of Manipur and the scar on the women of Manipur does not move Modi," he added.



INDIA BLOC MPS TO VISIT STRIFE HIT MANIPUR ON JULY 29-30

New Delhi: A delegation of 20 Opposition party MPs from the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will visit violence-hit Manipur on July 29 and 30 to get a first-hand account of the situation. A Congress leader said that a delegation of 20 MPs of INDIA will visit Manipur for two days and try to meet the victim families and people, who have taken refuge in the relief camps in the northeastern state and will try to get the first-hand account of the situation there.

TALK ABOUT 'RED TOMATOES' INSTEAD OF 'RED DIARY': GEHLOT TO PM

Jaipur: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday said that the talks about 'red diary' is nothing but an imaginary concept and the Prime Minister should talk about 'red tomatoes' instead of 'red diary'. "I know nothing of 'red diary' but I know about 'red cylinder' which has wreaked havoc and is a real loot, costing Rs 1150. People will show red flags to BJP," the Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said while interacting with the beneficiaries of the scheme who availed LPG cylinders for Rs 500. The Chief Minister transferred Rs 155 crore to the accounts of 36 lakh beneficiaries. "Red diary" is nothing but an imaginary concept. The PM, instead of talking about it, should talk about red tomatoes and the red faces of people (angry with inflation)," he said.

SC agrees to extend tenure of ED chief Sanjay Mishra till September 15

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to extend, till September 15, the tenure of the present ED Director Sanjay Mishra, who was due to demit office on July 31 in accordance with a recent SC judgement. "In ordinary circumstances we would not have accepted such an application...taking into consideration larger public interest we permit the ED Director to continue till September 15, 2023," a special bench of Justices B.R. Gavai, Vikram Nath, and Sanjay Karol said in its order. However, the bench clarified that it will not entertain any further application by the Centre seeking extension of tenure of the present ED Director and Mishra will cease to hold the post from the midnight of September 15/16, 2023. The Union government had requested the top court to extend Mishra's tenure up to



October 15. The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to constitute a special bench to hear the Centre's application on July 27 after Mehta sought an urgent listing of the matter.

INDIA BLOC THIRD MEETING ON AUGUST 25, 26 IN MUMBAI

New Delhi: The third meeting of the opposition parties of Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will be held in Mumbai on August 25 and 26, sources said on Thursday. According to sources, the meeting will be held for two days in Mumbai which will be attended by all the 26 parties of INDIA bloc. The second meeting of the opposition meeting took place in Karnataka's Bengaluru on July 17 and 18. The name 'INDIA' was decided during its second meeting which was attended by 26 opposition parties. The venue, Mumbai, for the third meeting was also decided during the same meeting in Bengaluru, which was also attended by former Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

DGCA OKAYS AIR ASIA, AIR INDIA EXPRESS MERGER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday gave its go ahead to the Tata Group's initiative to merge the budget airline AIX Connect (previously known as AirAsia India) with Air India Express, a senior DGCA official confirmed to reporter. This marks a crucial step before the planned legal merger of the two entities can take place. "The airline has now received regulatory approvals to operate its flights under the 'Air India Express' branding. This development marks a significant fast-tracking of the integration efforts, including harmonisation of customer touch points, products, and services across both airlines," the airline said in a state-



ment. "The approval from the regulator allows both Air India Express Ltd (AIXL) and AIX Connect (AIXC) flights to be marketed, distributed and operated under a common brand name 'Air India Express', prior to the subsequent scheduled legal merger of the two entities," it said. "The proposal to synergise the consumer offerings under a unified and renewed brand within the next few months demonstrates the commitment to a superlative customer promise, streamlining product and service standards and unlocking synergies between the two companies," it further said.

MEA takes strong note of stapled visa issued to Indian sportspersons

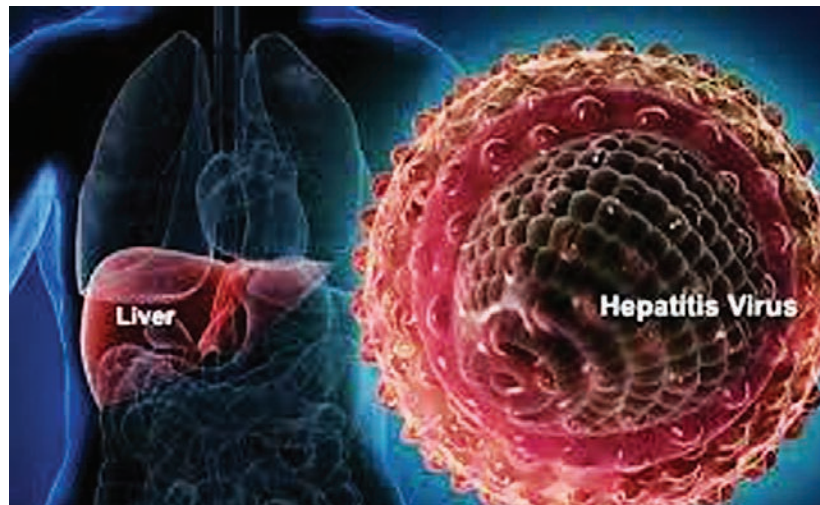
New Delhi: India on Thursday said that it has lodged strong protest with China after some of the players were issued stapled visa, dubbing the action "unacceptable" and India reserves the right to suitably respond to such actions. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday said: "On stapled visa issue, our longstanding and consistent position is that there should be no discrimination or differential treatment on the basis of domicile or ethnicity in the visa regime for the Indian citizens holding valid Indian passports." He said that it has come to their notice that stapled visas were issued to some of our citizens representing our country in an international sports event in China.

World Hepatitis Day HEALTH EXPERTS STRESS NEED FOR AWARENESS TO TACKLE VIRAL HEPATITIS

- ▶ Hepatitis C symptoms are observed very late until it's reached the advanced stage.
- ▶ However, some symptoms may include fatigue, itching, nausea, muscle weakness, stomach pain and jaundice. These symptoms are non specific, which makes it difficult to diagnose Hepatitis C. Diagnosis of Hepatitis C can be done using blood tests for antibodies.
- ▶ Women with Hepatitis C are recommend testing the baby when they are at least 18 months old.
- ▶ Treatment options will help people clear the virus. Medications are very beneficial. For anyone with liver damage, doctors will recommend them to avoid usage of alcohol, drugs or tobacco. The general medications are also reviewed.

Hyderabad | Agencies

Every year, July 28 is observed as World Hepatitis Day, to help create awareness in people about the effects of hepatitis that can cause liver inflammation, liver cancer and major liver related diseases. This year, the World Health Organisation (WHO) World Hepatitis Day theme is "One Life, One Liver", which focuses on creating awareness in the public for prevention of liver cancer, early detection and available facilities for prescribed treatment, stressing authorities to quicken the necessary steps to eradicate the viral infection to meet the 2030 global health targets. Viral hepatitis is a global health problem that caused 1.34 million deaths in 2015, which is higher than the deaths caused by tuberculosis and HIV. Hepatitis B and C are solely responsible for 96 per cent of hepatitis mortality. There are many different types of Hepatitis viruses (A to E), but B and E are the most concerning types that caused more than 8,000 new infections everyday



which are undetectable. In India, more than 40 million people are chronically affected with Hepatitis B and 6-12 million people are infected with Hepatitis C. HAV is the most common type of hepatitis that is observed in children, which made it a public health problem. India is currently in the category of intermediate zone (4 per cent). Hepatitis B positivity in the population ranges from 1.1 per cent to 12.2 per cent, with a prevalence of 3-4 per cent. On the other hand, Hepatitis C antibody prevalence is estimated inbetween 0.09 per cent to 15 per cent. Some regional level studies show that 6-12 million people in India have Hepatitis C.

HC RESERVES ORDER ON ASI SURVEY OF GYANVAPI MOSQUE; TO ANNOUNCE ON AUG 3

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court has reserved its order on the ASI survey of the Gyanvapi mosque. The court will announce its verdict on August 3, an official said on Thursday, adding the stay on ASI Survey will continue till then. The Anjuman Mosque Committee moved the high court on Wednesday challenging the order of the Varanasi Court directing the ASI to survey the mosque premises (except for wuzukhana). This order was passed on an application filed by four Hindu women worshippers who are party to a suit filed before the District Court seeking year-round access to worship inside mosque premises. The Anjuman Committee argued in the high court that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was never a party to the suit or never noticed by the Varanasi Court.



Minor girl rape case

'NON-REMOVAL OF RAHUL'S TWEET CONTRIBUTES TO DISCLOSING IDENTITY', NCPDR TELLS DELHI HC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) through an affidavit has told the Delhi High Court that micro-blogging site Twitter's decision to not remove Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tweet, wherein he had allegedly revealed the identity of a minor Dalit girl, who was raped and murdered in 2021, contributes to disclosing the victim's identity.

In March, the high court had sought a response from the NCPDR on a plea seeking FIR registration against Rahul Gandhi in the matter.

A nine-year-old minor girl had died under suspicious circumstances on August 1, 2021, with her parents alleging that she was raped, murdered and cremated by a crematorium's priest in southwest Delhi's Old Nangal village.

A social activist Makarand Suresh Mhadlekar had moved a plea in the high court in 2021, alleging that Rahul Gandhi had violated the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and the Protection of Children from Sexual



Offences Act, 2012, which prohibits the identification of minors who have been sexually assaulted.

The NCPDR in its affidavit has said that though Twitter has withheld the post in India on receiving a notice sent by it, the social media platform failed to remove the tweet altogether which is still available for the public to be seen outside India.

It has said that in order to fully give effect to its obligations, Twitter ought to have removed the impugned tweet from its platform and the same

should not be hidden only in the "Indian territory".

"The object is to conceal the identity of the minor girl child and hence merely hiding the post in question from Indian domain shall not suffice the purpose of hiding the identity of the victim. True meaning and effect has to be given in letter and spirit to Right to Privacy and Right to dignity as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," the affidavit reads.

It further says that it is pertinent to mention here that the said post can

still be accessed and is still available in public domain throughout the world. Consequently, the inaction of the Twitter Inc contributes into disclosure of the identity of the victim, which is in violation of country's laws.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma has granted eight weeks' time to other respondents to file their affidavits and has posted the case for hearing on November 23.

The NCPDR had earlier told the court that it wants to support and join the petitioner in the matter.

It had told the court that the offence of making such a disclosure still exists, despite Twitter's claim that it had removed Gandhi's tweet. Sajjan Poovayya, a senior lawyer representing Twitter, had argued that "nothing survived" in the petition because the contested post has been "geo-blocked" and is currently not accessible in India.

He had added that Rahul Gandhi's account was suspended by the social media platform but was later restored. Nonetheless, the petitioner and the NCPDR's counsel argued that the offence still exists.

Manipur Assembly session likely to be held from July-end or early August

Imphal | Agencies

The Manipur government, responding to the demands of opposition parties and various civil society organisations, on Thursday decided to convene the state Assembly session this month end or from early August.

Addressing reporters after a cabinet meeting, Manipur Health and Family Welfare Minister Sapam Ranjan Singh said that the business of the proposed Assembly session is yet to be decided.

Political circles said that it is obvious that the ongoing ethnic violence and related issues would be discussed in the session.

Meanwhile on reports of a section of the media that the Manipur government did not take care of BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte, who was brutally assaulted by a mob in Imphal on May 4, Singh said that after his medical treatment in the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal for few days, the



state government has arranged air ambulance to shift the legislator to Delhi's Apollo Hospital for better medical care.

Singh, who is also the Manipur government spokesman, said that Valte, who belongs to the Kuki-

Zomi tribal community, is in stable condition and discharged from hospital.

The minister while talking with the media denied that the mob gave him electric shocks as reported in a section of the media.

PM Modi has time to make political speeches across country but not in Parliament: Kharge

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying that he did not want to speak in Parliament over Manipur violence, which is a temple of democracy but has ample time to make political speeches across the country which is "tarnishing democracy".

He also said that the government which does not listen to the cries of people of Manipur is a blot on humanity.

In a tweet, Kharge said, "Burning of Manipur is a black chapter for the country. The government, which did not take note of cries of the people of Manipur for



the last 85 days, is a blot on humanity. The Parliament session is going on and instead of speaking on the floor of the House, the Prime Minister is making speeches by visiting places, this is tarnishing democracy." "By abusing opposition, the misdeeds of the Modi government cannot be erased. Only the anti-dalits, tribes and backward people can make fun of black

clothes, but for us black is a symbol of protest and strength. Black color is a symbol of justice and a symbol of dignity. The people of Manipur deserve justice, peace and respect," the LoP said. He said, "The BJP cannot run away from its responsibility by pushing the life of Manipur into darkness, by adopting dictatorial attitude, by diverting attention from the issue.

DELHI TRAFFIC POLICE ISSUES ADVISORY AHEAD OF MUHARRAM PROCESSIONS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In view of Muharram on Friday and Saturday, the Delhi Traffic Police have outlined the routes and timings of the main Tazia processions and also put in place a comprehensive traffic diversion plan to manage the flow of vehicles during the event.

According to traffic advisory, the main Tazia processions are set to begin on the night of Friday at approximately 9 p.m from various locations.

One of the major routes will start from Chhatta Shahzad, Kalan Mahal, passing through Kamra Bangash, Chitli Qabar, Churi Walan, Matia Mahal, Jama Masjid, Chawri Bazar, Hauz Qazi, and then returning via the same route. Another significant procession will commence from Old Police Chowk, taking the route through Ashok Basti, Qutub Road, Khari Baoli, Lal Kuan, Hauz Kazi, Chawri Bazar, Jama Masjid, and vice versa.

Furthermore, Tazias from Nizamuddin, Okhla, and Mehrauli will directly reach Karbala, while



other Tazia processions will be carried out in various districts of Delhi and terminate at local Karbalas in their respective areas.

The traffic police further said that on Saturday around 11 a.m, the processions will reform and follow the same route, assembling at Kalan Mahal and then proceeding to

Karbala via Pahari Bhojla, Chitli Qabar, Matia Mahal Chowk, Jama Masjid, Chawri Bazar, Chowk Hauz Qazi, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi Railway Station, Connaught Place, and other key areas.

To ensure smooth traffic flow during the processions, the Delhi Traffic Police has devised a diversion plan

for Delhi Transport Corporation and other city buses.

The plan includes curtailment and rerouting of buses on various roads such as Desh Bandhu Gupta Road, W-Point, A-Point, Shanti Path, Panchsheel, Sardar Patel Marg, Arbindo Chowk, Aurobindo Marg, South End, Prithviraj Road, and more.

NAGALAND POLICE TO PROBE ILLEGAL TRANSPORT OF AMMUNITION BY COP, OTHERS

Kohima | Agencies

Nagaland Police have constituted a high level committee, headed by an Inspector General of Police (IGP), to investigate the involvement of a police officer and five others in the unauthorised transportation of ammunition, an official said on Thursday.

Nagaland Police had intercepted a car in the 6th Mile area in Chumoukedima in Dimapur on July 10 and around 2,500 different types of ammunition, concealed in rice bags, were recovered. Police inspector Michael Yanthan, in-charge of Police central store in Chumoukedima, four civilians, including a woman and a deputy kilonser (minister) of NSCN (IM) were arrested in this regard.

Director General of Police (DGP) Rupin Sharma said that a high level committee headed by an Inspector General of Police would probe the matter.



The senior police officer said that the Inspector who was in charge of the store, acted in his personal capacity by stealing the ammunition and no conspiracy angle had been found yet. Sharma said that the police have been monitoring the incident very closely and established the money trail. The main accused, Yanthan, has confessed to his crime.

He confessed that he was paid Rs 4.25 lakh by one person to sell about 1,500 rounds of SLR ammunition and 1,000 rounds of 5.56 mm calibre bullets of INSAS rifles.

The arrested woman confessed to the police that the consignments were collected from the NSCN-IM leader, who also told the police that he had bought the ammunition from Yanthan. The DGP further informed that the arrested persons are now in judicial custody. The police department has proposed to the government to put the inspector under suspension.

Hoax threat of flight crash at Delhi airport leads to police investigation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A recent incident of hoax threat at the Delhi Airport has prompted a thorough investigation by the Delhi Police.

On the night between July 24 and July 25, an unidentified individual made a threatening call to the police, claiming that a flight crash was imminent on July 25.

In response, the police registered a case under the relevant sections of the law and initiated a probe.

The caller, speaking in Hindi, said, "Kal ek flight crash ho jayegi" (a flight will crash tomorrow). However, on July 25, no such incident occurred, leading the police to conclude that the call was indeed a hoax.

First Information Report (FIR) filed in connection with the incident indicated that the alleged caller deliberately created fear and nuisance among the public by giving false and misleading information, causing unnecessary panic. The police quickly delved into the matter after receiving the PCR call, which



was forwarded to the investigators for further examination. "The subsequent enquiry revealed that the mobile number used to make the threatening call was registered under the name of one Abhinandan Kumar, a resident of Gaya in Bihar," as per FIR accessed by reporter. Moreover, I J James, the shift in-charge of DIAL Security and Vigilance at Terminal-3, IGI Airport, filed a complaint that they received information from the Air Traffic Control (ATC) in Delhi about the threat conveyed through the Delhi Police, warning of an imminent air crash at the IGI Airport on July 25.

DALIT WOMAN STRIPPED, THRASHED OVER EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIR IN JHARKHAND

Ranchi: A Dalit woman was stripped, thrashed and tied to an eucalyptus tree over her alleged extra marital affair in the Sariya police station area in Jharkhand's Giridih district.

The woman in her complaint said that on Wednesday night at 11 p.m. she received a call and was asked to come out of her home. However, when she came out of her home, two youths standing outside her house forcefully made her sit on motorcycle and took her one kilometre away, where she was stripped, thrashed, and tied to the tree.

The woman remained tied to the tree whole night, and after locals spotted her and informed police, she was rescued.

Police are questioning two youths in this connection.

Extremely heavy rainfall in Telangana, west India, rainfall pattern shifting to east India from Saturday

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Extremely heavy rainfall is likely to continue over Telangana, Vidarbha, Konkan, Goa and ghat areas of central Maharashtra on Thursday while a decrease in rainfall activity over south peninsular India and increase in rainfall activity over East India will take place from Saturday, the IMD said.

In a bulletin, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that northwest India is expected to experience light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall, with isolated heavy rainfall over Uttarakhanda from Thursday to July 31.

"Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi, and west Uttar Pradesh are likely to witness such rainfall from Thursday to Saturday, while east Uttar Pradesh will experience it from Friday to July 31. Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir will also receive rainfall on Thursday and Friday, with isolated very heavy rainfall expected in Himachal Pradesh and west Rajasthan on Thursday," it said.

In central India, light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is anticipated from Thursday to Saturday, with isolated heavy rainfall. Vidarbha will likely experience isolated extremely heavy falls on Thursday, and Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha will have isolated very heavy rainfall on Thursday and Friday, respectively.

The weather agency further predicted that west India is expected to receive light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall



from Thursday to Saturday.

"Konkan, Goa, and ghat areas of Madhya Maharashtra will likely experience isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall during this period, while Gujarat and Marathwada will receive rainfall on Thursday and Friday. Konkan, Goa and ghat areas of Madhya Maharashtra may also see isolated extremely heavy rainfall on Thursday, with Mumbai city and adjoining areas likely to receive very heavy rainfall on Thursday and Friday," said the IMD. South India is expected to have light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall from Thursday to Friday, it said.

"Telangana, coastal Karnataka, and north interior Karnataka will likely experience isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall on these dates, and Rayalaseema and south interior Karnataka on Thursday. Telangana might witness isolated extremely heavy rainfall on Thursday," said the IMD. It also predicted that east India is expected to have light to moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall, with isolated heavy rainfall over Odisha from till July 31.

"Sub-Himalaya West Bengal & Sikkim will likely receive rainfall from Thursday to Saturday, Jharkhand from Saturday to July 31, and Bihar on July 30 and 31," it said.

Northeast India is anticipated to experience light to moderate fairly widespread rainfall, with isolated heavy rainfall from Thursday to July 31. "Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya may witness isolated very heavy rainfall on Thursday and Friday," it added.



MP TO INCLUDE 'BAIGA' AMONG THE MOST BACKWARD TRIBES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced to include the particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) Baiga among the most backward tribes in the state.

Baiga also have sub-castes like - Bijhar, Narotia, Bharotiya, Nahar, Rai maina and Kath maina.

The largest number of Baiga tribes are found in Mandla, Balaghat, Singrauli and Shahdol districts of Madhya Pradesh.

According to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, at least seven tribes communities (Abujh Maria, Baiga, Bhabra, Birhor, Hill Korba, Kamar and Saharia) in Madhya Pradesh have been categorised under the PVTG.

"Particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) Baiga of Singrauli district would be included among the most backward tribes," CM Chouhan said.

He also announced to upgrade the



existing 'Charan Paduka Yojana' scheme, which was introduced ahead of the assembly polls in 2018 under which, the government provides slip-

pers, saris and water bottles to 15 lakh tendu leaf pluckers of the state. Now, the government has decided to provide umbrellas to them and for this

purpose, an amount of Rs 200 each would be given to each beneficiary.

"I used to feel bad when my sisters used to go barefoot in the forests to pluck tendu leaves and thorn pricked their feet. If the Chief Minister is their brother, why should his sisters walk barefoot? Keeping this in mind, we have upgraded the Mukhyamantri Charan Paduka Yojana. Now, we have decided that umbrellas will also be given to the tendu leaf collectors. For this, an amount of Rs 200 each is being sent to their accounts," Chouhan said. The Chief Minister made some tendu patta collectors wear slippers with his own hands.

He said, "The double-engine governments are constantly working for the service and welfare of the poor. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is providing free food grains, housing, health and all necessary services to the poor. Poor people, who are landless, are being given pattas under the Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana in the state."

Shah chairs BJP core committee meeting in Bhopal, discusses poll strategy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday evening chaired a meeting of the party's core committee in Bhopal in view of the upcoming Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh.

The meeting lasted for more than three hours, during which various poll-related issues were discussed. The formation of the proposed committees in view of the elections was also finalised during the meeting. Announcement of these committees is possible on Thursday.

BJP sources said that besides discussions on the party's strategy for the upcoming elections, Shah also reviewed the progress of tasks assigned to state leaders.

Earlier Shah reached Bhopal airport on Wednesday evening, where



he was received by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and state BJP chief Vishnu Dutt Sharma.

Besides Chauhan, and Sharma, Bhupendra Yadav, Narendra Singh Tomar,

Jyotiraditya Scindia, Prahlad Patel, Kailash Vijayvargiya, B.L. Santosh, Narottam Mishra, Murlidhar Rao, and Shivprakash were among those present in the meeting.

Sub-inspector opens fire on senior inside police station in MP's Rewa

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A sub-inspector rank police officer opened fire on his senior colleague in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh.

The incident occurred inside the Civil Line police station on Thursday.

As per the official report, sub-inspector B R Singh entered into inspector Jitendra Sharma's cabin and all of sudden opened fire on him. Sharma is posted as in-charge of Civil Line police station.

The shocking incident has brought Rewa district police on their toes as they are yet to ascertain what led junior to open fire on his senior. The reason behind the incident was not immediately known.



Sharma was rushed to a private hospital, said the police official, but did not provide further details. Asked what led to the firing incident, Rewa Superintendent of Police (SP)

Vivek Singh said he will provide details later.

Sources said that inspector Sharma has sustained bullet injuries on his neck and was recuperating at a private hospital in Rewa.

Spice trader, who committed suicide, was supposed to appear in court in cheque bounce case

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A 35-year-old spice trader, who allegedly committed suicide in Madhya Pradesh's business capital Indore, was supposed to appear in a district court on Thursday in a cheque bounce case, police said. Preliminary investigation revealed that Virendra Sen had borrowed some money from three persons - Shivshankar Sharma, Sunil Raikwar and Rajpal, however, it could not be ascertained what amount of loan was taken, the police said.

"The deceased family members were asked to submit the details regarding loan amount, money returned to lenders and also if any property was usurped, however they could not furnish these details. Since the deceased had mentioned about loan and harassment in his video



before the suicide, and a written suicide note was also recovered, we have booked all persons under

Section 306 (Abatement of suicide)," the police said. Before hanging self to death inside

his house in Musakhedi locality, Sen had written a five-page suicide note and also filmed a video detailing his grievances to the Indore Police Commissioner.

"Money was borrowed at different times, but the exact amount could not be ascertained. Shivshankar Sharma has lodged a cheque bounce case against Sen and an arrest warrant was also issued.

The accused persons have also revealed that they had given money to Sen. Three persons were arrested," police said.

In the video that Sen had recorded just before the hanging himself to death on Tuesday, he had said, "I don't even have money to pay an advocate's fees. I have no option but to end my life and urge you (the Police Commissioner) not to trouble my family after my end."

Every farm will get irrigation water and every house will get tap water: CM Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the area under irrigation is being increased in the state. Through various irrigation schemes, water will be supplied to every farm and to every household through Jal-Jeevan Mission. Bahoriband Lift Micro Irrigation Project worth Rs 1011 crore has been approved for Katni area. The Bahoriband lift micro-irrigation project will irrigate 80,000 acres and provide water to 5 villages of Katni tehsil, 86 of Bahoriband, 17 of Rithi and 43 villages of Slimnabad. Through Jal-Jeevan Mission, 109 villages of Rithi Janpad in Katni district, 50 villages of Katni Janpad, along with 159 villages in Pathari area of Katni district, will now easily be provided with tap water in every house. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a large public gathering in the Vikas Parv at Bargaon in Katni



district. He performed bhoomipujan for development works worth more than Rs 313 crore in the area. Benefits were also distributed to the beneficiaries of various schemes. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan made several announcements for the development of the area. Chief Minister Chouhan said that continuous efforts are being made for the empowerment of women in the state. There are more than 45 lakh

ladli laxmis in the state and approximately 1.25 crore Ladli Bahnas. Now women of 21 years of age and those from families with less than 5 acres of land but owning tractors are also eligible for Ladli Behna Scheme. Today, women are running the government due to 50 per cent reservation in panchayats and urban bodies. Today, 23-year-old female Sarpanch and Katni Mayor are sitting on the dais here.

It is a matter of pride for us. The amount of Ladli Bahna will be gradually increased to Rs 3000. Chief Minister Chouhan said that dignity and honour of women in the state is ensured entirely. Liquor shops have been closed. There is a provision of capital punishment for hanging rapists.

MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE BY CM CHOUHAN

- Sub tehsil will be created in Badgaon.
- Panumariya Nagar Panchayat is being constituted.
- Faculty of Science will be started in Higher Secondary School, Bargaon.
- A new building of Higher Secondary School, Bakal, will be constructed.
- Revenue Inspector Board will be formed in Bachhaiya village of Bahoriband tehsil.
- School in Parsel will be upgraded

Congress's Big Outreach To Farmers, BJP Expands Scheme

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Both BJP and the Congress rushed to make announcements in view of the upcoming elections in Madhya Pradesh, hours ahead of Home Minister Amit Shah's arrival in Bhopal for brainstorming with top BJP leaders.

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath announced waiver of farm loans and pending electricity bills of farmers on coming to power in the state. The waivers were part of the Kisan Nyay Yojana, which also promised at least 12 hours uninterrupted free electricity for 5 HP water pumps for the farmers.

Under the scheme, cases lodged against farmers over protests during the present BJP regime in the state will also be withdrawn, promised



Nath. The announcement came amid reports that the BJP government in MP will soon launch a scheme providing cooking gas cylinders for women at Rs 500, which is same as one of Congress's five poll guarantees in the state.

The scheme, started in 2018 to benefit 15 lakh Tendu leaf collectors, earlier had the provision of slippers, sarees, and water flasks for the beneficiaries.

He also declared the inclusion of the Baiga tribe, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG), among the district's most backward tribes.

management.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan addressed a month-long Vikas Parva event in eastern MP's Singrauli and made several announcements aimed at the tribals and women.

He said that umbrellas will now be provided to the Tendu leaf collectors across the state under the existing Charan Paduka Yojana and Rs 200 will be credited to their bank accounts.

The scheme, started in 2018 to benefit 15 lakh Tendu leaf collectors, earlier had the provision of slippers, sarees, and water flasks for the beneficiaries.

He also declared the inclusion of the Baiga tribe, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG), among the district's most backward tribes.

CM CHOUHAN PAID TRIBUTE TO FORMER PRESIDENT BHARAT RATNA DR. KALAM ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid floral tributes to Bharat Ratna Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India, famous as great scientist and missile man, by garlanding his portrait in the auditorium at the residence office.

Dr. Kalam was born on 15 October 1931 in village Dhanushkodi (Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu). He was the eleventh elected President of the Republic of India. Dr. Kalam served the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for four decades. He played an important role in India's space programme and military missile development. He played a decisive, organisational and technical role in the nuclear tests. Dr. Kalam passed away on 27 July 2015. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was awarded the highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna.

SBI Life Insurance registers New Business Premium of Rs 6,207 crores for this period

Team Absolute | Bhopal

SBI Life Insurance, one of the leading life insurers in the country registered a New Business Premium of Rs.6,207 crores for the period ended on 30th June, 2023 vis-a-vis Rs.5,591 crores for the period ended June 30, 2022. Single premium has increased by 18% over the corresponding period ended on 30th June, 2022.

Establishing a clear focus on protection, SBI Life's protection new business premium stood at Rs 781 crores for the period ended June 30, 2023 marking a growth of 12%. Protection Individual new business premium registered a growth of 5% and stood at Rs. 213 crores for the period ended June 30, 2023. Individual New Business Premium stands at Rs. 4,059 crores with 18% growth over the corresponding period ended on 30th June, 2022. SBI Life's profit after tax



PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

- Private Market leadership in Individual NBP of Rs. 4,059 crores with 18% growth and market share of 26.8%.
- APE stands at Rs. 3,033 crores.
- 17% growth in Protection APE to Rs. 373 crores.
- Value of New Business (VoNB) stands at Rs. 873 crores.
- VoNB Margin stands at 28.8%.
- 45% growth in PAT to Rs. 381 crores.
- Robust solvency ratio of 2.15.
- 57% growth in Annuity & Pension New Business to Rs.1,826 crores.
- Assets under Management stands at Rs. 3,28,283 crores with 25% growth.

stands at Rs. 381 crores for the period ended June 30, 2023.

The company's solvency ratio continues to remain robust at 2.15 as on June 30, 2023 as against the regulatory requirement of 1.50.

SBI Life's AUM also continued to grow at 25% to Rs. 3,28,283 crores as on June 30, 2023 from Rs. 2,62,349 crores as on June 30, 2022, with the debt-equity mix of 69:31. Over 94% of the debt investments are in AAA and Sovereign instruments.

The company has a diversified distribution network of 2,89,162 trained insurance professionals and wide presence with 996 offices across the country, comprising of strong bancassurance channel, agency channel and others comprising of corporate agents, brokers, Point of sale persons (POS), insurance marketing firms, web aggregators and direct business.

Through GSP, skilled manpower will be available to the investors in the state itself : Minister Scindia

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Technical Education Minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia said that after the start of the Global Skill Park, skilled youth will be available according to their industry to the investors coming to the state. Along with this, youth will also get employment opportunities. Minister Scindia was reviewing the progress of the Global Skill Park under construction at Narela Sankri.

Minister Scindia said that there are immense possibilities of employment in every sector, the only need is to develop skills. The biggest contribution in making India a developed country is the skill development sector. The Global Skill Park will include such courses which are the need of the hour. The focus will be on soft skills, aviation related courses, communication skills etc. Scindia asked various industries and establishments to talk about setting up labs in the Global Skills Park. It was



also asked to collect this information that in which sector skilled manpower is needed more.

Scindia said that GSP is the dream project of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. In this, advanced courses like animation gaming, cyber security, coding, robotics, data science, artificial intelligence will be included. Youth will have to be connected with new technology like AI, machine learning. Scindia instructed to complete the construction works of the park within the time limit. Additional Chief Secretary Technical Education Manu Srivastava, Director Skill Development Harjinder Singh and representatives of various establishments related to construction works were present in the meeting.



EDITOR'S SPECS

BJP prepares for 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in poll-bound MP

In view of the upcoming Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah took stock of the party's poll preparedness in Bhopal and discussed 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra', likely to be flagged-off from four different areas in September. In the late Wednesday night meeting of party's core committee, Shah also reviewed the progress of tasks assigned to the core committee during the last meeting held on July 11, sources said. The core committee has been directed to prepare a complete blue-print regarding the Yatra, which will be flagged off from Ujjain, Gwalior, Chitrakoot and Jabalpur districts. Sources said Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state Home and Law Minister Narottam Mishra, Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel, party national general secretary Kailsh Vijayvargiya and state unit head V. Sharma are likely to lead the 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also likely to participate in one of these yatras, however, it would be finalised after the complete roadmap is prepared. During the meeting, the Union Ministers - Narendra Singh Tomar, who has been appointed as the party's election convenor for Madhya Pradesh and Jyotiraditya Scindia, apprised about the party's preparations in Gwalior-Chambal division. Shah also held one-on-one discussion with Vijayvargiya about Malwa-Nimar regions. Sources also said that the BJP has planned to set up a state election committee of 16 members, including Chief Minister Chouhan and state unit head V. D. Sharma. The party is likely to announce the name of the state election committee members in the next couple of days.

AIUDF IS KEEN, BUT ASSAM CONG FIRM ON KEEPING AJMAL OUT OF INDIA

Tanuj Dhar

As many as 26 opposition parties, including the Congress, have forged themselves into an alliance named 'INDIA'.

In Assam, though, the Congress began to combine opposition forces much before the formation of 'INDIA'.

The state leaders of the grand old party were successful in bringing together 12 opposition parties under a single umbrella.

The joint opposition forum included Left parties, Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi's Rajgor Dol, former All Assam Students Union (AASU) leader Lurinjyoti Gogoi's Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP), and others.

But the joint forum lacks a prominent player in Assam politics - Badruddin Ajmal's All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF).

Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress and Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were also not given a place in the opposition forum.

Following the announcement of 'INDIA', the situation has changed to a great extent. Both Trinamool Congress and AAP are now constituents of the opposition alliance but the AIUDF is still out of the alliance.

Aminul Islam, an MLA from Mankachar in Assam and general secretary of AIUDF told IANS:

"One of the key players in the alliance, Nitish Kumar met us in Patna a few weeks ago. Our leader Badruddin Ajmal was also present there. As per Bihar Chief Minister's advice, we also met Sharad Pawar in Mumbai. They were very eager to take us into the alliance. But it is true that we were not invited to the meetings that happened later."

Since its inception in 2005, AIUDF has been a prominent factor in Assam politics. In the 2011 assembly election, they became the primary opposition party in the state with 18 MLAs.

In 2016, the number of seats



dropped a little to 13. However, in the last assembly polls, Badruddin Ajmal's party managed to win 16 seats. Later, one of its MLAs resigned from the party and was re-elected on a BJP ticket.

Out of 14 MP seats in Assam, in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, AIUDF won three seats. The tally decreased in the 2019 general election and only Badruddin Ajmal himself could win the party bastion Dhubri seat.

In the 2021 assembly election, Congress and AIUDF forged a grand alliance to oust the BJP from power in Assam. The combination won more than 40 seats but failed to attain a magic figure in the 126-member legislative assembly.

The relations between the two parties deteriorated further and after a hitch in Rajya Sabha polls over cross-voting in favour of a BJP candidate, Congress denounced the alliance.

Aminul Islam said: "It was the Congress MLAs who voted for the BJP. They even announced that the traitors would be punished. It is more than one and half years, the Congress could not take any action against its MLAs who voted for the BJP candidate."

He further said that at present Assam has nearly 40 per cent of the Muslim population. Congress has lost its base among many communities, like 'tea garden people', Ahom, etc. So, they want to bank on the Muslim votes. But minority people have full faith in

Badruddin Ajmal and they will vote for the AIUDF only.

According to Islam, Congress has been trying hard to mislead Muslim voters by saying that AIUDF is a B team of the BJP.

"We are completely sure that Congress would fail in their tactics. Congress has forged alliances with parties most of which have no representations either in the assembly or Parliament barring a few. These small players cannot help them to win seats... rather we firmly believe that AIUDF will next at least three MPs to Lok Sabha next year," he added.

The AIUDF MLA also mentioned that their party was an ally of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and they would support 'INDIA' after the Lok Sabha polls. He remarked: "We are against BJP and cannot join the NDA. So, we have decided to support the opposition alliance."

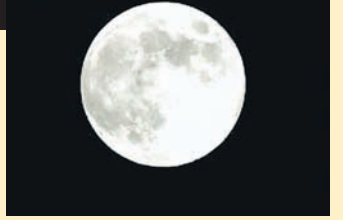
However, the opposition leader in the Assam assembly and senior Congress MLA Debabrata Saikia said: "It is AIUDF leaders who are misleading the people. They cannot win seats. Our state president Bhupen Bora for the last one and a half years repeated the same stand that AIUDF cannot be accommodated in the opposition alliance. They tried to be a part of 'INDIA', but no one paid any heed to them. They went to Patna and other places and they had to return empty handed."

He also made it very clear that no Congress leaders contacted AIUDF to join the opposition alliance.

"When they went to Patna and Mumbai, I said strongly that if Nitish Kumar or Sharad Pawar think that they need AIUDF either in Bihar or Maharashtra to accumulate votes for them, they can have an alliance with them in their states. But Assam Congress believes that AIUDF is a non-entity and so there is no need to include Badruddin Ajmal in the opposition fold," Saikia added.

As global race for moon heats up, India eyes lunar natural resources

Shrey Srivastava



In 1969, a defining moment in human history occurred when American astronaut Neil Armstrong took his historic steps on the moon, becoming the first person ever to do so. This remarkable achievement not only opened the door of possibilities for other nations to explore the moon but also ignited a global "race for the moon". Later many countries tried to land on the moon in which some succeeded and some failed.

According to Statista, the long-term goal for nations is to create a permanent base on the moon in order to exploit its natural resources, such as water and oxygen (extracted from rocks), precious metals, rocks and rare earths, and Helium-3 (to create fuel suitable for fusion energy generation). The race for the moon is also starting anew as several more countries and even private companies have announced lunar missions. Last week, India's 'Babubali' rocket successfully put the moon spacecraft -- Chandrayaan-3 -- into orbit in a copy book style.

The LVM-3, the country's heavy rocket, nicknamed 'Babubali' carried the 3.8-tonne Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft like the hero in the film of the same name lifts a heavy lingam, and slung the moon-bound craft in its intended earth orbit.

In August last year, South Korea launched its first-ever lunar mission. The mission was called the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter (KPLO), also known as Danuri. The mission was managed by the Korean Aerospace Research Institute (KARI). The goal of Danuri was to test South Korea's lunar spacecraft technology.

The US space agency NASA plans to launch its next moon mission in 2024 -- called Artemis II, which will take astronauts to orbit the

moon. The US space agency plans to launch the Artemis III mission in 2025 or 2026, bringing the first woman and person of colour to the moon. It will be the first time that humans will walk on the moon since the Apollo missions ended in 1972. NASA has stated that the mission will be carried out using Elon Musk's SpaceX Starship.

Musk has previously expressed his intention of creating a base on the moon and a city on Mars.

"To really get the public real fired up, I think we've got to have a base on the moon," Musk said at the 2017 International Space Station Research and Development (ISSR&D) conference in the US.

Moreover, Russia's long-awaited and delayed robotic re-introduction to moon exploration, Luna-25, is at its launch site. According to the Russian state news agency TASS, the mission will launch on August 11. China has also announced plans with Russia to set up a joint base on the moon by 2035, but no timeline has been drawn up for the project.

China previously successfully landed its probes Chang'e 3 in 2013, Chang'e 4 in January 2019 and Chang'e 5 in 2020.

India is likely to collaborate with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on a new lunar mission. Space scientists would send a lunar rover and lander to explore the moon's southern pole as part of this mission. Twelve US astronauts have walked on the moon between July 21, 1969, and December 14 1972.

international

INDIAN CREWMAN DEAD, 20 OTHERS HURT AS SHIP CATCHES FIRE OFF DUTCH COAST

London | Agencies

An Indian crewman was killed and at least 20 others injured when a fire broke out onboard a cargo ship carrying nearly 3,000 vehicles, off the Dutch coast.

Several crew members jumped off to save themselves from the fire that erupted on Tuesday night on the 199-metre Panama-registered Fremantle Highway as it was en route from Germany to Egypt.

The Indian Embassy in the Netherlands said it was in touch with the victim's family and making efforts for his repatriation.

"We are deeply saddened by the incident involving Ship 'Fremantle Highway' in North Sea, resulting in the death of an Indian seafarer & injuries to the crew. Embassy of India is in



touch with family of the deceased & is assisting in repatriation of the mortal remains," the Embassy tweeted on Wednesday.

"Embassy is also in touch with the remaining 20 injured crew members, who are safe and receiving medical attention. All possible assistance is

being extended in coordination with the Dutch authorities and the shipping company."

According to the Guardian, the ship's owner said an electric car in the cargo was suspected as a possible cause for the blaze in the area, which has been declared a Unesco world heritage site and has a rich diversi-

ty of more than 10,000 aquatic and terrestrial species.

After the fire, rescue ships sprung into action and sprayed water on to the burning vessel to cool it down.

In addition, a salvage vessel was hooked on to stop the ship from drifting.

A helicopter airlifted the remaining people from the 23-strong crew off the burning ship. The injured crew were being treated for breathing problems, burns, and broken bones, the Guardian said quoting local Dutch authorities.

"The ship is still on fire. The recovery vessel Hunter has an emergency connection to the ship and is holding the ship in a controlled position. Multiple parties are working on an action plan to limit the damage as much as possible," the Coast Guard said in a post on Twitter.

Saudi F-15SA fighter jet crashes during training

Riyadh: An F-15SA fighter jet of the Royal Saudi Air Force crashed during a training session, killing the crew on board, state media reported.

Turki Al-Malki, the spokesman of the Saudi Defence Ministry, said that the crash happened on Wednesday near the King Khalid Air Base in Khamis Mushait, around 800 km southwest of the capital Riyadh, Xinhua news agency reported, citing Saudi Press Agency. Al-Malki said that an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the crash.

The F-15SA is a two-seat fighter jet. Saudi Arabia has not revealed the exact number of those killed in the crash.

US Fed hikes interest rates by 25 basis points

New York | Agencies

The US Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark interest rates by 25 basis points to the range of 5.25 to 5.5 per cent, the highest level in over two decades, as it continues to ramp up its fight against inflation.

It is the 11th interest rate increase since the Fed began its aggressive rate hiking campaign in March 2022, taking the federal funds rate to its highest level since early 2001, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Recent indicators suggest that economic activity has been expanding at a moderate pace. Job gains have been robust in recent months, and the unemployment rate has remained low. Inflation remains elevated," the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the Fed's policy-setting body, said in a statement on Wednesday afternoon, after a two-day policy meeting.

The FOMC "seeks to achieve maximum employment and inflation at the rate of 2 per cent over the longer run. In support of these goals, the committee decided to raise the target range for the federal funds rate to 5.25-5.5 per cent," it said. The latest economic indicator showed that the US consumer price index



slowed down to 3 percent year on year in June, the lowest since March 2021, but still above the central bank's target range of 2 per cent, suggesting more policy action may be needed.

"Inflation has moderated somewhat since the middle of last year. Nonetheless, the process of getting inflation back down to 2 percent has a long way to go," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a press conference Wednesday afternoon.

Powell stressed that inflation remains well above the Fed's longer-run goal of 2 per cent, citing a string of economic data.

Over the 12 months ending in May, total personal consumption expenditures (PCE) prices rose 3.8 per cent. Core PCE, which excludes the volatile food and energy categories, rose 4.6 per cent from a year earlier.

Heat waves impact 92 mn kids in Europe, Central Asia: Unicef

Geneva | Agencies

Staggering 92 million children in Europe and Central Asia, comprising half of the region's young population, face heightened exposure to the frequent heat waves, twice the global average, the Unicef said in a new policy brief published on Thursday.

Countries in these parts of the world are feeling the heat of the climate crisis, and children's health and well-being are suffering the most, Xinhua news agency quoted Regina De Dominicis, the Unicef regional director for Europe and Central Asia, as saying in the brief.

"This is expected to rise to all children in 2050. The multitude of negative implications on the current and future health of such a significant proportion of the region's children must be a catalyst for governments to



urgently invest in mitigation and adaptation measures," she said. The brief highlights that children are exceptionally susceptible to the repercussions of heat waves, with their core temperatures rising significantly higher and faster than adults, placing them at serious risk of illnesses, including heatstroke.

Furthermore, heat waves also affect children's education by hampering their ability to concentrate and learn, said the report.

In recent years, heat waves

in Europe and Central Asia have become more frequent with no signs of abating, and the frequency is set to increase even further over the coming years.

Under the most conservative estimates of a global temperature increase at 1.7 degrees Celsius, the report warned that a concerning future awaits children in Europe and Central Asia.

By the year 2050, every child in the region is predicted to experience high heat wave frequency.

Lawyers ask Indians seeking asylum in UK to pretend as 'tortured' Khalistanis, gays: Report

London | Agencies

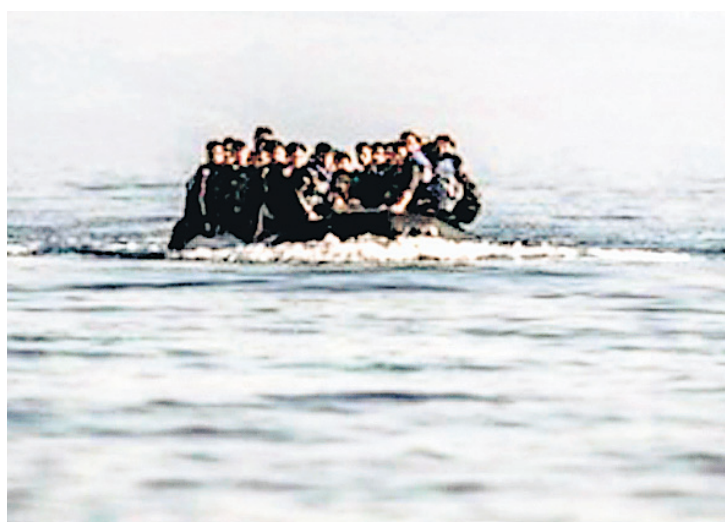
Immigration lawyers in the UK are briefing clients on how to lie to the authorities to win the right to stay in Britain and are charging 10,000 pounds to make false asylum claims, according to a Daily Mail investigation.

V.P. Lingajothy, a lawyer who came to the UK from Sri Lanka in 1983, asked an undercover Mail reporter to pretend that he is a pro-Khalistani who was ill-treated and tortured in India to get asylum in the UK.

The undercover reporter posed as a farmer from the Punjab who just landed in the UK on a small boat.

"You can say that the Indian government accused you of being pro-Khalistani, you were taken into custody, arrested and you were ill treated, tortured, sexually tortured. That's why you couldn't marry and you were frustrated, you wanted to commit suicide," the Daily Mail quoted Lingajothy as saying.

The lawyer asked for 10,000



pounds to invent a back story to use in the asylum application, which included claims of sexual torture, beatings, slave labour, false imprisonment and death threats that left the migrant suicidal and forced him to escape to the UK.

He even promised a doctor's report to support the story and produced anti-depressants to be given to the Home Office as "evidence" of psychological trauma, the Mail reported.

At another firm, where the undercover reporter went, the lawyer said

he would have to "create the evidence" to make it appear the migrant had a genuine fear of "persecution and assassination" if he returned home.

A third lawyer said he would use it to make it appear the undercover reporter feared for his life in India, which would include reasons like anti-government political allegiances, a love affair with someone from the wrong caste or being gay.

According to the report, up to 40 solicitors' firms are being monitored by the authorities amid suspected asylum claim "abuses" and allegations of "carbon copy" applications from different people represented by the same firms.

With a multi-million-pound property empire, most like Lingajothy enjoy the trappings of a successful lawyer.

In response to the report, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Chancellor Alex Chalk said the "appalling" conduct by the law firms must be met with the "full force of sanctions".



MAHARASHTRA FARMERS TO LAUNCH 4-MONTH AGITATION FROM AUG

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Various farmers' organisations will launch a series of agitations for four months starting from August in Maharashtra to press for their various demands, a top official said here on Thursday.

President of the All India Kisan Sabha, Ashok Dhawale said that the Maharashtra chapter of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), which spearheaded the national farmers' agitation two years ago, will also be launched here next month.

At a preparatory meeting held here, the SKM Maharashtra said that along with the central demands like legal guarantee of MSP at 1.5 times the comprehensive cost of cultivation, complete liberation from debt and a monthly Rs 5,000 pension to farmers and agriculture workers aged above 60, a comprehensive crop insurance scheme and other burning issues of the state farmers will be taken up.

On August 9, the 'Quit India Day' anniversary, farmers will mark an 'Anti-Corporate Day' and demonstrate all over the state, on August 14, public meetings will be held to highlight their causes.

Independence Day will see a series of Tricolour processions taken out in



the state with massive participation from the farmers and tillers, said Dhawale.

In September-October, the state SKM will organise foot-marches and processions at the grassroots levels, and from November 26-28, a 72-hour 'Mahapadav' will be held in Mumbai, with participation by all state and

central trade unions and farmers groups. Explaining the significance, Dhawale said that November 26, 2020 was the day when the historic struggle of the farmers started in Delhi and north India against the three anti-farmers laws and also the nationwide strike of central trade unions, while November 28 is the death anniversary

of the champion of peasants and caste reformer, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. An 11-member coordination committee of the SKM with major farmers groups was elected and more organisations will join subsequently, besides a 10-member committee to prepare for the upcoming four-month agitations.

NIA arrests one more accused in ISIS module case

Team Absolute | Mumbai

National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested one more accused for promoting violent activities of the proscribed terrorist outfit ISIS.

NIA official identified the accused as Adnanali Sarkar (43). The central agency arrested Sarkar following raids in Kondhwa, Pune.

"Several incriminating materials, such as electronic gadgets and several documents related to the ISIS, during searches at Sarkar's Kondhwa house were seized. The material exposed the accused allegiance with the ISIS and his role in promoting the outfit's violent agenda by motivating and recruiting vulnerable youth," the official said.

NIA said that the accused had hatched a conspiracy to further ISIS terrorist activities in the country.

The agency said that Sarkar was trying to disturb the unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of the



country, and wage a war against the Government of India as part of the ISIS conspiracy through the organisation's like 'Maharashtra ISIS module'.

NIA had registered the case on June 28. On July 3, the NIA had arrested four accused: Tabish Nasser Siddiqui from Mumbai, Zubair Noor

Mohammed Shaikh alias Abu Nussaiba from Pune, and Sharjeel Shaikh and Zulfikar Ali Barodawala from Thane after extensive searches in Mumbai, Thane and Pune. NIA said that they will continue to probe the Maharashtra ISIS module case to unravel all the full contours of the conspiracy.

Coast Guard aids 8 scientists, 36 crew of stranded NIO ship off Karwar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Moving swiftly, the Indian Coast Guard saved eight prominent scientists and 36 crew members on a state-of-the-art research vessel of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) which was adrift off the Karwar coast, an official said here on Thursday.

The ship, 'RV Sindhu Sadhana' was drifting dangerously close to the Karwar shore in Karnataka following an engine failure and could pose a potential environmental disaster.

The distressed vessel, stuck at around 20 nautical miles, was approaching the Karwar coast at a speed of three knots when the ICG received the SOS.

"The situation was critical, as the NIO, a state-of-the-art research vessel, was carrying valuable scientific equipment and research data. Moreover, the proximity of the ship to the ecologically sensitive Karwar coastline posed an imminent threat of grounding, which could have resulted in a major oil spill and devastating pollution to the pristine marine environment," said an official.

On receiving the distress call, the ICG swung into action and activated a high-priori-



ty rescue operation, dispatching their highly advanced ship with a specialized team to the area.

Recognizing the potential magnitude of the disaster, and battling tough weather conditions, the ICG also took measures to safeguard the RV Sindhu Sadhana to prevent it from running aground in the fragile ecosystem of Karwar. Given the sea conditions, the size of the distressed ship, distance from the shore and other factors, the ICG towed the RV Sindhu Sadhana and safely brought it to Goa, around 70 nautical miles away.

The ICG said that the entire team of scientists and crew onboard the NIO ship were safe and the quick response operation helped avert a potential maritime and ecological hazard.

TIME HAS COME TO VERIFY BJP'S BRAND OF 'HINDUTVA': UDDHAV THACKERAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Launching a scathing attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena (UBT) President and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the time has come to check the ruling party's brand of 'Hindutva', here on Thursday.

Turning 63 on Thursday, Thackeray's comments came in the second part of his birthday interviews to the Saamana Group, with a volley of questions fired by the Executive Editor and MP Sanjay Raut.

Thackeray said that his father and the Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray's 'Hindutva' was not of fanatic variety, it was a dream, he had openly supported the Uniform Civil Code and the abrogation of Article 370.

However, the present form of Hindutva, in which you do whatever you want in the name of Hinduism, will never be accepted by the Hindus anywhere.

"They call others corrupt, humiliate them, ruin their lives and then

force them to sit beside them... This is not Hindutva," declared Thackeray.

He added that Hindutva does not mean just a 'dhoti', wear it as per convenience and take it off, and such 'showy' Hindutva is not our or acceptable.

"Earlier, during the Congress era, processions were taken out and slogans raised saying Islam is in danger... Now, Hindu Janakrosh marches are being taken out... So what did you do for nine years? Even today, Hindus are insecure in Kashmir, what's being done for them?" Thackeray demanded. Turning to the Manipur situation, the ex-CM asked whether those being killed there are not citizens of this country and what is being done for them, and is this the (BJP's) Hindutva. On the contrary, the BJP accuses the Opposition parties of being 'families coming together to save themselves'.

Thackeray said that whenever patriotic parties come together to save the 'family', the BJP feels they are targeting their chair, and pointedly asked: 'what has the BJP achieved in the past nine years, especially for

Hindutva'.

"Yes, families have joined together to save the country, democracy... I had implemented the concept of 'My Family, My Responsibility' during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Today it needs to be executed all over the country as 'My Country, My Responsibility'," said Thackeray, justifying his stance in Bengaluru recently during the national opposition parties' conclave. To a query on the issue of Ram Temple and whether it was resolved, Thackeray countered, "who solved it?"

"At the time of the Babri Masjid incident, you were not ready to even take responsibility... you did not take the decision of Ram Temple, then how can you take credit for it. What did you do for Hindutva and where is it now?" Thackeray asked sharply.

Referring to the flock of people from other political parties joining the BJP, Thackeray said that Ram has gone away long back and the party is now just full of 'aaya-rams'.

"This entire party is of 'aaya-rams'... What about the people originally with your party... will they be



deployed only for party work or will they be given tickets in parliament and assembly elections... I just read that Maharashtra is lagging in exports, but someone commented it is leading in import of MLAs...," said Thackeray in a swipe at the ruling alliance in the state.

Meanwhile, the ruling BJP leaders like Narayan Rane, Sudhir Mungantiwar, Ashish Shelar, Prasad Lad, Keshav Upadhye and others have ridiculed and slammed Thackeray's two-part marathon birthday-interview and his comments.

Ajit Pawar will get opportunity to become Chief Minister: Praful Patel

Team Absolute | Mumbai

NCP's Rajya Sabha member Praful Patel on Thursday said Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is a popular and heavyweight leader and he will get an opportunity to become the chief minister. Asked about such speculation, Praful Patel, who supports Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) faction, told reporters in Nagpur that the post (of CM) is not vacant, so why talk about it.

"Ajit Pawar is a popular and heavyweight leader. He has been leading our party for several years now. Those who work get the opportunity either today, tomorrow or day after. Many have got the opportunity. Ajit Dada will also get it, if not today, tomorrow or anytime in future. We will work in that direction," he said. Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan



recently claimed that Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar would be appointed as the state's chief minister replacing Eknath Shinde on August 10. Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis on Monday dismissed Chavan's claim saying Shinde will continue to be the chief minister and there will be no change of guard in the state.

Ajit Pawar and eight other NCP MLAs joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government on July 2. While Ajit Pawar took oath as the deputy chief minister, the MLAs were sworn in as ministers. Later, the crucial finance department was allotted to Ajit Pawar, the nephew of NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

Eknath Shinde had said Ajit Pawar's entry into the government posed no threat to him.

Asked about the possibility of him being inducted into the council of ministers at the Centre, Praful Patel there is no discussion on the Union cabinet reshuffle or expansion.

"I don't think it will happen," he said. To another question, he said, "My constituency will always be Bhandara-Gondia." Praful Patel had earlier represented Maharashtra's Bhandara-Gondia constituency in the Lok Sabha.

Traffic blocked on Mumbai-Pune Expressway for hours to clear boulders, mud

Due to incessant rains in the region, a landslide occurred on July 23 near the Adoshi tunnel on the busy Mumbai: The highway police blocked the movement of vehicles on the Mumbai-bound arm of the Pune-Mumbai Expressway for two hours to remove boulders and mud on the carriageway, officials said.

Due to incessant rains in the region, a landslide occurred on July 23 near the Adoshi tunnel on the busy road, said an official. The special two-hour traffic block was taken from 12 noon and 2 pm, he said.

So far, the highway police have taken three such blocks to remove the debris and mud on the Mumbai-bound lane of the Expressway, he said.

RED ALERT AS RAINS CLOBBER MUMBAI; TWO DEAD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rains continued to lash Mumbai and surroundings since dawn as schools and colleges were ordered shut after an IMD Mumbai Red alert was sounded and two persons killed in rain-related deaths, officials said here on Thursday.

Many areas of the city like Churchgate, Byculla, Worli, Bandra, Chembur, Ghatkopar, Kurla, Santacruz, Andheri, Malad, Bhandup and other areas received heavy showers since morning.

The overnight rainfall recorded till 8 am was - City 112.25 mm, Eastern suburbs 104.45 mm and Western suburbs 116.42 mm, according to the BMC Disaster Control.

The IMD has forecast "heavy to very heavy rain in the city and suburbs with possibility of occasional gusty winds reaching 45-55 kmph" for the day.

Following a Red alert declared late on Wednesday night, the BMC and state government ordered closure of all public-private schools and colleges today to ensure safety of students. In Thane, a motorcyclist reportedly skid on a wet stretch, lost control and was trapped and crushed to death between the wheels of a container truck on the



Ghodbunder Road. A woman was killed when a wall collapsed at her home in Kolhapur this morning during a downpour.

Besides Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Pune, Satara, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli are also issued a Red alert today, as per the IMD.

Though there are no disruptions of suburban rail services, roads and highways in Mumbai witnessed slow-moving traffic with snarls reported in different parts of the city.

For Friday, the IMD has given an Orange alert in Raigad, Ratnagiri, Pune and Satara, though the situation is likely to ease over the weekend. Fishermen on the coastal Konkan region have been advised against venturing into the high seas till July 30 as there will be heavy rains with strong winds touching upto 55-kmph during the period.

"No Way Left But...": Maharashtra farmer threatens suicide in letter to Chief Minister

Aurangabad | Agencies

A farmer from Hingoli in Maharashtra facing a debt of around Rs 20 lakh has written a letter to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde seeking a compensation for his crop losses and said if he does not get it, he will have no option but to commit suicide.

Gajanan Narayan Awchar, hailing from Sapatgaon in Sengao taluka of Hingoli, in his letter written to the chief minister on July 23 said he has pomegranate plantation over a hectare of land.

The farmer claimed he has not been able to sell the produce in any market since the COVID-19 pandemic and the crop infections since two years have increased the losses to Rs 50 lakh.

In the letter submitted to the chief minister's secretariat on July 24, Awchar claimed he has no means to earning to sustain his family comprising five members as he has a debt of nearly Rs 5 lakh from a bank and Rs 15 lakh



from another financial institution. The farmer also claimed he has been receiving notices from the bank and facing mental harassment for not being able to repay the loan.

"The government should compensate, or else there is no way left for me but to die by suicide," he said in the letter.

Sharad Pawar's NCP asks poll body for status of rival faction's request

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP on Thursday said the Election Commission has sent a letter seeking their response to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ajit Pawar's faction staking claim to the party name and symbol, and they will reply accordingly. However, NCP leader Praful Patel, from the Ajit Pawar faction, declined to comment on the matter.

On July 2, Ajit Pawar led a split in the NCP and joined the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government as deputy CM along with eight other NCP legislators as cabinet ministers.

The Ajit Pawar faction had also staked claim to the party symbol, informing the



Election Commission (EC) that he was elected NCP chief through a resolution dated June 30, 2023 signed by an "overwhelming majority" of members of the party, both from the legislative and organisational wing.

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP faction's national spokesperson Clyde Crasto on Thursday said the EC has sent a letter seeking their response on the Ajit Pawar's faction staking claim to the party name and symbol.

"We will respond accordingly," Crasto said.

However, Praful Patel said, "I don't want to comment on issues regarding our internal party matters." "Sharad Pawar continues to remain our idol and we want him to accept the political decision we have taken. We will persuade him," Patel told reporters in Nagpur.



Courtney Cox enjoys dinner date with partner Johnny McDaid

Los Angeles | Agencies

Friends' star Courtney Cox and Snow Patrol guitarist Johnny McDaid looked happy and in love as they stepped out in New York for a date night. The 'Scream' star was spotted alongside her longtime partner as they grabbed a bite to eat, reports The Mirror. The 59-year-old looked stunning in a casual look as she paired a white t-shirt and jeans combination with a denim jacket. She accessorised the outfit with a crossover black purse and white trainers. She completed the look with a pair of stylish sunglasses.

Johnny, 47, also went for the dressed down look as he opted for an all black look, including a black leather jacket over the top of a zipped hoodie.

As per The Mirror, the American actress and Brit musician have been dating since 2013. By 2014, they had announced their engagement. Despite things taking a downward turn and their engagement later being called off, the pair have remained together, and look closer than ever.

Courtney first met Johnny at a party in Los Angeles when they were introduced by mutual friend Ed Sheeran.

The actress was previously wed to 'Scream' co-star David Arquette. They were married between 1999 and 2010 and share a daughter, Coco, 19, -- to whom Jennifer Aniston is her godmother.

In April, David opened up about their marriage, saying he felt "inferior" at times.

He said her mammoth earnings during the height of her 'Friends' fame was a struggle for him as she earned up to \$1 million per episode for her portrayal of Monica Geller in the iconic sitcom.

David, who was by no means failing in his career during their marriage, said her success was "difficult" to swallow as he desperately wanted to be the one to "pick up the check".

MCU'S 'SECRET INVASION' FINALE COULD SET UP ITS UPCOMING 'ARMOR WARS' FEATURE

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Marvel Cinematic Universe's spy-thriller series 'Secret Invasion' has come to an end, the finale of the show is likely to set up the 'Armor Wars' storyline from the comics.

With its twist ending with regards to the War Machine, it could lead to a more faithful adaptation of the comic-book story of 'Armor Wars' story.

The original story of 'Secret Invasion' in the comics is vastly different from the one shown in the MCU, as the comic one is a crossover storyline that features many heroes such as Iron Man, Spiderman, Doctor Strange, Professor X, Wolverine, Luke Cage, Daredevil and many more teaming up to defeat the Skrull invasion after the Kree-Skrull war where the Skrullhomeworld was in fact eaten by the planet eating god called Galactus.

Much like the comic stories of 'Secret Invasion' and 'Armor Wars', the Earth is in shambles after the Skrull attack, and the antagonist Gravik's impersonation of War Machine has led to the US announcing a full-fledged war against the Skrulls, much like the alien species wanted. Now this interesting twist is going to be a good start to set up 'Armor Wars'.

The original 'Armor Wars' story revolved around Tony Stark becoming public enemy No. 1 in order to defeat all villains using Stark Technology by his lonesome, while completely sacrificing his reputation.

However, in MCU's 'Avengers: Endgame' Tony Stark died, meaning that in the new 'Armor Wars' feature, War Machine/ James Rhodes will likely be the main character.



'MEG 2' DIRECTOR BEN WHEATLEY TALKS ABOUT JASON STATHAM'S LOVE FOR DOING HIS OWN STUNTS

Mumbai | Agencies

Filmmaker Ben Wheatley, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film 'Meg 2', has spoken about the Hollywood actor Jason Statham's love for doing his own stunts and his keenness of doing as many stunts as possible by himself.

Anytime the actor is seen powering a jet ski through the water in the movie, that is indeed Statham.

Talking about his lead actor and his love for stunts, Wheatley said: "Because



the physics of a face are hard to fake -- you have to be upside down to really look like you are upside down -- we had Jason on this kind of giant hand drill setup, and we'd pull the trigger and spin him around, firing water at his face.

He added: "He wanted as few gimbal shots as possible, almost all of it is him -- obviously not jumping a giant wave, but him riding a jet ski very, very quickly. And scarily, we were all at the monitors, saying, 'Please come back all right!'"

'Meg 2: The Trench' is a literally larger-than-life thriller ride that superizes the 2018 blockbuster and takes the action up a notch higher and even greater depths with multiple massive

Megs and so much more.

Starring Jason Statham and global action icon Wu Jing as they lead a daring research team on an exploratory dive into the deepest depths of the ocean following the cinematic vision of director Ben Wheatley.

Their voyage spirals into chaos when a malevolent mining operation threatens their mission and forces them into a high-stakes battle for survival. Pitted against colossal Megs and relentless environmental plunderers, our heroes must outrun, outsmart, and outswim their merciless predators in a pulse-pounding race against time.



Greta Gerwig rules out possibility of 'Barbie' sequel

Los Angeles | Agencies

As reported by Variety, speaking to the 'New York Times' whether the success of 'Barbie' could lead to the start of any kind of franchise, the director said: "At this moment, it's all I've got. I feel like that at the end of every movie, like I'll never have another idea and everything I've ever wanted to do, I did. I wouldn't want to squash anybody else's dream but for me, at this moment, I'm at totally

'Barbie' director as of the moment has ruled out a potential sequel to her fantasy-comedy film, stating that as of now she has no ideas about any sequel to the massively successful movie, saying that while she does not want to squash any fan expectations, at the moment this is all she's got.

zero." Following the massive success of the movie amid the huge 'Barbenheimer' war, which doesn't seem to be dying down despite the fact that both movies are currently in their second week, Mattel CEO Ynon Kreiz had previously expressed his own excitement about the film and said that Mattel is very keen to make more 'Barbie' films. In an earlier interview with 'Time' magazine, he had said: "We're looking to create movies that become cultural events. If you can excite filmmakers like Greta and Noah to embrace the opportunity and have creative freedom, you can have a real impact." While Gerwig is not currently open to doing any more 'Barbie' films, she has expressed interest in directing a James Bond movie, and said in a podcast earlier that it would be a "huge honour" but also "a nerve wracking experience."

This is an interesting turn as 'Oppenheimer' director Christopher Nolan had also expressed interest in directing a 007 feature film, stating that he would like to have his own approach to the movie. Greta Gerwig may not be open to doing any more 'Barbie' films, but producer and lead actress Margot Robbie is sure open to doing more, as she has said that as of now, the film with its unorthodox approach can go in a million different directions, presenting more than enough opportunities for a sequel. 'Barbie' is currently leading at the box office having grossed over \$472 million at the global box office and has an 80 per cent positive reception which is a bit of a dip from its initial 85 per cent positive score.

Ariana Grande's new boyfriend Ethan Slater files for divorce from wife

Los Angeles | Agencies

Amid his new romance with singer Ariana Grande, Ethan Slater has filed for divorce from his wife of four years Lilly Jay, with whom he shares a baby boy.

According to TMZ, which cited legal documents, Slater filed for divorce in New York. The reason for his split from Lilly Jay was not listed.

The filing comes amid Slater's newfound romance with 'Wicked' co-star Ariana Grande, who also broke up with husband Dalton Gomez earlier this year.

Prior to his budding relationship with Ariana, the Broadway performer had dedicated multiple tributes to wife Lilly.

In November, he shared photos on Instagram to mark their fourth wedding anniversary. "My best friend," Slater captioned the post. "4 years married, 10 years together. And this is easily the best and most (*bizarre*) year yet."

Since news of his relationship with Ariana, Slater has set his Instagram account to private.

Slater and Lilly were high school sweethearts, and got married in 2018, and welcomed a son together last year. Sources close to Lilly said she was heartbroken to hear about Slater's new relationship and feels he abandoned his brand-new family.

According to the sources, Lilly Jay's heart is most broken over the fact that her young son "won't have both his mom and dad around constantly".

The 'Thank U, Next' singer and Slater's romance was revealed days after news broke that she and husband Dalton Gomez were divorcing. Grande and Slater have been together for several months now, and started dating after meeting on the set of 'Wicked'



Kylie Jenner



FIFA Women's World Cup

NETHERLANDS HOLD DEFENDING CHAMPIONS USA TO 1-1 DRAW

Wellington (New Zealand) | Agencies

A rematch between the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup finalists ended 1-1 here on Thursday, as Lindsey Horan's header cancelled out the Netherlands' opener in a highly anticipated Group E game.

This is the second time the U.S. and the Netherlands have faced off at the World Cup, and the first since the 2019 World Cup final in France, which saw goals from Rose Lavelle and Megan Rapinoe gift the U.S. a 2-0 victory, reports Xinhua.

The matchup also marked the first time in Women's World Cup history that the two finalists from the previous tournament met in the group stage.

The U.S. were unbeaten in a record 18 successive matches in the finals (excluding penalty shootouts) before Thursday's game, winning each of the last 13. The four-time champions started their campaign with a 3-0 victory over Vietnam, while the



Netherlands squeezed past Portugal 1-0.

Sophia Smith, who scored two and set up another in the Vietnam match, started in a three-forward line spearheaded by Alex Morgan, while Jill Roord took the field for the Netherlands.

The U.S. were aggressive from the start, but they found themselves on the back foot when Lieke Martens dribbled forward through

the middle and spread the play down the right, and Victoria Pelova assisted Roord to drill home. The defending champions responded quickly afterwards as Trinity Rodman's stunner was parried away by Daphne Van Domselaar, while at the other end, Dominique Janssen blasted over the bar. The U.S. will meet Portugal next Tuesday, while the Netherlands take on Vietnam.

NIGERIA STUN AUSTRALIA TO RECORD FIRST WWC WIN

Brisbane: Nigeria stunned co-host Australia with a historic 3-2 victory in the FIFA Women's World Cup Group B, here on Thursday.

Having frustrated Olympic champion Canada in a goalless draw on debut, Nigeria ran Australia ragged after conceding the opening goal to record their first World Cup victory. Osinachi Oshola put Nigeria in lead in the 65th minute and the Africans seemingly iced the game when Asisat Oshoala scored from a tight angle in the 72nd minute, but Alanna Kennedy's header in the dying minutes gave the Matildas hope.

Nigeria, however, held on in a frantic finish to trigger scenes of jubilation. The shock result means Nigeria is locked on four points with Canada in Pool B. Australia is on three points and faces a must win match against Canada on July 31 in Melbourne.

Even though Australia remains without injured talismanic captain Sam Kerr, they enter as firm favourites to secure the win needed for group survival.

1st ODI: India beat West Indies by five wickets

Bridgetown | Agencies

Wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan made his promotion to opening county by top-scoring with 52 as India beat West Indies by five wickets in a one-sided first ODI of the three-match series at Kensington Oval, here on Thursday.

After spinners Kuldeep Yadav (4-6) and Ravindra Jadeja (3-37) combined to take seven wickets between themselves to bundle out West Indies for a paltry 114, Kishan opened the batting and took on the bowlers hit seven fours and a six in his 46-ball 52 as India rejigged their batting order.

Captain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli sat back as everyone else were given a go with the bat. Rohit did have to come out at number seven to finish off the chase with 160 balls to spare as India got their ninth consecutive win over West Indies.

For West Indies, who had a horror day with the bat, performances from spinners Yannic Cariah (1-35) and Gudakesh Motie (2-26) were



the only positives.

Chasing 115, Kishan began with a pulled four off Dominic Drakes. In the fourth over, Gill fell after poking at a fifth stump line ball from Jayden Seales and Brandon King took a good low catch at second slip.

Kishan continued to be steady with his check-drives, Suryakumar was trapped lbw. Hardik Pandya was run-out after Cariah deflected the ball to non-striker's end. After his fourth ODI fifty, Kishan fell immediately, holding on to deep mid-wicket off Motie. In the next over, Shardul Thakur fell after dabbing straight to second slip

off Cariah. Rohit Sharma, coming in at number seven, and Ravindra Jadeja ensured India went over the line, with the skipper sweeping Motie to finish off the chase in style and seal an easy win for the visitors'.

Brief scores

West Indies 114 in 23 overs (Shai Hope 43, Alick Athanaze 22; Kuldeep Yadav 4-6, Ravindra Jadeja 3-37) lost to India (Ishan Kishan 52; Gudakesh Motie 2-26, Yannic Cariah 1-35) by five wickets.

Asian Games football draw

Indian men's team grouped with China, Bangladesh and Myanmar

Hangzhou (China) | Agencies

India's men's football team has been clubbed with hosts China, Bangladesh and Myanmar in Group A while the women's side has been drawn with Chinese Taipei and Thailand in Group B for the upcoming Asian Games 2023 as the draw for the continental event was conducted, here on Thursday.

The 19th Asian Games will be held in Hangzhou, China from September 18-October 7. In the men's event, 23 teams have been divided into six groups, where Group A, B, C, E and F has four teams each while Group D has



three teams.

The competition shall consist of two stages -- Group Stage and Knockout Stage. Group Stage will be played in a single round robin league system, whereas Knock-out Stage will consist of the Round of 16, quarter-finals, semi-finals, bronze medal match and gold medal match in which all in single round

knockout system.

Top two teams of each group and four best third-placing teams among all groups in the Group Stage, with a total of 16 teams will advance to the knock-out Stage. India had won the Asian Games gold medal twice in 1951 and 1962. They won the bronze medal in 1970.

CHANGES IN SCHEDULE OF ODI WORLD CUP EXPECTED: JAY SHAH

New Delhi: BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Thursday that changes in the original schedule of the upcoming Men's ODI World Cup is expected to be made in next few days, without specifying if it also includes the highly-anticipated India-Pakistan clash at Ahmedabad.

With the marquee match of the World Cup clashing with the first day of the Navaratri, the local police have told the BCCI that it would find it difficult to take care of security on the day.

"You can expect to see some changes to the original World Cup schedule which will be cleared in the coming two, three or four days, following some requests for changes from two to three member boards. The changes will be there in the schedule, but not in venues. The ICC and BCCI logistics teams are looking into it," said Shah in a press conference.



Japan Open

LAKSHYA, PRANNOY, SATWIK-CHIRAG STORM INTO QUARTERS

Tokyo (Japan) | Agencies

India's top men's singles players, Lakshya Sen and H.S. Prannoy, along with the in-form doubles combine of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stormed into the quarterfinals of the Japan Open on Thursday, while the women's doubles combine of Treena Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand crashed out.

The 21-year-old Sen, currently ranked 13th in World Rankings, Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan 21-14, 21-16 in a 50-minute encounter in the BWF World Tour Super 750 event with a total prize fund of USD 800,000.

Prannoy got the better of compatriot and former World No.1 Kidambi Srikanth in three games, storming back from a game deficit to win 19-21, 21-9, 21-9 in



57 minutes. In men's doubles, Satwik and Chirag, who won the Korea Open last week, also advanced to the quarterfinals by beating Denmark's Jepp Bay and Lasse Molhedge 21-17, 21-11. However, India suffered a set-

back as the top women's doubles pair of Treena Jolly and Pulella Gayatri Gopichand lost to the World No.7 pair of Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida from Japan, 21-23, 19-21 in just under an hour.

Playing on Court 1 at the Yoyogi National Gymnasium, Lakshya Sen took an early lead in the first game and opened up a 5-1 lead.

Though his Japanese opponent reduced the margin to 7-5, Sen won the next five points in a row to extend it to 12-5. Tsuneyama again fought back to cut down the lead to 16-14, the Indian shuttler won five consecutive points to win the game.

Lakshya Sen will now take on Koki Watanabe of Japan for a place in the semifinals. Watanabe defeated Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong 21-17, 21-14.

FIFA WC Joint Qualification Round 2

INDIA CLUBBED WITH QATAR, KUWAIT IN FOUR-TEAM GROUP A

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

The Indian men's football team has been drawn in Group A of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 2 alongside Qatar, Kuwait, and winners of the Round 1 match between Afghanistan and Mongolia, after the draw was conducted at the AFC House, here on Thursday.

The 36 teams were drawn into nine groups of four, and they will compete against each team in a home-and-away round-robin format, between November 2023 and June 2024.

All nine group winners and the respective runners-up will advance to the third round of World Cup qualifying, and at the same time seal their places at the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.

The other 18 teams from Round 2 will proceed directly to the third and final round of AFC Asian Cup qualifying.

The draw for the third round of the global showpiece in 2026 will be conducted in 2024, where the 18 teams will be divided into three groups of six; the top two from each group will qualify directly for the FIFA World Cup 2026.



PAKISTAN CONSOLIDATE TOP SPOT IN WTC STANDINGS

Colombo: Pakistan consolidated their top spot in the ongoing World Test Championship standings after beating Sri Lanka by an innings and 222 runs in the second Test to sweep the series 2-0 at the Sinhalese Sports Club, here on Thursday. With the 2-0 series sweep, Pakistan have further consolidated their top spot in the WTC25 standings, earning 24 points from two wins and 100 percent while India, who are now at number two on the list have 16 points (66.67%) following their 1-0 series win over West Indies.

Khel Karate League:- A battle of sports, support and unity

Lalit Sharma | Jaipur

To promote karate sports professionally in the country, a grand and spectacular second season of "Khel Karate League 2023" is being organized on September 21-24 at Saiwai Mansingh Stadium in Pink City under the International Sports Academy of India.

Dhananjay Tyagi, Founder of Khel Karate League, International Champion Karate, Brand Ambassador of Dholpur District selected by Election Commission of India, Youth Icon; He told that the way almost every sports league is being organized after IPL, the players of the country are not only getting the facilities, but also the attraction towards sports is also being seen among the youth. Along with thousands and millions of players associated with martial arts sports, we had a dream that our sports players should also get such a platform where players get financial support, training, facilities, which today has turned into reality in the form of Khel Karate League (KKL). He further added that it is a great pleas-



ure to see the new zeal, passion and enthusiasm among the youth for this game, the positive results of the hard work we have put in are coming out. In Khel Karate League, players will be given prize money worth up to Rs 10 lakh, along with all these players will be given official jerseys of Khel Karate League. To register your team in Khel Karate League, contact khelkarate@gmail.com, website www.khelkarate.com, the last date for registration is 1st September.

Ireland seal qualification for 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup

Edinburgh | Agencies

Ireland have sealed their qualification for the 2024 Men's ICC T20 World Cup, to be held in West Indies and USA, after their game against Germany was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to rain in the ongoing European Regional Final Qualifiers tournament.

Having won their previous four matches, against Italy, Denmark, Austria, and Jersey, Ireland needed just one more point to mathematically ensure qualification for next year's mega event. Due to their match against Germany being abandoned, the points were shared, and as a result, Ireland's passage to the Men's T20 World Cup was secured. Ireland, with nine points



from the ongoing tournament, still have one match left to play in the qualifying tournament, as they are set to face hosts Scotland in Grange Cricket Club on Friday. That game will decide who wins the tournament outright.

One more spot is still up for grabs from the European Qualifiers, with Scotland leading the race and needing just one point to join Ireland in next year's mega event, comprising 20 teams.

Hamburg Open

Rublev survives Miralles challenge; Ruud claws back to beat Sebastian Baez

Hamburg (Germany) | Agencies

Andrey Rublev saved three match points as he came back from the brink to claw past Spaniard Bernabe Zapata Miralles at the Hamburg European Open.

Rublev won the match 5-7, 6-1, 7-6(7) to reach the pre-quarterfinals.

The second seed recovered from a slow start at the ATP 500 clay-court event, finding his best level deep in the third set to fend off Zapata Miralles, who was chasing his first Top 10 win of the season.

Rublev rallied from 4/6 in the third-set tie-break and



saved his third match point at 6/7 with a forehand winner. The 25-year-old raised his arms aloft after winning the two-hour, 53-minute first-

round thriller. In other matches, fourth seed Alexander Zverev defeated wild card Maximilian Marterer of Germany 6-3, 7-5

while top seed Casper Ruud came back from losing the second set to beat Sebastian Baez 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 in the Round of 32.

Mbappe turns down record offer from Al Hilal: Report

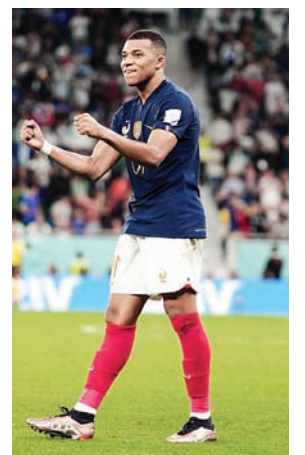
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Paris Saint-Germain's star forward Kylian Mbappe has reportedly turned down a world record offer from Saudi Arabian football club Al Hilal.

The Saudi Arabian club has made a world record offer of 259 million pounds (300 million euro) for the French striker and was also permitted to negotiate with the star player.

According to the leading French sports daily L'Equipe, emissaries of the Arab club were in Paris this week trying to convince the striker, but he refused any discussion with the representatives of Saudi Arabia's most successful club.

The 24-year-old French captain, who still has one year remaining on his con-



tract, is unwilling to renew his contract with PSG and is believed to prefer a move to Real Madrid as a free transfer. The French star was also left out of the PSG squad for the pre-season tour of Japan and South Korea.



Saif, Sara come together on screen for first time, for ad films

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Bollywood's dynamic father-daughter duo Saif Ali Khan and Sara Ali Khan have joined forces for the first time. However, the project not being a film might prove to be a bit of a dampener for their fans.

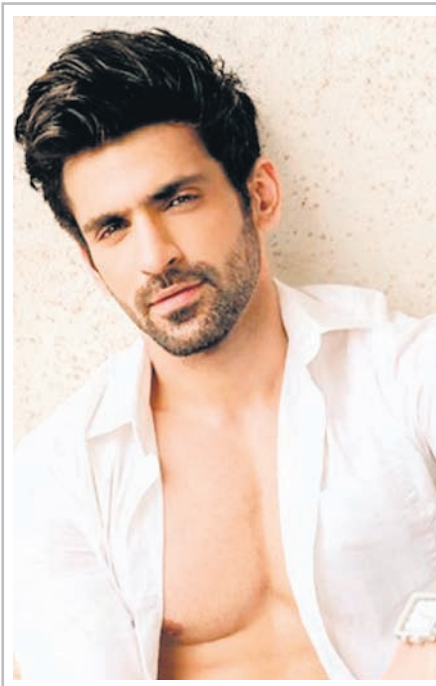
Saif and Sara have shot together for a series of ad films, portraying an engaging contrast between a millennial and a Gen X mindset, when it comes to insurance decision-making.

The video shows Sara getting out of a car, as Saif says, "Wow! New car", adding "Insurance liya?", to which the Pataudi princess replies, "ofcourse". They are sharing the screen with veteran actor Bijendra Kala.

The ad is captioned as, "Sara surprises Saif with big savings!"

With their fresh and entertaining approach, the ads encourage viewers not just to embrace new-age methods of purchasing insurance but also benefit from the ease and convenience of picking insurance.

Sara is the daughter of Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh. She has a younger brother, Ibrahim, and two half-brothers from Saif's second marriage to actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, Taimur and Jeh. She made her acting debut in 2018 with Abhishek Kapoor's romantic film 'Kedarnath', in which she played a Hindu girl who falls in love with a Muslim porter, played by late actor Sushant Singh Rajput. She has done films like 'Simmba', 'Love Aajkal', 'Coolie No. 1', 'Atrangi Re', 'Gslight'. Her most recent release 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke', alongside Vicky Kaushal emerged as a surprise hit this year.



Rohit Shetty is the perfect host, motivator: Arijit Taneja

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arijit Taneja was super excited to be a part of 'KhatronKeKhiladi' Season 13. Back from shooting the show in Cape Town, South Africa, in Mumbai, he cannot wait to share what all happened there.

"It was so wonderful that I have come back with some battle scars. It was incredible, one of my nicest experiences till date. Everyone who has participated in this programme, in my opinion, has emerged as a totally different person," Arijit said.

"The journey has been fantastic, and I already miss Cape Town. We all participated in the stunts together, where we laughed, cried, cheered one another, and also suffered injuries. It was a lovely experience that lasted for fifty-five days, not less," he added.

The actor connected with most of the contestants well. "I think Archana is really engaging and humorous, but she also performed her stunts flawlessly. I will miss everyone from the show since we all made strong bonds. I got along well with Anjoom Fakhri, Shiv Thakare, Dino James, Anjali Anand, Nyrra M Banerji, and Sheezan Khan," he smiled. Praising Rohit Shetty to be the perfect host and motivator, Arijit took a metaphorical route as he said: "He gives us an 'injection', I would say, to enhance people's performance in their stunts. He has scolded everyone, including me. However, I would say that it was not merely scolding; it was more of his way of motivating us to complete the stunts." "Nonetheless, there was one instance when Nyrra was scolded by Rohit sir because she was not listening to him during one of the stunts. I would consider him an OG. Whenever we discuss stunts, his name and face immediately comes to my mind due to his persona and swag," he added.

Sushmita shares health update, says she's 'fabulous', has been 'eating well'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sushmita Sen, who has returned from her European vacation, recently took to her Instagram and conducted a live session where she spoke about her health.

The actress had earlier suffered a heart attack during the filming of the third season of her hit streaming show 'Aarya'.

During the live session, a fan inquired about her health to which she replied as, "My health is fabulous... I have been eating well."

Her followers were also excited to get some updates about her upcoming project, 'Aarya 3' in which she avenges the murder of her husband by the durglords. Although she did not reveal anything

major about the show's third season as she is bound by a contract, she expressed that she has a lot to share about all the work they did before the health scare happened and all the action they shot after her recovery.

"I am waiting for 'Aarya 3'. I think it's going to be very lovely this time. There is a lot that has gone into it, so many things to tell you when we finally discuss 'Aarya' about all the stuff that we did, pre-health scare and all the action we did post. I hope you like it," she said.

Sushmita Sen captioned the post, "#instalife #justbeing I missed you guys!!! Love you for all the goodness you bring to my life... ALWAYS!!! #yourstruly #dug-gadugga."



I AM A SECURE ACTOR AND LOVE ENSEMBLE CASTS, SAYS TAMANNAH BHATIA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who is winning praise for her work in the streaming anthology 'Lust Stories 2', has said that being a part of an ensemble is empowering and she doesn't feel insecure in a multi-starrer cast as she is a secure actor.

Tamannaah was interacting with the media during the 'TuAaDilbara' song launch in Mumbai.

The song is the Hindi version of 'Kaavaalaa' from the Rajinikanth-starrer 'Jailer'.

Talking about younger generation avoiding ensemble films out of insecurity, Tamannaah said: "I think change is individual, I remember when 'Baahubali' happened, my first Telugu successful film 'Happy Days' happened, then I did a recent show titled 'JeeKarda', I've always been a part of ensemble films and I have never shied away from that because I think there is power when great bunch of creative people come together and I think I have always been a very secure actor."

"I can say for myself that in fact when you are with these great stalwarts from the industry, your best comes out, because you know you can't do anything else but to bring your A game," added Tamannaah.

Tamannaah will soon be seen sharing screen space with Rajinikanth in 'Jailer', and Chiranjeevi in 'Bhola Shankar'. When asked what's the one thing she has learned from stalwarts, Tamannaah said: "They have not taken their positions for granted, so as a young actor this is something that I have learned from them, and I hope to imbibe it, till the end of my career and life."

Shubhangi Atre to essay double role in daily soap

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shubhangi Atre, who essays the role of Angoori Bhabhi in the hit television show 'Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai', will be soon seen in a double role in the upcoming track of the show.

The actress shared that the show will have an intriguing storyline as the innocent Angoori Bhabhi will assume the alter ego of 'Chamelijaan', a club dancer with a sultry demeanour.

The episode will also feature a crossover from another hit show 'Happu Ki UltanPaltan' as its titular character Happu Singh (Yogesh Tripathi), Commissioner (Kishore Bhanushali) and Manohar (Nitin Jhadav) will go undercover to arrest an international criminal's girlfriend.

To their astonishment, they encounter a doppelganger of Angoori, who calls herself 'Chamelijaan'. However, their encounter is cut short when the lights unexpectedly go out, leaving the mysterious woman injured and seeking help. Meanwhile, Angoori feels disheartened after

facing an insult from Tiwari (Rohitashv Gour) for being a traditional housewife. Driven by the circumstances, she leaves the house.

The actress said: "Spotting an opportunity, the commissioner and Manohar approach Angoori to implore her to assist them in catching the criminal, a plea to which she agrees. As the plot unfolds, Tiwari and Vibhuti (Aasif Sheikh) disguise themselves and venture into the club, unaware of what lies ahead. The way one thing leads to another and the events that unfold will provide the viewers with a fun dose of laughter, surprises, and unexpected twists."

Expressing her joy in portraying a double role, Shubhangi elaborates, "I absolutely loved taking on the new character of Chamelijaan. Being able to dance on various occasions brought me immense delight. As an actor, the desire to delve into multiple roles is constant. I consider myself blessed to be a part of a show like 'Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai', which presents fresh storylines every week, offering me opportunities to do different things, experiment with my appearance, and present something novel to the audience."

PARTHSAMTHAN HITS DUBBING STUDIO FOR HIS BOLLYWOOD DEBUT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Parth Samthan, who was recently seen in the streaming series 'Social Currency', is set to make his Bollywood debut with the upcoming romantic comedy film 'Ghuchchadi' for which he recently dubbed his dialogues in a Mumbai studio.

The actor, who is known for his work in 'Kaisi Yeh Yaariaan' and 'Yeh Hai Aashiqui', will be sharing the screen with veteran actors like Arun Alrani, Sanjay Dutt, and Raveena Tandon in his Bollywood debut.

The movie has been written and directed by

the talented debutant director Binoy Gandhi.

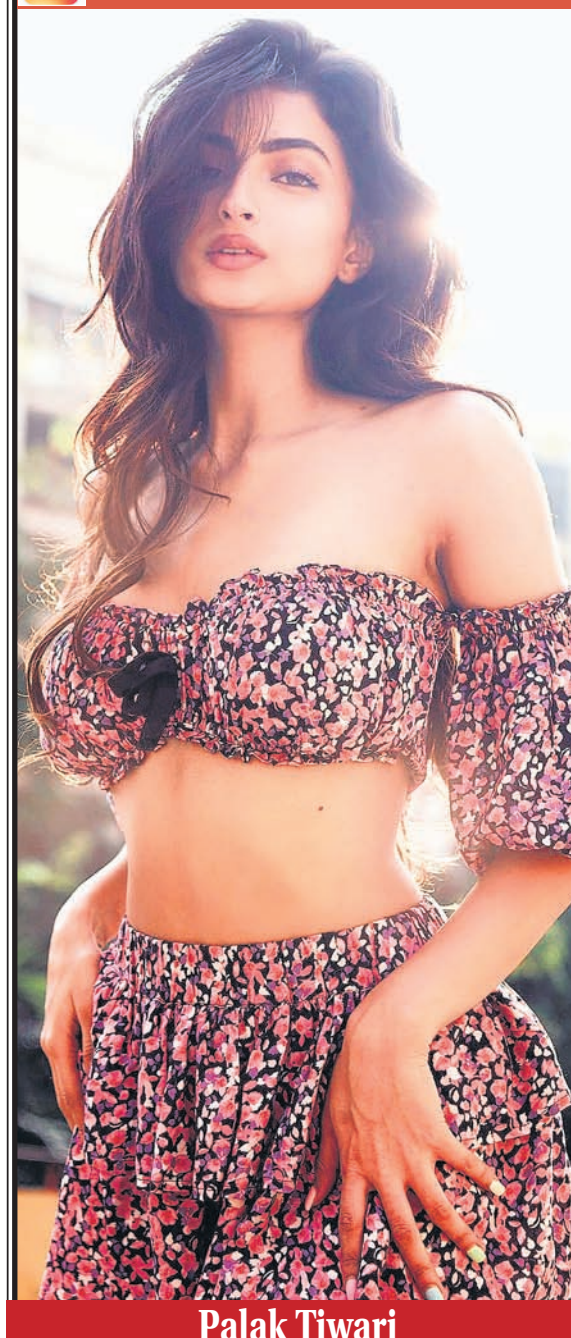
As he took to the dubbing studio, the film marked the final phase of its post-production.

"'Ghuchchadi' has been an incredible journey for me," he shared. "Working alongside such experienced actors and a fantastic team has been a dream come true." Parth plays the lead role of a charming young man. His character's journey from confusion to clarity and the series of hilarious escapades.

The actor said: "I fell in love with the script the moment I read it. It's a romantic comedy with a heart, and I believe the audience will connect with the story and the characters."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Palak Tiwari