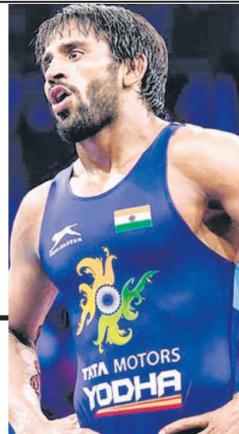


absolute india

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TWO ALLEGED AL QAEDA-LINKED TERRORISTS HELD IN LUCKNOW: POLICE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), in a major operation, has arrested two alleged terrorists, linked to Al Qaeda, from Kakori on the outskirts of Lucknow on Sunday. The two alleged ultras were reportedly hiding in a house in Kakori area. UP ATS IG GK Goswami, who led the seven-hour operation, told reporters that the suspects were planning serial blasts in the state capital and other cities in the coming days. He said that arms, as well as live bombs including pressure cooker bombs, detonators and 6 to 7 kg of explosives had been recovered from the house. A bomb disposal squad was summoned to the site and nearby houses were evacuated. The ATS IG claimed that the suspects had links with Kashmir also.



Briefing reporters, ADG, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar said that the arrested persons had been identified as Minhaz Ansari, 32, and Maseeruddin, 50. He said that based on information gathered from initial interrogation, raids were being conducted at various places to arrest their accomplices. However, he refused to divulge the source that

tipped them off about the terror plan.

The ADG said that the arrested persons were members of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, a Kashmiri wing of Al Qaeda that is active in Jammu and Kashmir. The outfit was formerly led by Zakir Rashid Bhat who was eliminated by security forces.

He said that their handler was Umar Halmandi from the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, who had radicalized the two. The ATS team had received a tip-off

about their presence and had been tracking them since the past one week. A team led by IG ATS had closed in on their location and raided their houses. The ADG said that the two arrested men would not be produced before the court and taken on remand for further investigations. Meanwhile, security has been beefed up at all vital installations in the state including airports and checking at various highways and bus stations is being carried out.

West Bengal Police Arrests 3 Suspected Jamaat-Ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh Terrorists

Team Absolute | Kolkata

► **THREE SUSPECTED JMB TERRORISTS HELD FROM KOLKATA BY STF. ARRESTED PERSONS ARE NAZIUR REHMAN, SHABBI, REZAUL. SOME FIREARMS WERE ALSO SEIZED, AS PER THE OFFICIAL SOURCES.**

Kolkata Police's Special Task Force on Sunday arrested three suspected Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) terrorists. As per the official sources, "Three suspected JMB terrorists held from Kolkata by STF. Arrested persons are Naziur Rehman, Shabbir, Rezaul. Some firearms were also seized." V Solomon Nesakumar, a senior police officer of Kolkata Police's STF addressed a press conference on the matter and said, "Today at 2:00 PM, 3 Bangladeshi

nationals have been arrested by STF whose link is with JMB. A handwritten diary and some false documents have been found from them."

Meanwhile, two terror suspects were arrested by the Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) in Lucknow's Kakori on Sunday, informed police sources. A huge amount of explosive material was also seized from their possession. They said that the ATS had received information that the arrested terror suspects were planning to carry out some major terror incidents in the state.

Terror funding case: NIA team arrests several persons in Kashmir

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) team on Sunday carried out raids at many places in Kashmir and arrested several persons, including the chairman of an Islamic seminary in connection with a terror funding case. The NIA team along with Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF raided several places in Anantnag and Srinagar districts in connection with the case registered 10 days ago relating to the radicalisation in the Indian subcontinent. Sources said the team raided an Islamic seminary named 'Sirajul Uloom' at Dalal Mohalla in old city Nawabazar area in Srinagar and seized some office records and a laptop besides arresting the chairman of the seminary, Adnaan Ahmad Nadi. The institution is affiliated to an Islamic seminary in Uttar Pradesh. The raid at Srinagar was followed by similar raids at villages Pushroo, Sunsooma and Achabal in Anantnag district. The teams arrested several persons there, including one Javid Ahmad Mir, an MBA and a shopkeeper; Umar Bhat, running a readymade garment shop; Owais Ahmad Bhat, laboratory technician; Tanveer Ahmad Bhat, shopkeeper; and Zeeshan Ameen Malik, chemist at Janglat Mandi in Anantnag town. Besides, NIA, Intelligence Bureau, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing), and the Jammu and Kashmir Police were jointly involved in the search operations. As per an official, the case pertains to online radicalisation and that the agency had got inputs about involvement of some foreign based handlers behind the radicalisation process. The raids were based on inputs received from some people detained by the security forces as well as investigating agencies involved in the case. The raid took place a day after 11 Jammu and Kashmir government employees, including two sons of most wanted terrorist Syed Salahuddin, were removed for their alleged involvement in terror-funding activities.

Ahmedabad police asks people to shut windows, doors during Shah's visit



Team Absolute | Gandhinagar

The police in Ahmedabad's Vejalpur area on Sunday asked the people residing there to shut down their windows and doors facing a community hall that will be inaugurated by Union Minister for Home Amit Shah.

Citing security reasons, the Vejalpur Police station Police Inspector L.D. Odedra had requested the residents of Swaminarayan Swati society and other societies around the Vejalpur community hall to shut down their windows and doors. "As the Union Home Minister Amit Shah is arriving here to inaugurate the Vejalpur community hall and as the dignity is protected with a Z+ security, looking at the security reasons, we request every residents to shut down their windows and doors facing the

hall from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday," said the letter from Odedra to the residents.

"This is just a request, it's not an order. For easing of the surveillance for our men we have requested the citizens. If windows and doors facing the hall are shut, we will have less areas to monitor for security, that was the purpose and nothing else," Odedra told the IANS.

Asked whether any instructions had been issued to him regarding this letter he said, "No such instructions have been passed down on me. These requests are purely from my side."

The Union Home Minister is on a three day visit to his home state to carry out a host of functions and inaugurations. Shah would be inaugurating various works of the Indian Railways, Vejalpur community hall and a party plot.

Cong levels corruption charges against K'taka CM, seeks resignation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress has alleged that Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa and his close aides are involved in corruption and posts are being sold for money. Addressing a press conference in Delhi on Sunday, Dinesh Gundu Rao, (in-charge of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Goa) and Gourav Vallabh, Spokesperson, AICC, said, "while India is



fighting against COVID-19, Karnataka CM is 'fighting for Corruption', 'Environmental Corruption' in Karnataka. Rs 16 crore deal for Chairmanship of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) Gundu Rao alleged that the undue interference in

day-to-day administration by his younger son BY Vijayendra and other close relatives has been alleged in many cases. The latest allegation in this series is by a qualified senior engineer, who has suffered at the hands of relatives of CM BS Yediyurappa, trying to fulfill their insatiable demand for huge sums of money just to secure and remain in a prestigious public office. "In the bargain, he has been left high and dry after having sold away all his fixed assets and properties to mobilize the required amounts totalling up-to

Rs 9.75 crore to satisfy the greed of CM's close relatives," he said. The Congress party said it has three demands in this entire matter that BS Yediyurappa should resign immediately from the post of CM, an independent judicial probe under the supervision of Honourable Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court to uncover the entire matter and send the culprits behind bars. "We urge central agencies like CBI, ED and IT authorities to carry out an exhaustive investigation and uncover the truth," Rao said.

NEW RULES TO ENSURE RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA ECOSYSTEM: IT MINISTER

New Delhi

India's Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has reviewed the implementation of the new IT rules and said that these norms will ensure safer and responsible social media ecosystem in India. Taking to the India-made micro-blogging platform Koo, he said that he reviewed the implementation and compliance of the new guidelines along with the Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar. "Reviewed the implementation and compliance of Information Technology Rules, 2021, along with my colleague Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar Ji. These guidelines are empowering and protecting users and will ensure a safer and responsible social media ecosystem in India," he said. Just after assuming charge of the ministry, Vaishnaw on Thursday said that everyone has to follow the law of the country.

Focus on fast socio-economic development of entire NE: Reddy

■ Reviewing various developmental activities and programmes in the region, Reddy told officials that all ongoing projects should be completed in a stipulated time-frame.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that socio-economic development of the entire north-eastern region at a fast pace will be his key focus area.

Reviewing various developmental activities and programmes in the region, Reddy told officials that all ongoing projects should be



completed in a stipulated time-frame.

"All pending projects should be resolved at the earliest through a proper consultation mechanism with other Ministries," he said.

Secretary DoNER Dr Inderjit Singh and senior officials gave a comprehensive presentation to the Minister about all the projects, schemes and policies of the

Ministry of DoNER in the two-day review session.

Earlier, after taking charge of the Ministry, Reddy had said that the kind of transformation that took place in the north east in the last seven years in all spheres of life under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is both incredible and unprecedented.

AFTER HASINA'S MANGO GIFT, TRIPURA CM SENDS PINEAPPLES TO B'DESH PM

Agartala: Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Sunday sent the state's exotic and juicy pineapples to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who had sent juicy "Haribhanga" mango of her country to her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and Chief Ministers of West Bengal and four northeastern states.

Tripura government officials handed over 100 boxes containing 400 pieces (around 800 kg) of the Kew variety of pineapple to the officials of Indian High Commission at the Agartala-Akhaura checkpoint.

"The Indian High Commission officials would hand over the pineapple to Hasina in Dhaka," Tripura Horticulture Department Director Fanibhusan Jamatia told IANS.

After receiving the delicious gift ("Haribhanga" mango), Deb in a tweet, said that he is extremely happy after getting the mangoes and thanked Hasina.

The Tripura Chief Minister also talked with Hasina over phone and inquired about the Covid situation in Bangladesh. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the India-Bangladesh friendship would remain intact," the Tripura CM told the Bangladesh PM, according to an official of the Chief Minister's Office.

Tripura annually produces 1.28 lakh tonnes of two major varieties -- Kew and Queen -- of pineapples in 8,800 hectares of hilly orchards across the northeastern state and earlier exported pineapples and lemons to Dubai, Bangladesh and other countries and many Indian states. President Ram Nath Kovind, at a function in Agartala in 2018, announced the "Queen" variety of pineapple would be Tripura's state fruit.

NUMBER OF MINISTERS INCREASED, BUT NOT OF VACCINES: RAHUL



New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has once again targeted the government over its vaccine policy. He questioned the non-availability of vaccines and linked the issue with the latest cabinet expansion, saying that while the number of ministers has increased, but vaccines have not increased.

Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "The number of ministers has increased, but not of vaccines" and questioned, "Where Are Vaccines". He also tagged a gif along with his tweet which said India needs to go at vaccination rate of about 80 lakh per day to target 60 per cent of population with both doses by December 2021.

Population stabilisation plan of UP govt welcomed

The proposed plan to stabilise population in Uttar Pradesh by the Yogi Adityanath government ahead of the Assembly elections next year, has received mixed reactions.

Team Absolute | Agra

This could in fact become a major poll plank, feel poll watchers. Already the plan has triggered an intensive debate in political circles.

A proactive policy initiative to encourage people to opt for smaller families should have salutary effects, on the quality of life in general and usher in much needed socio-economic reforms. Parents with one or two children will be suitably rewarded in a number of ways, according to a note in circulation for discussion.

While enlightened public opinion favours the proposed strategy, rumblings of concern are being articulated by the representatives of the minority community and the opposition parties in the state.

But most experts and academics agree that the population pressure in Uttar Pradesh has to be defused if any meaningful

headway is to be made to impart momentum to developmental activities.

India, with a current population size of 1.37 billion, has the second largest population in the world. By 2027, we are expected to overtake China to become the most populous country.

"The constant decline in fertility and mortality in India during the 1980s has brought a positive change in the age structure of population and has resulted in a huge young force of human capital and the trend will remain until early 2030, says Dr Dharendra Kumar (Population Scientist and Dean, IHMR University). Investments in the future of the youth population is critical because caste dynamics and social mores inhibit the opportunities to access education, health, nutrition, employment, and empowerment, especially for women and girls. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have successfully proved the importance of

investing in education and improving access to quality healthcare in order to achieve population stabilisation.

Many experts opine that coercive population control measures are not the solution and could instead lead to a potential increase in sex selection practices. This could have a negative impact on the Child Sex Ratio, affecting Central Government campaigns such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme. China recently rescinded its stringent population policy, having found itself in the midst of a population crisis. On the other hand, neighbouring Sri Lanka successfully stabilized fertility rates by simply increasing the age at marriage, a move that was made more effective by ensuring girls were educated, says political commentator Paras Nath Choudhary. Strategists say that increased access to education, economic and other development opportunities, lead to fertility decline.

For the country's youth population, family planning and access to contraceptives is a critical element of the primary care component, given its crucial role in delaying first births, ensuring spacing between births, lowering maternal and child mortality, and preventing unsafe abortions, says social activist Mukta Gupta. Divya Santhanam of the Population Foundation of India says, "Keeping girls in schools and increasing the number of years girls remain in school, can have a huge impact on the health and well-being of the population, particularly among young people. This helps in delaying the age at marriage/cohabitation and increasing the interval between marriage and the first pregnancy. We need to expand the range and reach of the current basket of contraceptive choices, and consider adding more Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC), which are critical in view of our large population of young people."

WILL NOT RESIGN, SAYS KARNATAKA BJP MLA RAMESH JARKIHOLO

Belagavi (Karnataka):

Ramesh Jarkiholi, a former minister in Karnataka's BJP government who became mired in a sex scandal, did a U-turn on Sunday on his resignation threat and said resigning from the post of MLA was a closed chapter. His earlier statement that he would resign from the MLA seat had created a stir in the state politics. "After consultation with religious leaders, elders and well wishers, I decided not to submit resignation," he maintained on Sunday. After visiting powerful Lingayath seer of the Suttur Mutt in Mysuru and meeting former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Ramesh Jarkiholi, also accused of wrong doings in the Gokak Assembly constituency which he represents, announced that he would resign in 10 days.



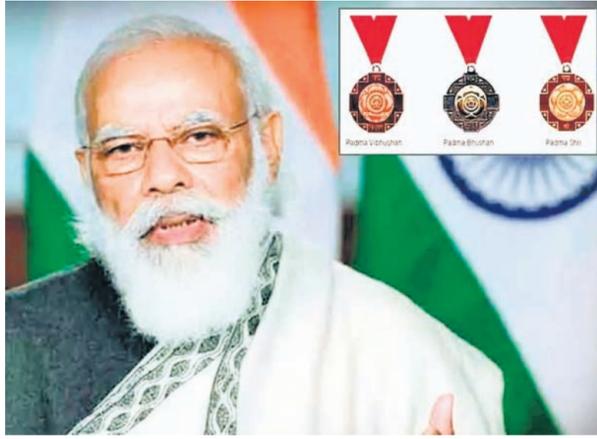
PM INVITES PEOPLE TO NOMINATE FOR PADMA AWARDS 2022

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Noting that India has many talented people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday invited people and those doing exceptional work at the grassroots to nominate for Padma awards 2022. The Padma awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service). The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made.

Taking to Twitter to invite people for making their nomination for the award, the Prime Minister said: "India has many talented people, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots. Often, we don't see or hear much of



them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PeoplesPadma. Nominations are open till 15th September. <https://padmaawards.gov.in>."

The Central government in last month opened the online nominations for the Padma Awards 2022. The last date for nominations is September 15, 2021. The awards will be announced on

the occasion of Republic Day in 2022. The Central government instituted two civilian awards-Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan in 1954. The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg. These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.

People across UP supporting us: BJP on local polls

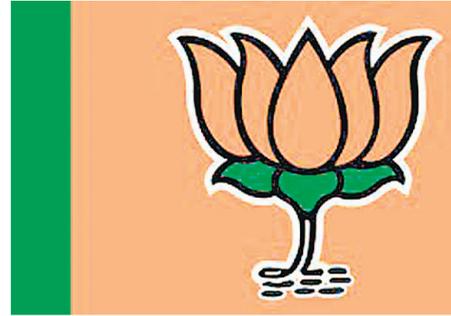
Team Absolute | New Delhi

Riding high on the party's thumping victory in Uttar Pradesh 'zila panchayat' and block head polls, the BJP now believes that the wind is blowing in its favour across the state and it will reflect in next year's Assembly polls.

The saffron camp claims that people across the state are supporting the party. Of the total 825 posts of block heads, the saffron party has won 635. Earlier, the BJP managed to sweep zila panchayat head posts.

Co-in-charge of Uttar Pradesh BJP, Sanjiv Chaurasia told IANS that results are clear indication about the ground reality and massive support for the BJP.

"There is huge support for the BJP government's welfare policy and good governance model across the state which our political



rivals failed to understand. Results of zila panchayat and block 'pramukh' (head) result have sent two clear messages, firstly the BJP has huge support at ground and secondly this support is spread across the state. Despite Rakesh Tikait leading a farmer's protest, the BJP swept western Uttar Pradesh in both zila panchayat and block head elections," Chaurasia said.

The saffron party feels that continuous victory at the different levels of local governance is a clear message that people are happy and supporting the BJP and the Yogi Adityanath government has the support of voters.

Chaurasia, a member of Bihar Assembly, said, "Results are people's verdict on four years of BJP government in the state and established that everyone irrespective of caste, region and

religion are happy with working of Yogi Adityanath government under guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. People will also bless the BJP in the next Assembly polls as it is the only party which has performed and given a good transparent, corruption-free government."

Many believe that maintaining the ongoing momentum in its favour till next year's Assembly polls will ensure the BJP's return to power for a second consecutive term.

"We are getting support from every section of society and all the regions of the state. We just need to keep working at an organisational level to connect with people and explain the achievements of the Yogi government. We also need to tell people about the welfare measures of the Modi government over seven years," a party functionary said.

Saving lives more important than saving heritage: Owaisi



Hyderabad | Agencies

Reiterating the demand for construction of new building of the Osmania General Hospital, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday said that saving lives is more important than saving heritage.

"If you want to save heritage, save it, but if you want to save lives, and save money, we need a new building for Osmania Hospital," he said after inaugurating the 23-bed Covid ward at the Indo-US

Hospital at Malakpet here. During a visit to the Osmania Hospital last month, the MP demanded that the state government build a new hospital at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore.

"If you want to keep the building, keep it; if you want to demolish it, do so," he had said. Heritage activists, who have been urging the government to protect the heritage structure, had taken exception to the MP's remarks.

Owaisi, however, defended his stand, saying the condition of the

Osmania Hospital is deteriorating with every passing day. He said the Osmania Hospital needs a built-up area of 20 lakh square feet. The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief said that people criticising his party for supporting the Osmania Hospital's new building are neither aware of the situation at the hospital nor have ever visited it for treatment.

The MP said when the Chief Minister can demolish the Warangal Jail and build a hospital there, why can't he build a new building for the Osmania Hospital Medical College, which is the oldest medical college in the country and has given countless doctors in different disciplines. "The annual number of surgeries has come down from 90,000 to 45,000 at the Osmania Hospital. We will not let the government escape the Osmania Hospital issue, by citing heritage concerns," he said.

Designed by Vincent Esch, the Osmania Hospital building on the

banks of Musi River was completed in 1925.

Owaisi pointed out that the shortage of beds and ventilators led to loss of many lives during the second wave. "Covid treatment is expensive. And hospitals like these (Indo-US Hospital, Osmania Hospital) can help patients save their hard earned money during times of crises," he said.

He assured cooperation to the Sahayata Trust-run Indo-US Hospital to further improve healthcare infrastructure and Covid treatment facilities with the help of his MP fund.

Earlier, Owaisi went around the Covid-19 ward with Malakpet MLA Ahmed Balala. The facility is equipped with critical care specialists, 24x7 piped Oxygen, ventilators, bi-pap machines and additional oxygen cylinders in case of emergencies. High quality oxygen concentrators with dual output, dialysis machines and even an in-house oxygen plant that is due for import on July 15 will provide best medical support

to Covid patients.

Once operational, the oxygen plant funded by IMRC, US and implemented by the Sahayata Trust, which manages the hospital, will be able to provide 24x7 liquid medical oxygen for Covid-19 patients at the hospital. "In case of emergencies, free refills of oxygen cylinders will be provided by the Trust," said Sahayata Trust CEO Syed Aneesuddin. He said another oxygen plant would come up at Toli Chowki in the city. Two new branches of the Indo-US Hospital are proposed in the city at Toli Chowki and Shah Ali Banda.

Aneesuddin thanked IMRC Chairman Manzoor Ghori for funding the Sahayata Trust projects. He said Indo-US Hospital has been offering treatment at subsidised prices for a long time.

Director of the Indo-US Hospital, Dr Mohammed Abdul Moiz said they trained specialists to follow Covid-19 guidelines issued by the Central government and the WHO.

BJP all set to contest Goa Assembly polls under CM Sawant's leadership

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Despite some groups raising a voice against him, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is all set to contest next year's Goa Assembly elections under current Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. A well placed source said that the issue was discussed at a high level meeting and it was decided that Sawant will lead the party in the Assembly polls.

A senior leader told IANS that the BJP government in Goa led by Sawant is doing a good job and will return to power under his leadership.

"Goa elections will be fought under Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The issue was discussed at length and the central leadership is confident of returning to power under him and has asked the state unit to devise specific plans," said the senior BJP leader.

According to a party insider, however, contesting elections under the leadership of Sawant is no guarantee that he would be made the Chief Minister if the BJP returned to power.

"You saw what happened in Assam. Elections were contest-



ed under Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal but after the results the party made Himanta Biswa Sarma the Chief Minister. So the Assam model is also something that is keeping everyone on their toes," said another leader.

A party functionary said: "Who the Chief Minister will be is a decision that is taken by the central leadership and parliamentary board and that is not an issue to be discussed at this juncture. Another senior saffron party leader said the party was concerned over the recent infighting between Sawant and Health Minister Vishwajit Rane over Covid-19 management.

Central leaders had visited Goa and had held a meeting with the party state president of Goa over the recent issue of infighting. They had asked the state unit to resolve the issue at

the earliest and warned them that it should not linger on with elections just round the corner," he said.

Another party leader explained that Rane is 'quite ambitious' and feels he also deserves a chance.

"Vishwajit Rane is the son of a former Chief Minister (Pratapsingh Raoji Rane) and he feels he has the capabilities. But so far the party is only looking at Sawant as someone who can lead the party to a victory," he said.

The party had won three of the five municipal councils where elections were held with less than a year to go for the state assembly elections under the Sawant government.

"The performance of the BJP was good in the urban local bodies elections where we won six out of seven local bodies including Panaji. This shows the ground presence of the party. We have to keep the momentum going," said the leader.

The Central leadership has asked the state unit to devise specific plans keeping the elections in mind and connect with the voters with Covid-19 cases coming down in the area.

NFSU DEVELOPS FORENSIC TRAINING MODULE FOR POLICE

Gandhinagar | Agencies

Following a recommendation from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the National Forensic Sciences University here has prepared a special forensic training module for the police. The university will be training police personnel across the nation with offline as well as online modules on the latest crime and forensic methods, and the protocols to be followed.

"On the recommendations of the MHA, the NFSU had been entrusted last year to develop a special forensic training module for the police. While developing the module during the Covid-19 pandemic, we also developed an online version of the module. But the training module was not an entirely new thing for us in Gujarat, as the GSFU (before

getting the national status) had prepared this module and had trained Gujarat police officers," S.O. Junare, Director, NFSU, Gandhinagar and Delhi campus, told IANS. "Within a span of five years, we have already trained around 13,000 police personnel through this module regarding various forensic methods like cybercrime, DNA extraction, DNA profiling, financial cyber frauds, their methodology, forensic investigation and various other aspects. Almost 80 per cent of the trained personnel are from Gujarat Police," added Junare.

"These police officers, even though trained for crime investigation, don't necessarily know the latest forensic methods of detection, investigation, evidence collection, evidence transfer, data transfer etc. They need to be taught as much, as the criminals are constantly

updating and upgrading themselves. To match them and even remain a step ahead of them is badly needed," said Junare.

"The Central ministry entrusted this responsibility to us (NFSU) to develop a mass and virtual training module for the police. Right now we have the programme in English and Hindi, but we are developing it in eight other languages," Junare told reporters during a presser on Saturday, which was held to brief about the inauguration programme of a centre of excellence on the NFSU campus.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the Centre of Excellence for Research and Analysis of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances on the Gandhinagar campus of the NFSU on July 12.

POLITICAL BARBS FLY AMID THREAT OF WATER CRISIS IN DELHI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid peak of summer when water demand in the national capital has risen up to around 1,200 MGD per day, the ruling AAP and the opposition BJP have launched political barbs at each other. On Sunday, scores of AAP workers protested outside Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta's residence, warning him to resolve the water issue with BJP-led Haryana government within 24 hours, otherwise, water supply of his residence would be cut. The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is governed by the Delhi Government, however, it justified its protest alleging that BJP-led Haryana is solely responsible for the situation as it has reduced supply of raw water to Delhi 100 MGD per day. "There has been a shortage of

water in Delhi for a few days, but the BJP leaders are busy doing politics. We have given BJP 24 hours' time to solve this water problem and if not resolved, be ready to face cut in water supply," said AAP leader Durgesh Pathak. AAP's protest came as a counter to the BJP as its Delhi unit head Adesh Gupta had on Friday warned of the water crisis and had warned that if the issue is not resolved, the BJP will cut water supply to the residence of Delhi Water Minister Satyendar Jain. Gupta had also claimed that DJB, which was running at a profit of Rs 800 crore, is now in the red and in fact, on the verge of bankruptcy under the AAP government. Meanwhile, DJB vice chairman and AAP leader Raghav Chadha on Sunday claimed that Haryana has been withholding Delhi's

legitimate share of water and that the raw water being discharged into the Yamuna by the neighbouring state is at an "all-time low".

DJB on Saturday claimed that the shortage of raw water from Haryana has resulted in reduction in water treatment at Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants. "Raw water discharge through Yamuna by Haryana is at an all-time low. There is zero cusec release of raw water in Yamuna from Haryana," Chadha said. A DJB official said Chandrawal treatment plant's production capacity has reduced to 55 MGD from its earlier 90 MGD, whereas, Wazirabad is producing 80 MGD compared to 135 MGD water before and the Okhla water treatment plant is supplying 15 MGD instead of its earlier 20 MGD.

West Bengal govt to sell off DPL land to clear debts

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Though West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been vocal against the disinvestment policy of the central government and has often alleged that the Modi government is selling off major public sector units including in banking, insurance and steel but the state government has decided to go the same way by selling off or leasing out a portion of unused land of Durgapur Projects Limited (DPL), a loss-making power utility that was under a restructuring plan, to clear the firm's debts.

A few days before in a high-level meeting at 'Nabanna' attended by state power minister Aroop Biswas, state law minister Malay Ghatak and chief secretary H.K. Diwedi it was decided that the state government would either sell off



or lease out a portion of DPL to meet the debts of the company.

"Though it is not yet clear which portion of the land would be sold or leased off, the process could start with 154 acres spread in three parcels in Durgapur. Two officers of the power department went to Durgapur on Wednesday and visited all three land parcels which could be put up for monetisation in the first phase," said a senior official of the state finance department.

According to sources, DPL has its power plant and coke oven plant on around 650 acres. Moreover, it has administrative buildings, township and various offices on around 900 acres. About 50 per cent of its 3,559 acres are lying unused these days.

According to a restructuring plan taken up by the power department in 2019, the DPL was divided into three parts. The transmission was taken over by the West Bengal State Electricity

Transmission Company, the distribution was handed over to the West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company and the West Bengal Power Development Corporation was given the charge of the electricity generation.

"But these were yet to be notified duly and no other restructuring process like staff being laid off was initiated. The DPL has been facing a loss of Rs 200 crore every fiscal for the past one decade. A bold step is needed to clear the burden of at least Rs 2,000 crore at the DPL," said a source.

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari had been vocal on this issue. Responding to media queries at the Assembly premises he said that the state government is doing the same thing for which they had been critical of the Central government. "They are trying to sell DPL's land to a

private promoter. They are disinvesting state government's stake in Haldia Petrochemicals Limited. Earlier, the state government sold off Metro Dairy to a private entity. And this same state government and the ruling party are accusing the Centre of its disinvestment policies. This is a complete dichotomy," Adhikari said.

The Left Front government had also planned to utilise the unused plots of the DPL by setting up townships in a joint venture. But the plan could not materialise because of stiff resistance from the CITU.

This time also, the CITU said it would resist if the state wanted to sell off the plots or gave them on long-term lease. "We will put up stiff resistance if the government takes any step like promoting on the DPL land," a senior district committee member of CITU said.



COPS USE WATER CANNONS AS CONGRESS WORKERS OPPOSE LAND FOR RSS AFFILIATE

Police have filed a case against Digvijaya Singh and eight other Congress leaders along with 200 workers of the party for organising a protest without prior permission and violating COVID-19 rules.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government's decision to allot land in an industrial estate to an RSS affiliate associated with small industries prompted the opposition Congress to stage a protest under senior leader Digvijaya Singh here on Sunday wherein police used water cannons.

The incident occurred when Singh, a Rajya Sabha MP, and other Congress workers were trying to climb on a barricade during the protest held at Govindpura industrial area, officials said. Police have filed a case against Singh and eight other Congress leaders along with 200 workers of the party for organising a protest without prior permission and violating COVID-19 rules.

"Police used water cannons but we will continue to fight against the land allotment till the association of Industrial area is with us. The water got into my ears, Congre" Singh told reporters.

Singh, also a former chief minister of the state alleged that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had given this land worth crores to the Laghu and Madhyam Udyog Bharti at the rate of Re 1 despite opposition from the Industrial Association.

"This is the only park where workers take their lunch and rest," Singh said.

The former chief minister said the Govindpura industrial estate was



developed for ancillary units of the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) in Bhopal. "The park land in the estate is being allotted to this organisation without changing the land title and securing due permissions. 95 per cent of the industrialists are opposed to the land allotment to this body," he said.

"I, CM Chouhan, former CM Babulal Gaur had planted saplings in this park," Singh recalled. Eyewitnesses said a heated argument broke out between Singh and Bhopal DIG Irshad Wali during the demonstration in the presence of police personnel. When Singh said the Congress will demolish the foundation stone on the allotted land, Wali is heard saying the police will keep an eye on him, they said.

District Collector Avinash Lavania told Singh that the work at the allotted land is allowed only after securing necessary legal permissions

including from the Industry Department. Reacting to the Congress' protest, Madhya Pradesh Medical Education Minister Vishvas Sarang said the upcoming project of the Laghu Udyog Bharti will provide skill development and create jobs. "This land was allotted to the Laghu Udyog Bharti after considering all the aspects," he told reporters. Sarang said contrary to the claims made by Singh, no industrialist was seen during Saturday's protest. "Digvijaya Singh is always opposed to every new creation and brings negativity into every positive thing. The youths will be prepared for employment. Digvijaya Singh was CM for ten years but instead of giving jobs, he deprived the daily wagers of their employment. He is now feeling bad when something new is created," Sarang alleged.

Congress leader and former Union minister Arun Yadav con-

demned the use of force by police against the party workers and Singh. "The BJP regime allotted the land to an organisation affiliated to the RSS. Police used force when Congress workers staged a protest. The CM should take action against erring officials," Yadav demanded. Ashoka Garden police station in-charge Alok Shrivastava said that police filed cases against eight leaders including Digvijaya Singh, MLA PC Sharma, Vibha Patel and others, besides 200 party workers.

"These leaders were booked under sections 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 147 (rioting) of the Indian Penal Code," he said. Shrivastava said only water cannons were used to disperse the protestors and no excessive force was used during the protest.

6 family members electrocuted in Chhatarpur: CM despatches immediate relief

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the accident.

The incident took place at Mahua Jhala village, about 42 km from district headquarters, while construction work of a septic tank was underway, Bijawar police station in-charge Mukesh Singh Thakur said.

Team Absolute | Chhatarpur

Six members of a family were electrocuted to death during a construction work at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district on Sunday morning, police said. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the accident at village Mahua Jhala in Chhatarpur district. Six people died due to electrocution in village Mahua Jhala of Bijawar in Chhatarpur district. Chouhan has expressed condolences on this painful accident.

The incident took place at Mahua Jhala village, about 42 km from the district headquarters, while the construction work of a septic tank was underway, Bijawar police station in-charge Mukesh Singh Thakur



said. One of the victims got down into the tank to remove the shuttering plates used to cast the roof slab. However, due to lighting arrangements made in the tank, the electric current spread on to the plates and the person got electrocuted, the official said.

The other victims got down into the tank to save their family member and they also got electrocuted, he said. Six of them were rushed to a hospital where doctors declared them dead, he said, adding that the deceased were in the age group of 20 to 65 years.

he Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced immediate relief amount, in this regard checks of Rs. 4

lakh each were provided to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs. 2 lakh to the father of the unmarried deceased in village MahuaJhala of Bijawar in Chhatarpur district.

Sub-Divisional Officer of Bijawar Rahul Siladiya handed over checks of the above amount to the families of the victims. Janpad Panchayat of Bijawar is looking after the process and helping late Ramprasad Ahirwar and Milan Ahirwar under Sambal Yojana in getting their relief amount at an accelerated pace. It is to be known that in the tragic accident on Sunday in village MahuaJhala, 6 people died untimely due to electrocution.

Governor Patel congratulates Gehlot on taking over as Karnataka Governor

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to Thawarchand Gehlot on taking over as the Governor of Karnataka. He has said that Gehlot is a hardworking administrator and a visionary leader. The state of Karnataka will benefit from his long experience in the field of social and political service. Under his guidance, the state will attain new milestones of "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas".



Singh Kulaste and Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale, Members of the Karnataka Cabinet, MPs, MLAs, senior State Government officials and dignitaries from Madhya Pradesh also were present. It is noteworthy that Thawarchand Gehlot was the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment at the Centre before taking over as the Governor. Before assuming the new charge of Karnataka State, he was the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.

CONGRESS LEADER SENDS BURNOL TO MISHRA OVER SCINDIA'S ELEVATION

Bhopal: Trading barbs over the induction of Jyotiraditya Scindia in the Union cabinet, a Congress leader on Saturday sent tubes of Burnol cream to Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra to 'ease pain'.

Mishra on Thursday had said that those who are feeling jealous about Scindia, a former Congressman, getting into the Narendra Modi cabinet should be given Burnol (which is used to treat minor burn injuries). "When the Congress issued a statement about a betrayal by Scindia, Mishra said he would send us Burnol. Now we have sent two tubes of the ointment to Mishra because he needs them more," state Congress spokesperson Narendra Saluja said. The tubes were sent through an e-commerce platform, he said. "One tube is from Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, because Mishra was eyeing his post. Another tube is from state Congress chief Kamal Nath because Mishra is obsessed with him and continuously talks about him," Saluja said. State BJP secretary Rahul Kothari said it was a cheap stunt. "This is a cheap tactic being used by Congress. The opposition party should tell us what kind of ointment Nath needs, because he travels only by air and now Scindia has become the aviation minister," Kothari retorted.

8 new SpiceJet flights to MP from July 16: Scindia

In a tweet, the Union Minister Scindia said that the new routes would be Gwalior-Mumbai-Gwalior, Gwalior-Pune-Gwalior, Jabalpur-Surat-Jabalpur, and Ahmedabad-Gwalior-Ahmedabad.



Ahmedabad-Gwalior-Ahmedabad.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Days after taking over as India's new Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia on Sunday said that budget airline SpiceJet will start eight new flights from Madhya Pradesh starting July 16.

In a tweet, the minister said that the new routes would be Gwalior-Mumbai-Gwalior, Gwalior-Pune-Gwalior, Jabalpur-Surat-Jabalpur, and

Scindia took charge of the ministry headquartered at the Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan here on Friday. He succeeds Hardeep Singh Puri who has now got the Ministry of Petroleum while retaining the Urban Affairs Ministry. Besides, former Army chief-turned-politician General V.K. Singh (ret), the Minister of State in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, is also the new Minister of State for Civil Aviation. The sector is one of the hardest impacted by the Covid pandemic.

At present, airlines and airports are running into massive financial and job losses. However, the sector, despite the economic fallout, has successfully been able to transform its image from elitist to essential. The two ministers will now face the daunting task of Air India's divestment as well as reinvigorating the sector through infrastructure development.

MP receives 11% below normal rainfall so far this monsoon

Monsoon had hit Madhya Pradesh on June 10, seven days before its normal arrival date.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has received 11 per cent below normal rainfall from June 1 to July 11 due to a break in the monsoon activity, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said on Sunday. Monsoon had hit Madhya Pradesh on June 10, seven days before its normal arrival date. By June 20, the state had received 94 per cent more rainfall than the average, but the activity weakened from the last week of June, they said.



Panna district in east MP has received only 64 per cent of the average rainfall, which is that region's lowest so far this season. The district has recorded 87.6 mm rainfall as against its average of 240.4 mm, senior meteorologist with IMD's Bhopal office, G D Mishra, said. Likewise, Morena district in west MP has recorded the lowest 60 per cent rainfall. It received 46.7 mm rainfall against its normal 115.7 mm rainfall, he added. According to the IMD data, only eight districts, including Singrauli and Chhindwara, out of the 20 districts in east MP, have received more than average rainfall. Similarly, only six districts, including Bhopal and Indore, out of the total 31 in west MP have received more than normal rainfall, the data showed.

MAN HELD FOR OBJECTIONABLE COMMENTS ON PM, UNION MINISTER

Ujjain: Madhya Pradesh police have arrested a 28-year-old man for allegedly making objectionable comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani on social media, an official said on Sunday.

A local BJP leader filed a police complaint on Saturday against Govardhan Nagar, a resident of Aky Jagir village in Ujjain district, Khachrod police station in-charge Ramkishor Singhavast said. In his complaint, Khachrod BJP mandal unit president Chetan Sharma alleged that the accused posted an edited picture along with some objectionable comments on social media platforms, the official said. Following the complaint, Nagar was arrested and a case registered against him under provisions of the Information Technology Act, the official said, adding that the accused was later released on bail. A probe is on into the case, he said.

IAS officer arrested for 'forging' court orders

The accused had allegedly got promoted from the State Administrative Service to the IAS cadre with the help of one of the forged orders pertaining to his acquittal in the assault case.

the district court filed a complaint about this on June 26 this year at MG Road police station in Indore.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case against unidentified persons under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 420 (forgery), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 471 (using forged documents as genuine) and other relevant provisions.

Team Absolute | Indore

According to officials, two forged orders, dated October 6, 2020, were allegedly prepared in the name of the special judge of the local court. In one of these orders, Verma was acquitted of charges of abusing, and assault and criminal intimidation of a woman.

The other judgement said both the parties had reached an agreement. In his complaint, the special judge said he did not pass any order on October 6, 2020, as he was on casual leave that day for the check-up of his wife, who is a cancer patient, officials said. The fake order about Verma's acquittal in the assault case was allegedly presented to the state government as original following which he was promoted to the IAS cadre, another official said. The police are conducting further investigation into the case, he added.

Employment promotion necessary to make self-reliant MP: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that employment promotion is necessary to make Madhya Pradesh self-reliant. Today the sunrise of new-industry is happening in the city of Lord Mahakal. Now continuous industrial development will go on here. Madhya Pradesh government is committed to provide employment to the local people. He appealed to the public to cooperate with the industrialists to maintain a good industrial environment.

Chouhan said that the textile unit which is being set up in Ujjain today with an investment of Rs 60 crore is coming from Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu, which is the hub of textiles. He had started this effort 4 years ago, when he went to Tiruppur, which has been successful today. This plant will start its work by 2022. Four thousand women will get direct employment from industries coming to Ujjain.

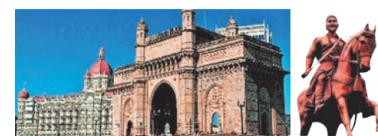
Chouhan on Sunday performed bhumi puja of the ultra-modern textile unit to be set up by BEST Corporation of Tamil Nadu on the land of soybean plant in Ujjain.

Chouhan said that 150 acres more land has been sought by BEST Corporation, so that they will put a new plant here. Without delaying in this matter, the land will be given to the company immediately. In the city of Baba Mahakal,



Pratibha Syntex will do the bhumi puja of their plant next month. Similarly, proposals for investment of Rs 1017 crore have been received in Vikram Udyogpuri by other companies including Karnataka Antibiotics, Sai Machines, Amul and Srinivas. Four thousand people will be connected with direct employment through all these. Not only this, an investment of three thousand crores will be made by Grasim in Nagda in different phases. A new era of In the programme, Higher Education Minister Mohan Yadav said that today is the beginning of a new era in the history of Ujjain. Four thousand women will get direct employment with the

establishment of textile industries. Besides, training of women will be started from now on in batches of two hundred and fifty each. Adequate land is being made available for the industry and industrialists are being fully supported by the Industrial Development Corporation and the Industries Department. The way investors are getting attracted towards Ujjain, this will create a chain of industries here. Finance Minister and Minister in charge of Ujjain district, Jagdish Deora said that today is a very happy day for Ujjain. He congratulated the industrialist and his team setting up the industry. Deora said that the state is progressing continuously in the direction of self-reliance. We will move ahead on the path of continuous development under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Chouhan. The Chief Minister constantly thinks about what should be done to make the state self-reliant. In this direction, the work done for industrial development in Ujjain today will pave the way for new industries. The way investors are getting attracted to Ujjain, a garland of industries will be formed in Ujjain. Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Rajvardhan Singh Dattigao said that a large number of employment would be generated from the unit being started in Ujjain. The project to be set up in Ujjain is environment friendly. This production unit will also attract other textile units.



CENTRE HAS NO RIGHT, COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN MAHA WON'T BE AFFECTED BY NEW MINISTRY: PAWAR

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday refuted reports which claimed that the newly-formed Ministry of Cooperation at the Centre may "hijack the cooperative movement" in Maharashtra.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Reacting to the new Ministry of Cooperation, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said that cooperative movement in Maharashtra will not be affected by the newly formed ministry.

"The reports of the Union Ministry of Cooperation creating problems in the state have no facts as the matter constitutionally belongs to the state govt. The right to a multi-state institution, i.e., an institution which is run in two states, goes to the Central government," Pawar said.

He further clarified the issue saying that the laws regarding the cooperation sector are framed in Maharashtra Assembly. "The Centre has no right to interfere in the laws drafted by the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly," the NCP chief said. "This is not a new decision as



such. It was there when I was in the central government. But, unfortunately, the media is painting a different picture that the Centre's

Ministry of Cooperation may hijack or end the cooperative movement in Maharashtra," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre recently carved out a new ministry for cooperation, which earlier was a small department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has been given charge of the newly-created ministry, on Saturday said the government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered.

When asked about the Uniform Civil Code, the NCP chief said he can't comment on it until the Centre takes a decision on this.

"I can't comment on it till the central government takes any decision. We are waiting for the central government's take on it. Once they clear it, only then we can say something," he said.

No berth for Munde in Union cabinet, 20 BJP office-bearers quit in Beed

A local leader also said members of Beed Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti along with BJP councillors from Ambajogai have left for Mumbai to submit their resignations.



BEED | Agencies

More than 20 office-bearers of the BJP from Beed district in Maharashtra resigned in protest against local MP Pritam Munde Khade not finding a place in the newly-expanded Union council of ministers, a local leader said on Sunday.

He also said members of Beed Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti along with BJP councillors from Ambajogai have left for Mumbai to submit their resignations.

Among those who have quit over the last two days included a member of the Beed Zilla Parishad and a member of the Panchayat Samiti besides BJP district general secretary, student wing president, district vice president, tehsil president, and district vice president of the BJP youth wing. They handed over their resignations to BJP district president Rajendra Maske, the leader

said. "Pritam Munde was in the reckoning to get a cabinet berth, but her name was dropped at the last minute. Thousands of workers of BJP were waiting to see Pritam Munde get a place in the expanded council of ministers. However, their dream was shattered when her name did not figure in the final list. In protest, I am resigning from the post," said BJP Beed district general secretary Sarjerao Tandle.

However, BJP national secretary Pankaja Munde had denied reports that her MP sister Pritam Munde Khade was upset over not getting a berth in the Union cabinet.

Pankaja, a former minister in the then BJP government in Maharashtra, had also said that the party workers were confident that Pritam will be inducted into the council of ministers. Pankaja had clarified that any decision made by the BJP is acceptable to her and her sister as they are loyal workers of the saffron party.

Thane builder suicide: HC rejects Maharashtra's plea seeking cancellation of bail to four accused

The death toll in the Arabian Sea tragedy caused by Cyclone Tauktae earlier this week has shot up to 66, while around 10 persons are still reported missing. A total of 188 persons have been rescued safely so far.

Team Absolute | Thane

The Bombay High Court has rejected the Maharashtra government's application seeking cancellation of bail to four accused in the suicide case of Thane-based builder Suraj Parmar in 2015.

While three of the accused are sitting corporators in Thane civic body, the fourth one is a former cor-

porator. Parmar had committed suicide by shooting himself dead in October 2015.

In his suicide note, he had blamed four corporators for his extreme step, accusing them of harassing him for money. A Thane district court had earlier granted bail to the four accused-NCP corporators Hanumant Jagdale, Najeeb Mulla, Congress corporator Vikrant Chavan, who is presently also the president of the party's Thane city district unit, and former MNS corporator Sudhakar Chavan.

In its order dated July 7, the copy of which was made available on Saturday, high court judge Justice Prakash D Naik said, "Long time has lapsed after the bail of the applicants. Hence, all the applications (seeking cancellation of bail) be disposed of.

4.4 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS YAVATMAL, NEARBY AREAS

Yavarmal: An earthquake of 4.4 magnitude hit Yavatmal district and neighbouring areas on Sunday, officials said. There was no report of any casualty or damage to property, they said. The earthquake was experienced at 8.33 am, with its epicentre at Sadhunar in Yavatmal district, Dr Vipin Itankar, the collector of neighbouring Nanded district said while quoting data of the National Centre for Seismology. He said shocks were also felt in Nanded, located about 200 km from Yavatmal and 140 km from Latur. The Nanded collectorate was in touch with officials of neighbouring districts, the official said in a release, and asked people not to panic. Latur witnessed a massive earthquake in September 1993, killing around 10,000 people and injuring several others.

70% prison inmates have received at least one shot of Covid-19 vaccine

Active Covid-19 cases among the inmates have seen a slight rise over the last few days - from 45 on June 12 to 85 on Saturday.

Team Absolute | Pune

As many as 23,300 inmates across prisons in Maharashtra have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine till July 11. This is a sharp rise from the 7,600 who had received the first dose till June 11 since the inoculation drive began.

With the Maharashtra Prison Department intensifying its inoculation campaign, it has been able to vaccinate 70 per cent of the 33,600 prisoners.

Of the 23,300, 19,200 are undertrials and 4,100 convicts. Officials said the number of inmates vaccinated between June 10 and July 11 is more than double the number who were vaccinated till June 10.

"We are conducting vaccination drives with the help of local authori-



ties at respective locations of the prisons. In some smaller prisons, we are making sure that the majority get vaccinated in one go. In prisons with larger populations, drives are being conducted after dividing the inmates into batches," a prison department officer said. Meanwhile, active Covid-

19 cases among the inmates have seen a slight rise over the last few days from 45 on June 12 to 85 on Saturday. However, the number of prisoners from where Covid-19 cases have been reported has gone down from 16 to 12, the data has revealed. Since the second week of May,

when cases started rising at an alarming rate among the inmates, the Maharashtra Prison Department had started the process of releasing undertrial prisoners to decongest the jails. To date, 2,300 inmates have been released on bail and parole.

According to vaccination figures put out on Saturday, 3,288 inmates of Arthur Road Prison have been inoculated so far, followed by 2,758 at Yerawada central prison, 2,264 at Thane central jail, 2,244 at Nashik central jail, 909 at Amravati central jail, and 698 at Kolhapur central jail.

Since the start of the pandemic last year, 44 of the 47 prison establishments in Maharashtra have reported Covid-19 cases. 4,233 prisoners have tested positive to date, of which 4,135 have recovered, 13 have succumbed and 85 are recovering.

90% reclamation work for coastal road project complete, says BMC

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has planned to reclaim 111-hectare area in the Arabian Sea which is 12 times the size of Oval Maidan at Mumbai's Churchgate.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Around 90 per cent of the reclamation works for the Coastal Road has been completed, BMC officials have said. The road will extend the coast up to 100 meters inside the sea.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has planned to reclaim 111-hectare area in the Arabian Sea which is 12 times the



size of Oval Maidan at Mumbai's Churchgate.

Of the 111-hectare land reclamation required for the project so far, the civic body has completed about 100 hectares. The 10.58-km Coastal

Road being built for Rs 12,721 crore is expected to be ready by the end of 2023. The road will begin at the Marine Drive to the South end of Bandra Worli Sea Link (BWSL). The project, consisting of a tunnel, a

road, and an interchange, aims to connect south Mumbai to the Worli end of the Worli-Bandra Sea Link through a high-speed corridor.

"Mavala" the Tunnel Boring Machine - has completed digging 500 meters of the Coastal Road tunnel. The TBM, with its diameter of 12.19-meters, is said to be the country's biggest road tunnel boring machine. It weighs 2,300 tonnes and is 80-meters long.

It is digging on an average of 8-10 meters per day and around 20 meters below the ground at the Priyadarshini park site.

The country's first undersea tunnel is a set of twin tunnels one for each carriageway. The length of each is 2.07 km from Priyadarshini park to Choti Chowpatty at Marine drive, close to the landmark Chowpatty beach at Girgaon.

TWO DOCTORS BOOKED FOR MOLESTATION IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS

Thane: Two separate FIRs were registered against two doctors for allegedly molesting a nurse and a patient at Tulinj and Navghar in the Mumbai metropolitan region (MMR) in Maharashtra, police said on Sunday, adding one of the accused was arrested. In Tulinj, a doctor had allegedly inappropriately touched a 19-year-old nurse working in his hospital and also threatened her against disclosing the incident, an official said. An FIR was registered on Friday. The doctor is yet to be arrested, he said. In another incident which occurred in Navghar area, a doctor, 50, allegedly molested a woman during treatment, another official said, adding the accused doctor was arrested. Separate cases were registered against the accused doctors under various sections of the Indian Penal Code for outraging the modesty of a woman and criminal intimidation.

Transgender Kills 3-Month-Old After Parents Say No To Gifts: Mumbai Cops

The matter came to light in the morning when the body of the infant, who went missing on Thursday evening, was spotted in the creek, an official said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A three-month-old baby girl was allegedly kidnapped and thrown into a creek by two persons, one of them a transgender, after the child's parents refused to give in to their demand for some cash, coconut and a saree in Cuffe Parade area of south Mumbai, police said on Friday. The matter came to light in the morning when the body of the infant, who went missing on Thursday evening,

was spotted in the creek, an official said.

According to the police, the accused, one of them a transgender, had visited the infant's home to bless her and had demanded a gift of some cash, coconut and a saree from the parents, who refused. A heated argument ensued, following which the accused kidnapped the baby on Thursday evening and threw her into the creek, the official said, adding that the child's family launched a search and subsequently lodged a complaint with the police. Initially, a case of kidnapping was registered, but section 302 (murder) was added later when the child's body was recovered, he said.

The police had launched a hunt for the accused, who have since been arrested, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

Late Harappan-era artefacts found at virgin site in Jalgaon

A Maharashtra archaeologist may have hit a jackpot by discovering several potteries and artefacts, dating back to the later era of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), at Yawal in Jalgaon district.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The finds are mainly big and small pieces of pottery and vessels, depicting Harappan-style pictographical scripts that excited the discovery team led by Bhujang R. Bobade, Director, Heritage Foundation.

"We found the pottery pieces in the white mounds near the entrance of the Nimbalkar Fortress, around 20 km from Bhusaval... It's a virgin territory, hitherto unexplored by any archaeologist," an enthusiastic Bobade told IANS from the site.

Scores of pottery pieces, which was the major industry during the IVC with its unique potteries like glazed, incised, perforated or knobbed, have been found in barely 500 sq ft area after the first dig at Yawal. Bobade said that while most potteries of that era were plain, the others were uniquely painted with scales, chequers, images of trees, birds, animals or fish, mostly with plain bases and some with ringed bottoms. The pottery pieces discovered here are mainly wheel-made wares, both plain (red clay, with or without a fine slip) and painted (in red and black colours), as was common in the flourishing IVC era over 3,000 years ago.

"Another unique thing here is that besides the ancient Harappan-style artefacts, we also found some pieces dating much later, to the medieval era, or 15th-16th AD. This is probably unprecedented anywhere in India," Bobade said. He said the "twin discoveries" indicate that this particular



region of north-Maharashtra was inhabited for an extended period, very long after the IVC faded away into the pages of history. The Director of the Directorate of Archaeology, Tejas Garge, said that it could also date back to the Satavahana period, or roughly the time when the famous paintings were said to have been made in the Ajanta Caves, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Incidentally, the 76m long, 68m wide and 45m tall Nimbalkar Fortress, which stands near the site, was built by the local ruler, Rao Dhar

Nimbalkar, in 1788 and at one time it was in the possession of the royal family of Gwalior, the Scindias. However, several discoveries of bronze artefacts during excavations in 1958, 1974 and 1978 in Daimabad and Ahmednagar suggest that the late Harappan culture may have extended to this region of modern-day Maharashtra, said Bobade. Nevertheless, the potters' wheels, which were made of wood, have not survived the ravages of time, but the remnants of their creations are found scattered here, over 1,000 km away from the heart of the Harappan Civilization. The team members, including Bobade, Samadhan Mahajan, a government official, and his son Parth Mahajan, consider this as a truly astonishing find and said this will need massive further excavations, study and research. "Yet, it's still a mystery as to how such a large geographical area exhibited a uniform pottery tradition in forms, paintings and pottery designs similar to Harappa," Bobade said. The IVC was at one point the largest ancient human civilisation in terms of its geographical spread, with a core area of over 1,500 km, along the 3,200 km-long Indus River system of north and north-west India before it drains into the Arabian Sea near Karachi, Pakistan.

Bobade is confident that after the latest discoveries in Jalgaon, the Archaeological Survey of India and other experts will carry out further excavations and investigations to reveal more of the ancient era to the modern world.

Special trains fully booked: BJP demands more trains to Konkan ahead of Ganesh festival

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP has urged the Centre to increase the number of trains between Mumbai and Konkan after 72 special trains were fully booked in advance several weeks ahead of the Ganesh festival.

The advance ticket booking started on July 8 and all seats were fully booked by July 10.

Mumbai BJP (MLA) and former minister Ashish Shelar has urged the Union Minister of State for Railways, Raosaheb Danve, to consider the proposal for adding more trains before the Ganesh festival in September to ensure hassle-free travel of those heading to Konkan.

Shelar said, "met and requested Raosaheb Danve, who is MoS Railways, to consider more train services to



Konkan. During the Ganesh festival, people from Konkan living in Mumbai return to their native villages to celebrate the festival."

There are thousands of people still waiting to book their tickets, he added.

The ten-day Ganesh festival, which will begin on September 10, will be low-key in wake of strict Covid guidelines. Even the height of Ganesh idols has been restricted to four feet for community celebration (sarvajanic) and two feet for those installed at homes.



EDITOR'S SPECS

India, Russia together for peace

India and Russia said on Friday that it is important for the two countries to work together for Afghanistan's peace, and stability and security in the region. Following his two-day trip to Russia, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a joint press conference in Moscow said that the talks were as always very warm, comfortable, comprehensive and productive. The Russian Foreign Minister was in Delhi in April this year. As per a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, Jaishankar also had a "very good meeting" with Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov on Thursday. In the press conference, Jaishankar said, "The situation in Afghanistan occupied a lot of our attention because it has a direct implication for regional security. We believe that the immediate need of the day is really a reduction in violence. If we have to see peace within Afghanistan and around Afghanistan, it's important for India and Russia to work together and ensure that much of the progress that we've seen in economic, social and democratic terms are maintained. We are both committed to an independent, sovereign, united and democratic Afghanistan." The two sides also talked about the developments in Syria, Iran and Libya. Jaishankar said, A lot of the bilateral cooperation between India and Russia is focused on the nuclear, space, energy and defence sectors, but the two countries have now moved beyond the established areas with their discussion on greater inter regional cooperation particularly with the Russian far east. Jaishankar said the two sides made some progress with respect to the connectivity, especially the North South Corridor and the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor. India is poised to hold the Presidency of the UN Security Council in August. The minister shared with his counterpart Lavrov India's plans and ideas for the month. India is currently the chair of the BRICS and also of the RIC. The two countries have membership of G-20, ASEAN led fora, SCO and CICA.

HOW DECEIT WAS BUILT INTO CHINA'S FIRST AIRCRAFT CARRIER

N.C. Bipindra

Watching "Narcos" on Netflix may make one wonder how much of the content is fact and how much is fiction. Indeed, facts are often stranger than fiction. Here is one such story: China's first aircraft carrier.

Varyag was to be an Admiral Kuznetsov class multi-role aircraft carrier in the Soviet Navy. She was known as Riga when her keel was laid in Nikolayev on December 6, 1985.

Launched on December 4, 1988, she was renamed Varyag (Varangian) in late 1990, after the famous 19th century namesake former Soviet cruiser.

Construction stopped by 1992 with the ship structurally complete but without electronics. Ownership was transferred to Ukraine as the Soviet Union broke up and the ship was laid up unmaintained, and then eventually stripped.

In early 1998, she lacked engines, a rudder, and much of her operating systems. She was put up for auction. The ship never saw any active service. Only the hull remained floating on water, pending decision on her disposal.

In April 1998, Ukrainian Trade Minister Roman Shepe announced the winning bid -- \$20 million from a small Hong Kong company called the Agencia Turistica E Diversoes Chong Lot Limitada. It was divulged much later that bribery, threats, and everything imaginable under the Sun was employed to secure the auction.

The firm proposed to tow Varyag out of the Black Sea, through the Suez Canal and around southern Asia to Macau, where they would moor the ship and convert it into a floating hotel and gambling parlour. This wasn't a novel proposal.

After all, erstwhile Soviet carriers -- Kiev in Tianjin and Minsk at Minsk World in Shenzhen -- were fine examples of how Chinese converted old men of war into profitable tourist attractions.

Ukraine publicly did not wish a military role for the 'would have been' aircraft carrier. casino seemed like ticking all boxes. So far so good!

Before the auction was closed, officials in Macau had warned Chong Lot that they would not be permitted to berth Varyag in the harbour. The sale was carried out anyway.



Chong Lot was, in turn, owned by a Hong Kong firm called Chin Luck (Holdings) Company. Four of Chin Luck's six board members lived in Yantai, China, where a major Chinese navy shipyard is located.

Chin Luck's chairman was a former career military officer with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). However, the large involvement of former PLA officers is not necessarily a sign that the firm was a cover organisation, because, for historical reasons, it is not unusual in mainland China for a company that actually is involved in tourism or travel to be controlled by former PLA officers.

The practice is in fact prevalent in many countries. Hong Kong at the time had barely been handed over by the British to China.

Many still looked at Hong Kong as an ex-British colony and not necessarily as a Chinese territory. That a half-built aircraft carrier was publicised as a future floating casino, that too by a Hong Kong firm, ensured any and every anxiety that may have popped up in any think-tank around the world was laid to rest.

In mid-2000, the tug boats were hired to take Varyag under tow. However, Chong Lot ran into rough weather as it could not get permission from Turkey to transit the dangerous Bosphorus strait; under the Montreux Treaty of 1936.

Turkey even today has obligations to permit free passage but has certain sovereignty and refusal rights. The hulk spent almost a year-and-a-half under commercial tow, circling in the Black Sea. High-level Chinese government ministers conducted negotiations in Ankara on Chong Lot's behalf, offering to allow Chinese tourists to visit cash-strapped Turkey if the travel agency's ship were allowed to pass through the straits.

The soon to be casino had too much riding on it and delays would affect the tourism industry in Macau, it was claimed. On 1st November 2001, Turkey finally changed its stance. It was said, the vessel posed too great a danger to the bridges of Istanbul, and allowed the transit.

Escorted by 27 vessels including 11 tug boats and three pilot boats, Varyag took six hours to transit the strait. The Russian press reported that 16 pilots and 250 seamen were involved. The Suez Canal did not permit passage of ships without their own on-board power source.

Varyag had to be towed through the Straits of Gibraltar, around the Cape of Good Hope, and through the Straits of Malacca. But as was revealed in 2015, the ship had all four of her engines fitted and well preserved. The infor-

mation was a closely guarded secret to ensure the casino cover was not blown. The engines were restored in 2011 with smuggled spare parts and undercover Ukrainian assistance.

The world tracked the hulk and so did the tourism industry in general. Varyag entered Chinese waters on 20th February 2002.

She finally arrived at her destination. Not Macau though! Instead, she was berthed at Dalian Shipyard in north-eastern China. Even in those days of China's nascent modern navy, Dalian was a known naval shipyard.

Eyebrows were raised indeed. What was a ship, which all along meant to play a hospital-ity role, doing in a naval shipyard?

China, meanwhile, continued to assert that Varyag would be a casino and all accusations of a possible revival as an aircraft carrier was nothing but fiction. However, when Macau awarded new casino licenses in February 2002, Chong Lot was conspicuous by its absence in that list. The hulk was tied up at Dalian and left to rust -- or so the world was made to believe.

Over the next three years, Dalian witnessed activities at a feverish pace around Varyag. In 2005, she was moved to a dry dock. It was only in the months thereafter when the ship was being prepared as a carrier that the world realised what a ride they were taken on by Chong Lot and its original masters. Casino it certainly wasn't.

Seven years later, on 25th September 2012, the former-Varyag was commissioned as the Liaoning, the first aircraft carrier of the Chinese Communist Party's PLA Navy.

Anyone who had bet on its gambling role surely lost a ton of money! In 2015, it also emerged that almost 38 tons of blueprint were shipped to China by road to enable the hulk to be revived as an aircraft carrier. Much of China's dealings continue to follow these nefarious practices: The mask of innocence covering up a sinister plot. With China, fact is always stranger than fiction.

(N.C. Bipindra is Chairman, Law and Society Alliance, and Editor, Defence.Capital Magazine.)

international

'REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS EXPECT RESPONSIBLE US DRAWDOWN FROM AFGHANISTAN'

Islamabad | Agencies

All regional stakeholders expected a "responsible withdrawal" of the US forces from Afghanistan, a top Pakistani military official said.

"The responsible withdrawal was supposed to be after a peaceful transition, but the withdrawal happened in a bit hasty manner," Xinhua news agency quoted Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Major General Babar Iftikhar as saying on Saturday to a local news channel.

The US army is in the process of leaving Afghanistan and the withdrawal is expected to be completed by August 31, following which all regional stakeholders have to sit together and find a solution to the Afghan issue in consultation with the Afghan leadership, he added.

Answering a query about the future presence of the US in the region, the official said regional powers are "very well capable of solving Afghan issue if



we sit down together", and there is no need for Washington in this matter.

Talking about his country's role to solve the Afghan issue, Iftikhar said that Pakistan tried to help solve the

Afghan issue sincerely and it did everything within its capacity to facilitate the peace process.

"Afghan peace process has many aspects where it should be under-

stood that Pakistan was only a facilitator and not a guarantor in the process... We needed to understand that it would be Afghans' own decision and would not be dictated by any foreign party," he added.

The official said Pakistan has no favourites among Afghan stakeholders, and the decisions are to be taken by the Afghans.

"Afghans have the capacity and capability to decide their future course themselves."

Talking about the security measures taken by the Pakistani military to control the infiltration of militants from Afghanistan into Pakistan, the official said that border security and management has been beefed up and the 2,611-km frontier has been 90 per cent fenced whereas the remaining areas are either at high altitude or in glaciated places.

"The spillover effect may come to Pakistan... We were very well aware of that and took many measures to cope with the situation," the ISPR chief said.

Israel obstructs efforts to stabilise Gaza truce: Palestine

The Israeli blockade has led to sabotaging the lives of the Palestinian citizens and declining the level of basic services provided, under the pressure of Israeli delay and extortion



Ramallah | Agencies

Palestine has accused Israel of obstructing the efforts to stabilise the Gaza Strip by tightening the blockade.

In a statement on Saturday, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that more than 2 million people in the Gaza Strip "pay heavy prices due to the endless Israeli blockade which ruined their

daily living", reports Xinhua news agency "The Israeli blockade has led to sabotaging the lives of the Palestinian citizens and declining the level of basic services provided, under the pressure of Israeli delay and extortion," the statement said. Israel has been imposing a tight blockade on the Gaza Strip right after the Islamic Hamas Movement seized control of the coastal enclave in 2007. Israel tightened the blockade during the 11-day fighting with Hamas-led militant

groups, which ended on May 21 and left more than 250 Palestinians and 13 Israelis dead. The statement called on the UN Security Council to bear its responsibilities and take all needed measures "to oblige Israel to abide by international and humanitarian laws". On July 9 the UN Humanitarian Coordinator of the occupied Palestinian territory Lynn Hastings warned that the Israeli ban on bringing supplies to the besieged Gaza Strip puts vital sectors in the enclave at risk.

Bulgaria votes in early parliamentary polls

Sofia | Agencies

Bulgarians all over the world went to the polls on Sunday to vote in the country's early parliamentary elections.

More than 6.7 million voters are eligible to elect 240 lawmakers from 15 political parties and eight coalitions, according to official data.

As many as 13,005 polling stations opened across the country at 7 a.m. and are due to close at 8 p.m., the Central Election Commission of Bulgaria said.

Meanwhile, 782 more ballot boxes are available in 68 countries for Bulgarians living abroad to cast their ballots from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported. Polling stations in New Zealand opened first, followed by those in Australia.

Election day abroad will end the last in San Francisco, the Foreign Ministry said.

According to the country's legislation, parties and coalitions need to gain at least 4 per cent of the votes to enter the parliament. The votes received by those failed to enter the parliament will be redistributed proportionally to the qualified parties and coalitions.

Exit polls will be announced immediately after stations closed in Bulgaria, and official



results are expected on Thursday.

The previous parliamentary elections in Bulgaria were held on April 4 this year.

The then ruling party GERB together with its ally Union of Democratic Forces got only 75 seats and failed to form a government, while both of "There Is Such A People," the second largest party in Parliament with 51 seats, and Bulgarian Socialist Party, the third largest party with 43 seats, refused the proposal by Bulgarian President Rumen Radev to form a government. Therefore, in accordance to the country's constitution, Radev has signed a decree on the holding of new parliamentary elections, dissolved the National Assembly, and appointed a caretaker government.

INDIA FRUSTRATED WITH SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN: PAK MILITARY

New Delhi: With the great game unfolding rapidly after the sudden US drawdown from Afghanistan, regional players are trying to take control of the deteriorating situation on the ground. And as usual Pakistan is ratcheting up the negative volume by targeting India.

Referring to the oversized Indian footprint in Afghanistan, the Pakistani military has said New Delhi's investment was aimed at establishing influence in an effort to damage Islamabad's interests. "The prevailing situation has caused huge frustration on the Indian side," The Express Tribune quoted Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar, Director-General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), as saying in a television interview on Saturday. The ISPR is the media wing of Pakistan's military. "Now, Delhi has moved its spoils in different directions to blame Pakistan for the unrest in Afghanistan, but the Indian propaganda would not get any traction because the world has realised that Pakistan has made earnest efforts to resolve the Afghan issue according to the aspirations of the local populace. "Pakistan is only a facilitator of the Afghan peace process 1/2 not a guarantor.

"Pakistan has no favourites among the Afghan stakeholders. The Afghans have to choose their leadership. In case of any deadlock, we can assist. Pakistan has made all-out efforts but it cannot go beyond its limits. "Afghans have the capacity and capability to decide their future course," he added.

Ethiopia ruling party wins general elections

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the ruling Prosperity Party plans to use the electoral mandate it is given to focus on growing Ethiopia's economy in the next five years, especially the country's agricultural sector

Addis Ababa | Agencies

Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party won more than 400 out of 436 parliamentary electoral constituencies in the June 21 general elections, authorities announced.

Ethiopia has 547 parliamentary seats with faulty printing of ballot papers, logistical as well as security challenges forcing the electoral board to postpone voting in 111 electoral districts, reports Xinhua news agency.

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) announced on Saturday that it plans to hold a second round of national elections on September 6 in the rest of electoral constituencies, except in 38 electoral constituencies located in the war-torn Tigray region.

In a statement shortly after the announcement of the result, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the ruling Prosperity Party plans to use the electoral mandate it is given to focus on growing Ethiopia's economy in the next five years, especially the country's agricultural sector.



Ahmed also said Prosperity Party will work on finding a solution to insecurity problems affecting various parts of Ethiopia. On June 21, millions of Ethiopians chose candidates from 46 regional and national parties, though Prosperity Party was widely expected to be favourite to win the polls.

Under Ethiopia's parliamentary government system, the Prime Minister who is the highest authority of the land is selected from the party that wins the most seats at federal parliament level and will be sworn in after parliamentary vote.



MOLLY-MAE HAGUE IS SECRETLY MARRIED!

Los Angeles | Agencies
Molly-Mae Hague has sparked rumours she's secretly married Tommy Fury as fans spot a hidden clue. The 22-year-old was whisked away for a romantic getaway by her boxer boyfriend to celebrate their two-

year anniversary. And as a special treat the pair managed to bag tickets to see their favourite show in the theatre. Sharing a picture of their seat numbers in the grand circle - Molly inadvertently revealed the tickets were booked under "M Fury" suggesting she's taken Tommy's surname.

Molly said: "Can't believe we managed to get tickets to see this tonight...
 "One of our favourite horror films in theatre. Always wanted to see a show together."
 It's been two years since the Love Island stars fell head over heels for each other on the ITV2 dating show.



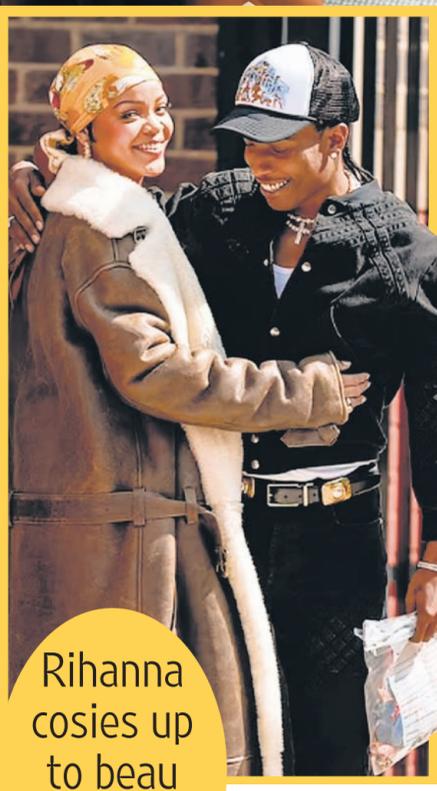
MICHELLE PFEIFFER: THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTRESSES OF MY AGE



Los Angeles | Agencies
Actress Michelle Pfeiffer has spoken about what it's like to be a mature actress in Hollywood now. She says there are many more "interesting roles" than there were a few decades ago.
 The 63-year-old actress said: "Something is changing, there are more opportunities for actresses of my age and for women above 30: maybe not really sexy or leading roles, but interesting."
 Her latest work includes the comedy-drama "French Exit" where she had to smoke non-nicotine or tar cigarettes to portray her character "Frances Price". She had quit the habit in 1992.
 "I quit smoking years ago, yet it's always such a joy to pick up again. I have always liked it but the cigarettes I use do not contain nicotine or tar, and are not addictive. Finished the movie, finished the party!"
 Pfeiffer told an Italian publication IO Donna, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

KYLIE JENNER: I HAD AN INSECURITY WITH MY LIPS

Los Angeles | Agencies
Reality TV personality and make-up mogul Kylie Jenner has shared that temporary lip fillers helped her to overcome her deepest insecurities.
 She shared in a new YouTube video that she wanted to get the procedure done to amp up her confidence as she was "insecure" about her "smaller lips", reports mirror.co.uk.
 "When I was younger I had an insecurity with my lips. I have temporary lip fillers and it was an insecurity of mine and it's what I wanted to do," Kylie said.
 The video, which includes an appearance from her mother and personality Kris Jenner, comes after she openly spoke about her struggles as a teenager after her first kiss.
 Kylie said the boy she kissed told her she had small lips and after that she started "over lining" her pout to make it look bigger. In the video, Kylie said: "I was 17 when I launched Kylie Cosmetics. It feels weird that this is my life now, looking back at it though, make-up has just been a part of my DNA. I just knew in my soul that this was what I was supposed to do. I think I was meant to feel that way, to then find make-up and find my confidence."
 She also talked about the negativity she sometimes receives online.
 "Being on the internet, people will pinpoint every single thing about you and make you realise things you would never realise in a million years. Make-up has always been a great way of self-expression for me.
 I just knew in my soul that this was what I was supposed to do," she said.



Rihanna cosies up to beau A\$AP Rocky

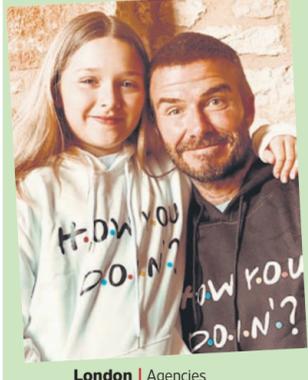
Los Angeles | Agencies
Rihanna and her beau A\$AP Rocky continued to look smitten with each other while on the set of a new music video in The Bronx borough of New York City. The singer, 33, pranced around set in three show-stopping ensembles, including a sexy bikini top that highlighted her incredible figure.
 While filming beside her boyfriend, Rihanna modeled a bustier top, baggy brown pants, and a floor-length suede trench coat. The songstress kept her final outfit of the day mostly under wraps with a robe, only exposing what appeared to be a checkered bikini top and matching headscarf. Her loyal fans have been eagerly waiting for new music for nearly six-years now, and by the looks of the shoot it appears she and Rocky may have collaborated musically on a new song.



Kerry Katona accused of taking a dig at the Atomic Kitten

London | Agencies
Former Atomic Kitten star Kerry Katona admitted she would have loved to have reunited with her ex-bandmates after coming under fire on Instagram.
 The 40-year-old singer posted a cheeky 'dig' at her co-stars after their heyday hit Whole Again has become an anthem again during the Euro 2020. The pop band reunited to release a revamped version of the song titled Southgate You're The One, a homage to England manager Gareth Southgate. The trio, consisting of Natasha Hamilton, Liz McClarnon and Jenny Frost, performed the reworked hit on Loose Women yesterday. Kerry took to her Instagram account to remind her fans of who the original trio were with a reposted Tiktok. She also shared a repost of her singing Atomic Kitten's revamped version of Whole Again with the caption "The OG".
 She also commented under the original post, admitting she "Would have loved to be a part of it".
 Earlier today, Kerry made another post to Instagram, which some fans saw as a dig at her former bandmates.

David Beckham asks daughter Harper to 'stop growing up'



London | Agencies
Beckham has shared an adorable post to mark his little girl's 10th birthday. The 46-year-old, who shares four children with Victoria Beckham, shared a tribute to Harper Seven on his official Instagram page to his 67.2million followers. He shared a black and white snap of himself holding a much younger Harper who was wearing fake tattoos all over her arms to look like her inked daddy.
 Harper can be seen wrapping her tiny arms around her dad's neck as the pair looked off into the distance together.
 She looked ultra adorable in the snap with a cute little bow placed neatly in her hair. Taking to the caption, David penned: "Happy 10th birthday to my pretty lady. To the girl with the biggest heart and the sweetest smile we love you so much big girl, please stop growing.. Love you #HarperSeven"

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Carla Bruni





COPA AMERICA

MESSI CELEBRATES FIRST INTERNATIONAL TITLE AS ARGENTINA STUNS BRAZIL 1-0



Rio de Janeiro | Agencies

Whenever Lionel Messi walks into the sunset now, he won't carry with him the jibes and criticism of having failed to win a title for Argentina, his national team. The final of the Copa America ensured Argentina's victory over Brazil by 1-0 after 28 years and has shut the doors for any more criticism against Messi's commitment towards his national team. The winning goal came from Angel Di Maria who in the 22nd minute struck off a long ball by

Rodrigo De Paul and lobbed it over goalkeeper Ederson to score the winning goal. Apart from that strike, which was helped by slipshod defending from Renan Lodi, the Argentines weren't that successful in breaching the Brazilian defence in the first half. They had only three shots in the period. De Paul, however, was the shining star in midfield. Messi himself shot wide off the goal in the 32nd minute as he couldn't dribble past Brazilian defence completely and shot from outside the box. The visitors were set back in the 52nd minute as Richarlison netted

the ball. However, relief came for Messi & Co soon as the strike was deemed off-side. Argentina survived anxious moments even after that as Brazil came close to equalising. But goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, who had made his international debut only this year and impressed in the semi-finals against Colombia saving three penalty kicks in the shoot-out to help his team enter the final, once again proved to be the hero. When the whistle blew, the entire Albiceleste jumped on a teary-eyed Messi. Six years ago, after losing the final

of Copa final to Chile in penalties, he wept even as the bus reached the team hotel. A year later, in the 2016 Copa final, he just couldn't take any further criticism and decided to retire only to come back to fulfil his dream and fill the lacuna five years later. The criticism from Argentina may have been harsh but understandable. The last time Argentina had won a major international trophy -- the Copa America itself -- was way back in 1993 when Messi was just six and Di Maria was only five. And the last time Albiceleste had scored in the Copa final, was in 2004.

WIMBLEDON 2021 MEN'S SINGLES:

Novak Djokovic Wins Record Equaling 20th Grand Slam Title

London | Agencies

World No.1 Novak Djokovic defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in the final on Sunday to win his sixth Wimbledon title and 20th Grand Slam overall. The Serb celebrated his victory by chewing on the grass from the hallowed centre court. The World No. 1 drew level with his great rivals, Switzerland's Roger Federer and Spain's Rafael Nadal, who he has chased ever since he captured his first major crown at the 2008 Australian Open, in a historic 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 final victory over seventh-seeded Italian Matteo Berrettini at The Championships, Wimbledon. "It was more than a battle," said Djokovic. "Winning Wimbledon was always the biggest dream of mine as a child. I know how special this is and I don't want to take



this for granted. I was a seven year old boy in Serbia, constructing a Wimbledon tennis trophy with improvised materials in my bedroom and now I am standing here with six titles. It's incredible." When asked what it means to win a 20th Grand Slam title, Djokovic added, "It means none of us will stop [playing]. I have to pay a great tribute to Rafa and Roger as legends of our sport, the two most important players in my career and why I am the player I am today. They made me realise what I needed to improve, mentally, physically and tactically. Djokovic, who has already clinched his ninth Australian Open crown (d. Medvedev) in February and a second Roland Garros title (d. Tsitsipas) last month, will now stake his claim for the calendar-year Grand Slam after earning his sixth trophy at the All England Club.

India Women beat England in second T20I



Hove: The Indian women's cricket team defeated England women by eight runs in the second Twenty20 International here on Sunday. Asked to bat first by the hosts, India women posted 148 for four wickets in their 20 overs thanks to a 38-ball 48 by opener Shafali Verma. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur blasted a 25-ball 31. They then restricted the home team to 140 for eight in their allotted overs with Poonam Yadav taking two wickets for 17 runs off her four overs. Brief scores: India Women 148/4 in 20 overs (Smriti Mandhana 20, Shafali Verma 48, Harmanpreet 31; N Sciver 1/20). England Women 140/8 in 20 overs (Tammy Beaumont 59, Heather Knight 30; Poonam Yadav 2/17).

Euro 2020: Queen wishes England best of luck ahead of final

London | Agencies

Queen Elizabeth II has sent her congratulations to England football manager Gareth Southgate for making it to the Euro 2020 final against Italy, and said that her family's wishes were with the team to lift the trophy on Sunday. "55 years ago, I was fortunate to present the World Cup to Bobby Moore and saw what it meant to the players, management and support staff to reach and win the final of a major international football tournament," the Queen said in reference to England's 1966 World Cup victory. "I want to send my congratulations and that of my family to you all on reaching the final of the European Championships, and send my good wishes for tomorrow (July 11) with the hope that history will record not only your success but also the spirit, commitment and pride with which you have conducted yourselves," said the Queen on Saturday.



Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, too has extended his wishes to the England team ahead of the Euro 2020 final. In a 28-second video posted on the official Twitter handle, Prince William said, "Gareth, Harry and every member of the England team on and off the pitch, just wanna wish you very best of luck for tonight. What a team performance it has been." The Duke added, "All the backroom team as well have been truly essential. I can't really believe this is happen-

ing. So exciting and I just wish you the very best of luck. You bring out the very best of England and we are all behind you. The whole country is behind you. So, bring it home." England face off against Italy to decide the winner of Euro 2020 at the Wembley Stadium.

Elise, Hsieh clinch Wimbledon women's doubles title

London | Agencies

No.3 seeds Elise Mertens of Belgium and Hsieh Su-wei of Chinese Taipei saved two match points to defeat the unheralded Russian pair of Veronika Kudermetova and Elena Vesnina 3-6, 7-5, 9-7 in a thrilling doubles final here at Wimbledon. From 3-6, 3-5 down, the No.3 seeds came all the way back, giving Hsieh her third title at the All-England Club and Mertens a third Grand Slam title overall on Saturday evening. "It was such a tough match. They had match points, I think a couple, so we just kept going. We said to each other, 'Just keep going,'" Elise told wtatennis.com. "We never gave up. That's the fighting spirit we had today that maybe made with the difference. Of course, there were nerves, but still we managed it well at the end. She's defending champion, champion again. It's



unbelievable." The Belgian previously won the Australian Open in February with Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka and now has just a French Open title missing from her set, while Hsieh won Wimbledon in 2013 with China's Peng

Shuai and 2019 with Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova. The victory also assures Elise of a return to the doubles world No.1 ranking. She first held the top spot for one week this May, and secured her return just by reaching the final.

MESSI CONSOLES NEYMAR AFTER COPA AMERICA WIN

Rio de Janeiro: As the Copa America final brought ecstasy to Lionel Messi's Argentina, it also resulted in agony for Neymar's Brazil.

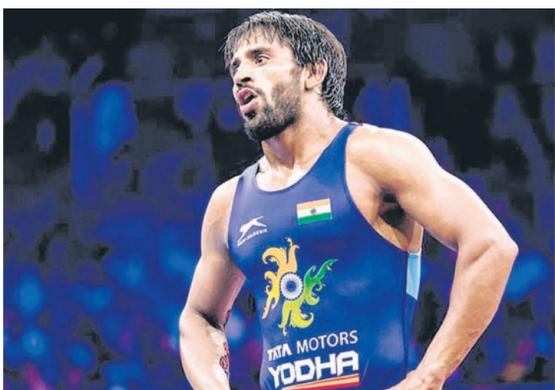
After the final whistle signalled the end of the match, which Argentina won 1-0, the newly-crowned champions ran towards Messi, lifted him up and started to celebrate. While the celebrations began for Argentina, Neymar was down on his haunches and in tears. The Brazilian forward was consoled by his teammates, manager and support staff. But the person who came to console Neymar was Messi, the man of the moment. He came around and gave a long hug to Neymar so that he could gather his emotions. The duo was together at Barcelona for four years before Neymar moved to Paris Saint-Germain. Argentina won their first Copa America title in 28 years, giving Messi his first trophy in Argentina colours. Before Sunday, Messi's wins at the international stage were the U-20 FIFA World Cup in 2005 and a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. An Angel Di Maria goal in the 22nd minute gave the tourists a 1-0 win over Brazil, a record-equalling 15th Copa America win equalling Uruguay.



Olympic countdown: Bajrang Punia, chasing a dream

Team Absolute | Mumbai

While growing up as a wrestler, Bajrang Punia had two idols -- double Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar and 2012 bronze medallist Yogeshwar Dutt. Though Yogeshwar was his mentor, Sushil was the big star of Indian wrestling, and Punia looked up to him for inspiration. Born in Khudan village in the Jhajjar district of Haryana, Punia started training as a wrestler at the age of seven. Though his family was not well off, his father -- a wrestler -- encouraged Punia to pursue the sport. Having learnt his craft in the mud pits, Punia switched to the wrestling mat in 2005 and joined the Sports Authority of India's centre at Sonapat. In 2008, he was shifted to Delhi to train at the Chhatrasal stadium.



Results came early as he excelled at the cadet and junior level and won his first senior-level medal, a bronze, at the 2013 Asian Championships at New Delhi. Punia is the only male wrestler to win gold at the Commonwealth Games (2018) and Asian Games (2018). He has bagged silver and two bronze medals at the World

Championships. Though he is confident of winning a medal, Punia did not have the best of preparations because of the COVID-19 pandemic as he struggled to get quality sparring partners. Punia did show good form when he won gold in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series 2021 held in Rome in March this year. However, the Asian Wrestling Championship in April almost shattered his dream as he suffered a knee injury. He has recovered well from it and is currently training in Vladikavkaz, Russia since last month, engaging 2019 70kg world champion David Baev of Russia and U-23 world champion Mirza Skhulukhia (70kg) of Georgia as his sparring partners. Considering his talent, experience and dedication to the sport, Punia is one of the favourite to bag India a medal in Tokyo.

INDIAN-AMERICAN BANERJEE WINS WIMBLEDON BOYS' TITLE

London | Agencies

Indian-American Samir Banerjee won the boys' singles title, beating Viktor Lilov 7-5, 6-3 in an all-American final at the Wimbledon championships on Sunday. Banerjee, who reached the final by beating France's Sascha Gueymard Wayenburg in the semi-finals, is the first American junior champion at Wimbledon since Reilly Opelka in 2015, and 12th overall. Banerjee, who is from New Jersey, and Viktor traded serves in the first set in the clash of two 17-year-olds before the Indian-American won two consecutive games from 5-5 to take the set. In the second set, Banerjee broke his opponent's serve in the sixth game and went on to win it 6-3, completing his triumph in one hour and 21 minutes, when Viktor made a backhand error. Banerjee is committed to



play for Columbia University in the autumn and draws inspiration from several players who took the college tennis route to success before. "Growing up, I think college was always in the picture, I was going to use tennis to get to college. Obviously trying to play at the highest level I could and then go to college and maybe after college try to go pro. I think I didn't really expect this," he told the Wimbledon official website after his semi-final victory. "I'm really happy with my commitment to Columbia, the coaches there I'm really buying into their vision. I think it's a really good stepping stone. Obviously, with Indian parents, they definitely want me to go to college and not just skip the whole...and just go right to pros. And I think it would be a good character-building kind of thing, because I'm not sure if I'm fully ready to just fully go pro yet, so as of right now, I'm still probably going to go to college," he had said.



THE FILM WAS MADE WITH TEARS, LOVE, LOTS OF FUN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As Filmmaker Shashank Khaitan's directorial "Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania" released seven years ago on this day, actor Varun Dhawan said the movie was made with tears, love and lots of fun. Varun, who played the role of Rakesh "Humpty" Kumar Sharma in the film, on Sunday took to his Instagram story to share some stills, which also featured actress Alia Bhatt, who essayed the role of Kazya Pratap Singh.

In one image, Varun shared a picture from the film and wrote: "Seven years of 'Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania'. Exactly how the film was made with tears, love and lots of fun."

"Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania" was the second time Alia and Varun shared screen space

after their debut in the film "Student of the Year". A quasi-sequel titled "Badrinath Ki Dulhania" was released in 2017. Meanwhile, Varun has wrapped up shooting for his next film "Bhediya".

Directed by Amar Kaushik, the supernatural thriller also features Kriti Sanon, Abhishek Banerjee and Deepak Dobriyal, and is scheduled to release on April 14 next year.

Varun will also be seen in the upcoming film "Jugg Jugg Jeeyo", which also stars Anil Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor and Kiara Advani.

7 Years of 'Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania'

MOUNI ROY SHARES 'WAY TO HER HEART'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Mouni Roy has revealed the way one can win her heart on Sunday. Mouni posted a picture on Instagram. In the image, Mouni is seen all dolled up in an all black ensemble sitting on a couch and gorging on some macaroons. She captioned the image: "Ways to my heart 1) get me food 2) make me food 3) be food Ps if dunno my love for food you don't know me at all x" She then posted a picture of her outfit and called herself a "black addict". Speaking about her upcoming work, Mouni will be seen in Ayan Mukerji's fantasy action adventure "Brahmastra" alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Nagarjuna, with Shah Rukh Khan in a cameo.



Evelyn Sharma announces pregnancy



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Evelyn Sharma took to social media on Sunday to announce that she is expecting her first child with husband Tushaan Bhandi.

Taking to Instagram, Evelyn shared a picture of herself lying down with her left hand over her baby bump and wrote: "Can't wait to hold you in my arms."

The comments section of her post has been flooded with congratulatory messages from her friends and followers.

Evelyn recently tied the knot with Sydney based surgeon Tushaan Bhandi in an intimate low key ceremony in Brisbane, Australia. The actress shared the news on social media in the first week of June.

On June 7, Evelyn had shared a series of photographs from her wedding day together with her husband Tushaan on Instagram. Thanking everyone for their wishes, the actress wrote: "Mr & Mrs Bhandi. Big big thank you to everyone who made this small ceremony the very best day of our lives!"

A week later, the actress also shared photographs from her honeymoon at an undisclosed location by the sea.

'It is very difficult to make people laugh': Priyadarshan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Priyadarshan has given a series of comedy hits with Akshay Kumar, so when the box-office wizard and National Award winner confirms a new film with the Bollywood superstar, fans would naturally be excited.

"Yes, it is happening next year. The film was supposed to happen this year but it had to be pushed. We start shooting next year," the filmmaker confirmed his film with Akshay.

The duo has delivered rib-tickling comedies like "Hera Pheri", "Garam

Masala", "Bhagam Bhag" and "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", and elaborating on the new project, Priyadarshan said: "It will be a comedy film. I don't want to take any more risks. Let me entertain my audience. So far, the films in which we both worked have been very successful."

"It is not a continuation of 'Hungama'. It is a different story treated in the same way as Hungama. There are confusions, situations, comedy of errors



and slapstick but the plot is completely different. It will be a laugh riot, I believe," he said.

Priyadarshan's new directorial "Hungama 2" is slated to release on Disney+ Hotstar on July 23.

Vicky Kaushal 'always' inspires Babil Khan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Babil Khan, son of late acclaimed actor Irrfan Khan, has shared that Bollywood heartthrob Vicky Kaushal always inspires him.

Babil on Sunday morning shared a picture of Vicky on his Instagram story. The image was first posted by the "Uri: The Surgical Strike" actor on Saturday, where he recalled the memory of his first audition in 2012. In the image, Vicky is seen holding an audition whiteboard wearing a white T-shirt. Babil wrote on the image: "@vickykaushal09 always inspiring me, bohut saara pyaar aapko (lots of love to you)." On the work front, Babil will soon make his debut with the film "Qala", co-starring Triptii Dimri and directed by Anvita Dutt.



Armaan to younger musicians: Please don't run after numbers

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Armaan Malik took to social media on Sunday to share a piece of advice for younger musicians.

In a tweet posted on Sunday afternoon, Armaan highlighted on the importance of creating good music and having one's unique style instead of running after numbers.

"I know we're all in this world where numbers determine your success, but I just want to tell younger musicians - please don't run after that! Please focus on making good music and developing your own unique style. That's what will help you create a dedicated fan base," Armaan tweeted.

"Your fans don't need to be in the millions, even if you have 1000 fans who are your tribe, your people, that's genuinely all that matters," he added.

Armaan, who is a football fan, took to Twitter earlier in the day to celebrate Lionel Messi's Argentina defeating Brazil at the Maracana Stadium to become the Copa America champions. Sharing a photograph of Messi's winning moment on Twitter, the singer wrote: "Watching #Messi lift a trophy for #Argentina is an emotional moment for all football fans, no matter where you're from or which player you are a fan of! #CopaAmericaFINAL #CopaAmerica."



Sonnalli Seygall