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RBI SEEKS REGULATIONS ON CRYPTO CURRENCIES: SITHARAMAN

"In view of the concerns expressed by RBI on the destabilising effect of cryptocurrencies on the monetary and fiscal stability of a country, RBI has recommended framing of legislation on this sector. RBI is of the view that cryptocurrencies should be prohibited.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said in the Lok Sabha that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended framing of regulations for cryptocurrencies. The Indian government wants an international collaboration if such a ban has to be put into effect, said Sitharaman.

The minister in the Lower House said that cryptocurrencies are by definition borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. "Therefore any legislation for regulation or for banning can be effective only after significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards," she said.

RUPEE JUST WHISKER AWAY FROM 80 PER DOLLAR

Chennai: *The week opened for Indian rupee on a weak note against the US dollar with the latter hardening against it. The rupee hit Rs 79.99 during the intra-day trade and closed at Rs 79.97 against the dollar.*

"USD-INR spot closed 9 paise higher 79.97, a whisker away from all time high near 79.99. Today rupee brushed aside all positive cues by way of strong equities and weaker dollar index. Strong demand for oil marketing companies kept the pressure on. Over the near term, bias continues to be upward. We expect the pair to trade within a range of 79.60 and 80.30 on spot," Anindya Banerjee, Vice President, Currency Derivatives & Interest Rate Derivatives at Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

GLOBAL FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR RUPEE DEPRECIATION: SITHARAMAN

New Delhi: Amid depreciation of the rupee against dollar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the Lok Sabha on Monday that global factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring crude oil prices and tightening of the global financial conditions, were the major reasons for the weakening of the Indian rupee against the US dollar.

She added that another reason was that the foreign portfolio investors have withdrawn about $14 billion from the Indian equity. Sitharaman said that currencies such as the British pound, the Japanese yen and the Euro have weakened more than the Indian rupee against the US dollar and therefore, the Indian rupee has strengthened against these currencies in 2022.

SC DIRECTS STATES TO PAY COMPENSATION TO COVID-19 VICTIM'S FAMILIES

'Without delay'

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and B.V. Nagarathna said it is closing the proceedings while directing all state governments to see that the compensation, as per the court's previous order, should be paid to eligible persons without wasting any time. If any claimant has a grievance in connection with compensation, or with the rejection of the claim, then they should move the grievance redressal committee concerned.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

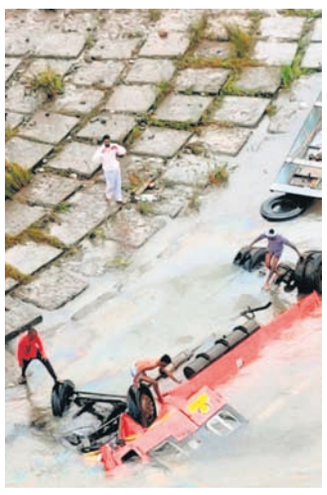
The Supreme Court on Monday directed state governments and Union Territories to ensure family members of Covid-19 victims receive compensation without any delay, and the grievance redressal committee to decide on claims application within four weeks. The top court made these observations while hearing a plea filed by petitioner-in-person advocate Gaurav Bansal, who contended that few claimants in Andhra Pradesh have not received compensation. Counsel representing the Andhra Pradesh government, however, informed the top court that as on the date of hearing, the compensation has been disbursed to them. The top court also directed the grievance redressal committee to decide the application of the claimant within four weeks. The Supreme Court had directed that Rs 50,000 compensation should be given to the family of persons who succumbed to Covid, and this amount should be disbursed from the State Disaster Response Fund. The top court, in connection with allegations connected with transfer of funds by the AP government from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) to personal deposit accounts, directed that the funds be transferred to the SDRF account within two days.Bansal, who was appearing for petitioner Palla Srinivasa Rao, had contended before the top court that AP government had diverted funds from the SDRF to personal deposit accounts which is not allowed under the Disaster Management Act.

INDIA REPORTS 16,935 NEW COVID INFECTIONS, 51 DEATHS

New Delhi: *India on Monday reported 16,935 Covid infections, a decline against previous day's 20,528 count, as per the Union Health Ministry data.In the same period, 51 fatalities took the nationwide death toll to 5,25,760.Meanwhile, the active caseload has also risen to 1,44,264 cases, accounting for 0.33 per cent of the total positive cases.The recovery of 16,069 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,30,97,510. Consequently, the recovery rate stands at 98.47 per cent.Meanwhile, the Daily Positivity rate has declined to 4.58 per cent, while the Weekly Positivity Rate currently stands at 6.48 per cent.Also in the same period, a total of 2,61,470 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 86.96 crore.*

13 KILLED AS MAHA ROADWAYS BUS FALLS INTO RIVER IN MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal



At least 13 people died and several were reported injured after a Maharashtra Roadways bus fell into the Narmada River in the Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh on Monday. The bus was heading to Pune from Indore.

The Madhya Pradesh government informed that 15 passengers have been rescued so far and the operation was underway at the incident site.

As per the reports, more than 50 passengers were in the bus when it fell into the river. Due to the heavy flow of water in the river, rescue operations were getting tough.The incident was reported on the Agra-Mumbai highway, which connects MP's Indore and Pune (Maharashtra). State Home Minister Narottam Mishra said, "Heartbreaking information has been received about a passenger bus going from Indore to Pune falling into the Narmada River at Khalghat in Dhar district. So far 15 passengers aboard the bus have been safely rescued. The rescue operation is going on continuously at the incident site," Mishra told the press here in Bhopal.

Girl students asked to remove innerwear at NEET centre in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram | Agencies

Parents were up in arms after girl students, appearing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) at a examination centre near here on Sunday, were asked to remove their innerwear.

An angry parent, whose daughter had to undergo this ordeal at the centre in Ayoor, 60 km from hiruvananthapuram, said on Monday what happened is totally unacceptable and he had no other option but to give a complaint."We dropped her around 12 noon at the examination centre and later we were asked to give a shawl by the exam officials. It was only after she came out after the examination did we realise what had happened. It seems there was a metal object in her innerwear and it was found out during the screening. She and many other students were asked to remove such innerwear and then only they were allowed to take the examination. Even he college where the examination took place said they had no role, as these things were done by an agency who was entrusted for the conduct of the examination," he said.

All those who candidates who had to undergo such a humiliation were under tremendous duress and they were unable to perform well because of this insensitive behaviour of the centre officials, the parent added.

K.M. Abhijith, President of the NSUI state wing, said appropriate action should be taken against the wrongdoers, while students, after hearing about the incident, staged protest marches towards the institution where this incident took place.

The institution has washed their hands off the incident, and blamed the agency which was entrusted with the conduct of the examination for what happened.

The local police also have started a probe after a complaint was registered.

Second monkeypox case in India reported from Kerala

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The second case of monkeypox has been reported in Kerela's Kannur on Monday. It was just after 5 days when the first monkeypox case was recorded. State Health Minister Veena George said "The second Monkeypox case has been confirmed in Kannur." A 31-year-old man, hails from Kannur has been infected with Monkeypox and is going under serious treatment at Praiyaram medical college. He returned from Dubai on July 13. His sample was sent for testing and is confirmed positive for Monkeypox, people who came in contact with the infected are kept under surveillance, officials said.

Earlier, the first case of Monkeypox was confirmed in Kerela on July 14. A 35-Year-old man was admitted to Thiruvnanthapuram medical college and is under ongoing treatment. The Union Ministry had sent a high level multi disciplinary team to Kerela to take protective measures against it, directing that if someone feels symptoms of monkeypox then the person should be rushed to the hospital immediately and get tested. Fever, headache, rashes are the major symptoms of Monkeypox. The suspects and the victims are suggested to cover their full body in order to avoid the disease from spreading.

Presidential Poll: Over 99% polling recorded across the country

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A total of 11 states and one union territory including Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tamil Nadu recorded 100 per cent voting on Monday in polling for the election of the 15th President of India.

Polling concluded successfully in free, fair and transparent manner at the Parliament House on Monday and in each of the 30 places of poll in State Legislative Assemblies including Legislative Assembly of NCT of Delhi and UT of Puducherry.

There were two contesting candidates -- Draupadi Murmu and Yashwant Sinha for the 16th Presidential election.

As per the Election Commission, of a total of 771 Members of Parliament entitled to vote (5 vacant), and similarly out of total 4,025 Members of the Legislative Assemblies entitled to vote (6 vacant and 2 disqualified), over 99 per cent cast their vote on Monday.

The Election to the office of President is one of the most important elections, which the Election Commission conducts vide the mandate of Article 324 of the Constitution. Polling was held between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in 31 locations.

'Vicious cycle': SC asks UP Police to not to take action against Zubair till July 20

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday orally remarked that Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair seems to get bail in one case and remanded in another in a "vicious cycle", as it ordered that no "precipitative action" be taken in 5 FIRs registered against him by the Uttar Pradesh Police until the next hearing on Wednesday.A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna issued notice on the plea filed by Zubair seeking to quash the FIRs registered against him by the UP Police and scheduled the matter for further hearing on July 20.During the hearing, Justice Chandrachud orally remarked "contents of all FIRs seem to be similar. But the problem is the vicious cycle. He gets interim bail in one case but gets arrested for some other case".

Zubair's plea was taken up after advocate Vrinda Grover sought urgent hearing on the matter.She contended that there are now six FIRs in UP -- two in Hathras, and one each in Lakhimpur Kheri, Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad, and Sitapur. She added that as soon as the top court granted relief to her client in Sitapur case, a warrant came in case of Lakhimpur Kheri and pointed out that last week, a Delhi court granted him bail in Delhi FIR.

After hearing arguments, the bench said: "Since the petition is not on board today, we direct the registry to list the matter on July 20. In the meantime, we direct that no precipitative action whatsoever be taken against the petitioner in 5 FIRs without the leave of the court."

All aircraft should be released for use only after certifying licence: DGCA

- ***THE DGCA SAID THAT AFTER FREQUENT REPORTS OF ENGINEERING RELATED OCCURRENCES IN SEVERAL AIRLINES, IT HAS CONDUCTED SEVERAL SPOT CHECKS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT AIRLINES ARE ADHERING TO THE LAID DOWN STANDARDS.***
- ***THE SPOT CHECK HAS DISCLOSED IMPROPER IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSE OF A REPORTED DEFECT, INCREASING TREND OF MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST -- MEL RELEASES, AND NON-AVAILABILITY OF REQUIRED CERTIFYING STAFF TO CATER TO MULTIPLE ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURE OF FLIGHTS IN SHORT INTERVALS.***
- ***IT HAS ALSO BEEN SEEN THAT AIRLINES ARE RESORTING TO FREQUENT ONE-OFF AUTHORISATION TO CATEGORY A CERTIFYING STAFF AT TRANSIT STATIONS WHICH ARE NOT IN LINE WITH EXISTING REGULATORY PROVISIONS.***

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Aviation regulator Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday said all the aircraft at base and transit stations should be released by certifying staff holding licence with appropriate authorisation by their organisation.

The directive has come following a series of technical snag related occurrences in planes in the last few days.

Keeping above in view it has been decided that all aircrafts at base and transit stations shall be released by certifying staff holding AME category B1/B2 license with appropriate authorisation by their organisations.

The DGCA has asserted that compliance to this should be ensured by July 28, 2022.

Earlier on Monday, concerned over the rising number of technical glitches in the flights, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia held meetings with chiefs of Indian airlines on Monday, asking them to strengthen safety oversight.

Scores of flights have been diverted owing to multiple technical snags in Indian carriers' aircrafts during the last couple of days. Sources said that the aviation minister on Monday told each airline to take all necessary steps that are needed to ramp up safety oversight.

DECISION MAKING IN DOT WAS PLAGUED WITH ADHOCISM, SAYS CAG IN REPORT ON SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In its audit report on 'Management of Spectrum', the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has observed that adhoc arrangement by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for opening application windows for three/six months for the allotment of spectrum caused uncertainties of availability of resource among government users and delayed the spectrum assignments and denial of spectrum in some cases.

Post the Supreme Court judgement of February 2012 regarding the allotment of spectrum for access services, it was seen that there were adhoc arrangement in the DoT for opening application windows for three/six months for allotment/assignment of spectrum administratively for both captive users as well as for other commercial services on provisional basis.

This not only caused uncertainties of availability of resources among government users, but also delayed spectrum assignments and denial of spectrum in some cases, observed the CAG report tabled in the Parliament on Monday.

The report said that the DoT had also not reviewed the pricing of spectrum assigned for captive users administratively, on formulae basis since 2012, though a committee had recommended for a periodical review of the pricing policy in 2013.

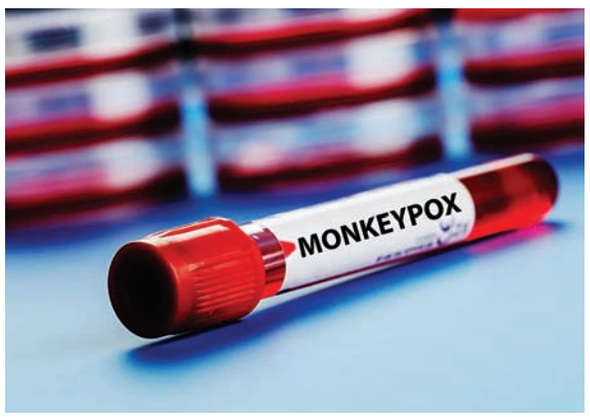
There was no differential pricing for spectrum, depending on features and usage of various spectrum bands assigned to the government users, it said. The CAG observed that decision making in DoT was plagued with adhocism and absence of any permanent mechanism in the department, constituting all government stakeholders to advise them on important issues relating to spectrum management comprising spectrum allocation/assignment/utilisation of assigned spectrum, re-farming and sharing of spectrum amongst government users etc.

There were no arrangements in place to study technological developments worldwide for suggesting their deployment in India for the spectrum users, as mandated by NDCP in 2018. The DoT had instead constituted (in June 2015) seven working groups for identifying frequencies in specific spectrum bands viz 470-520 MHz, 1215-1400 MHz, 1427-1500 MHz, 1800 MHz, 1880-1900 MHz, 2300-2400 MHz and 21.2-23.6 GHz for government users.

Only four groups had submitted their final recommendations between March 2016 and February 2021 though these working groups were required to submit their recommendations within six months. However, the DoT had not taken any final decision on the recommendations received so far, the report said.

Centre reviews Points of Entry health screening amid monkeypox scare

Team Absolute | New Delhi



The Union Health Ministry on Monday reviewed the functioning of health screening of international travellers arriving in India at airports and ports, as India reported its second monkeypox case.

At the review meeting, attended by airport and port health officers and regional directors from the ministry's regional offices, The ministry advised port officials to ensure strict health screening of all arriving international travellers that can minimize the risk of importation of monkeypox cases into the country.

Amid growing monkeypox scare, the officials have been advised and re-oriented in clinical presentation of monkeypox disease as per the ministry's 'Guidelines for Management of Monkeypox Disease'. They were also advised to coordinate with other stakeholder agencies like Immigration at international ports and airports to streamline health screening processes besides ensuring suitable linkages with hospital facilities earmarked to each port of entry for timely referral and isolation.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials from International Health Division, and Disaster Management Cell.

Meanwhile, Kerala reported second second case of monkeypox in India on Monday. A 31-year-old man, who had arrived from Dubai and was under treatment at the Pariyaram Medical College hospital at Kannur, tested positive for the disease.

Congress could not prevent MLAs from cross voting

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Despite all efforts the Congress could not stop its MLAs from cross voting in the presidential poll. MLAs in Odisha and Telangana went against the party line to support NDA candidate Draupadi Murmu.

Congress MLA in Odisha Mohammed Moquim himself informed the media about this after casting his vote. "I have listened to my conscience which guided me to do something for the soil and I voted for her though I am a Congress MLA and it is my personal decision."

In the Presidential poll no whip is issued and the voters have the right to choose.

Congress MLA Danasari Anasuya Seethakka, who was rumoured to have voted for the NDA candidate later clarified that she has not voted for the wrong candidate but one supported by the party and she only had an issue with the ballot paper. These are some MLAs whose cross voting has come to light but many Congress MLAs switched sides and the party is trying to identify them. Not only Congress MLAs but its allies like the JMM too drifted away as they voted for Murmu.In parliament Congress MPs lined up to vote including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, while ailing former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came on a wheelchair. Prime Minister Narendra Modi cast the first vote as per sources while RK Singh came in PPE kit. As per the Election Commission, out of a total of 771 Members of Parliament entitled to vote (5 vacant) and similarly out of a total of 4025 Members of the Legislative Assemblies entitled to vote (6 vacant and 2 disqualified), over 99% cast their votes. However 100% voting by MLAs was reported from Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tamil Nadu.

Nupur Sharma moves SC again for clubbing of FIRs for her remarks on Prophet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma has once again moved the Supreme Court, seeking stay on her arrest in the nine FIRs against her for her remarks on Prophet Muhammad during a TV debate and also sought clubbing of the FIRs with the one registered at Delhi.

In the fresh plea, Sharma said she had again received threats to her life, after strong observations by the top court on her earlier plea.

It also cited top court's judgments saying that a person cannot be subjected to multiple FIRs in several parts of the country for the same offence. Sharma, in her new plea, also sought a direction to club all FIRs lodged against her to a case registered by the Delhi Police and also sought a direction from the court to let her pursue the previous petition.

On July 1, the Supreme Court minced no words in slamming Sharma, whose remarks on Prophet Muhammad sparked a controversy. The top court said her loose tongue has set the entire country on fire and her irresponsible remarks shows that she is "obstinate and arrogant".

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, had mentioned the plea before a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and J. B. Pardiwala seeking transfer of all FIRs filed against her to Delhi. However, the bench reprimanded Sharma for making irresponsible comments against a religion during a TV debate. It said: "These remarks are very disturbing shows her arrogance. What is her business to make such remarks?" As Singh pointed at the written apology issued by her, the bench said: "This lady has a loose tongue... making inflammatory statements.. she should have to go on TV and apologise to the whole country. Please don't compel us to open our mouth."

"It is so disturbing... the outcome is what happened at Udaipur," it said in a reference to the brutal murder of a tailor.As Singh said the top court has laid down the principle in Arnab Goswami case to stop vexatious multiple FIRs for the same alleged offence, and that his client is facing a security threat and it would not be safe for her to travel now, the bench replied: "She faces threats or she has become a security threat? This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country."

The top court then declined to entertain her plea, forcing her to withdraw the petition.

One dead, several ill after drinking contaminated water in Gujarat's Vadodara

Vadodara | Agencies

A girl lost her life while several people fell ill after drinking contaminated water in Vadodara.

Twenty year old Unnati Solanki and her father Ashwinbhai were admitted in a hospital with complaints of cholera-like symptons. Unnati passed away on Sunday night while her father is under treatment, said Ami Rawat, Leader of Opposition in the Vadodara Municipal Corporation.

She paid a visit to the Solanki family and learnt that in each house at least one to two family members have cholera-like infection in Harijanvas in the Jetalpur area of the city. Since the corporation is not carrying out a door to door health survey the exact number of infections is not known.

A local resident told mediapersons, that the drinking water pipeline was installed during the rule of the Gaekwads and it has never been changed. This results in contamination at regular intervals.

Vadodara Mayor Keyur Rokadia visited the area and met the residents. He promised to get the pipeline replaced if required. Later, he told the media that the health department had carried out a door to door survey in the area and covered 430 houses, and not a single cholera case was found.

A non government organization, Team Revolution, has now started supplying mineral water bottles to the residents so that they don't have to drink contaminated water.

CBI BOOKS EX-IOA CHIEF NARINDER BATRA IN CORRUPTION CASE

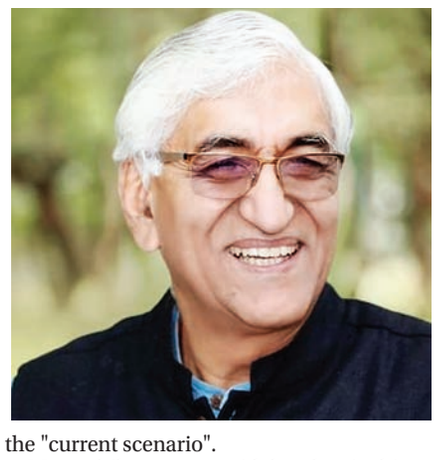
New Delhi: The sources in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday said that they have lodged an FIR under prevention of corruption Act against former president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Narinder Dhruv Batra.The case pertains to alleged misappropriation of public funds.

Meanwhile, Batra resigned as president of IOA and International Hockey Federations on Monday. He also resigned as a member of International Olympic Committee (IOC).Batra's office was raided by the CBI following which he resigned from the three posts which he was holding.

"Due to personal reasons I submit my resignation," he said in the letter.The federal probe agency has alleged that he was involved in corruption.

Trouble brews in Chhattisgarh after TS Singh Deo drops portfolio

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Chhattisgarh minister T.S. Singh Deo, who was one of the claimants of the Chief Minister's post, has dropped one of the four portfolios allotted to him.

Speaking to IANS over phone, Singh Deo said, "I felt I was not able to do justice to one of the departments allotted to me as I couldn't act according to people's wishes. So I have resigned from the Panchayat and Rural Development department."

While the actual reason behind Singh Deo's move is not clear, some sources said that interference in his work has angered the senior leader, forcing him to relinquish one of the potrtfolios allotted to him.

Singh Deo has been pushing for change in leadership in the state after the two-and-a-half-year tenure of present Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, but the Congress high command has not been able to resolve the leadership issue so far.In his letter to the Chief Minister on Saturday, Singh Deo stated that he was unable to fulfil the targets of the department as per the poll manifesto given the "current scenario".

Meanwhile, sources said that despite his repeated requests, funds were not sanctioned under the PM Awas Yojna, one of the reasons for which houses could not be constructed for eight lakh people in the state.

Singh Deo has been appointed Congress observer for Gujarat polls scheduled later this year.

SIX KILLED IN ANOTHER ROAD ACCIDENT IN TELANGANA

Hyderabad: Six persons were killed in a road accident in Telangana's Kamareddy district on Monday.This was the third road accident in Telangana on Monday.Earlier, three persons were killed and four injured in two separate accidents on National Highway 44 in Nizamabad district.The latest accident occurred when an autorickshaw came under the wheels of a container truck.Police said the accident took place on national highway 161 near Mainur village of Madnur mandal (block) of Kamareddy district.

The autorickshaw which was coming in the wrong route from Mainur towards Bichkonda came under the container truck which was on way to Gujarat from Hyderabad.Six persons travelling in the autorickshaw died on the spot. The truck driver and cleaner were injured.

Police registered a case and took up investigation.

Posing as Muslim, Hindu youth posts indecent messages on goddess, held

Kodagu (Karnataka) | Agencies

Karnataka police have arrested a Hindu youth on charges of posting objectionable, indecent posts on goddess Cauvery and women in Kodagu district of Karnataka, police said on Monday.

The arrested youth has been identified as Divin Devaiah, a resident of Kedamulluru in Virajpet taluk in Kodagu district. According to police, the accused had opened an account in the name of Muslim youth and posted messages.

The accused, through his fake account, posted defamatory and insulting messages on goddess Cuavery, which the local Kodava community worship as their deity. He had also targeted women belonging to the Kodava community in his derogatory posts.

Kodagu is considered a bastion of BJP and Hindu organizstions and it is also considered as a communally sensitive region. Various organisations had given bandh calls condemning the posts and the issue had taken a communal turn, threatening law and order situation.

Following the arrest, the bandh call given in Kodagu district is being withdrawn. Police explained that they had to take the help of Mumbai police to crack the case. The Mumbai police had got the inputs from California City about the fake FB account and passed on the inputs to local police, sources explained. Following the lead, the police have nabbed the accused youth. "This is an unfortunate incident which should not have taken place. Those who misuse social media handles must think twice, the incident of arrest must be a lesson for everyone," members from the Federation of Kodava Community stated.

Superintendent of Police Kodagu district, M A Aiyappa stated that it has become common to misuse social media with the lack of knowledge on its consequences. Further investigation in the matter is on.

AAP MP donates entire salary for education of students

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Newly elected Member of Rajya Sabha from Punjab, Vikramjit Singh Sahney, who is the International President of World Punjabi Organisation, on Monday announced to donate all his and staff salary during his tenure of six years for the education of economically weaker students.

Padma Shri Sahney made this announcement before taking oath of office in Parliament. Before the oath, he took part in 'kirtan' and 'ardaas' organised at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib here.

On the occasion, Sahney announced that he will donate all his and staff salary of his tenure for the education of economically weaker students. He launched Punjab Education Fund and the amount works out to around Rs 32 lakh per year and this will turn out to be Rs 2 crore in six years.

MP BUS TRAGEDY

Thirteen dead, rescue ops on

Thirteen people have died after a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus plunged into the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday expressed grief after thirteen people died when a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus plunged into the Narmada River.

MODI ANNOUNCES RS 2L FOR NEXT OF KIN OF DECEASED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed grief after thirteen people died when a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus plunged into the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh. The Prime Minister also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the bus tragedy. The injured would be given Rs 50,000.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) tweeted, "The bus tragedy in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, is saddening. My thoughts are with those who have lost their loved ones. Rescue work is underway and local authorities are providing all possible assistance to those affected: PM."

"An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of those who lost their lives due to the bus tragedy. The injured would be given Rs 50,000: PM," the PMO said in another tweet.

The incident occurred on a bridge connecting Dhar and Khargone districts. The bus has been pulled out of the river, while four teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are still carrying out the rescue operation. It was raining heavily in the Dhar-Khargone region and the water in Narmada river was flowing above the danger mark when the incident took place, making the rescue work all the more difficult.

MP GOVT ANNOUNCES EX-GRATIA OF RS 4L FOR EACH BUS ACCIDENT INCIDENT

Maharashtra announces Rs 10 lakh exgratia

15 people were rescued after the Maharashtra government bus plunged into the Narmada River. Maharashtra government has also announced Rs 10 lakh each for the family members of the deceased and full medical expense for the treatment of the injured persons.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Thirteen people have died after a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus plunged into the Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Monday, adding that five of the victims have been identified so far.

The incident occurred on a bridge connecting Dhar and Khargone districts. The bus has been pulled out of the river, while four teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are still carrying out the rescue operation.

Chouhan also announced that the state government will provide ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the family members of each of the deceased person. The bodies of the deceased will be transported to their respective homes, Chouhan added.

It was raining heavily in the Dhar-Khargone region and the water in Narmada river was flowing above the danger mark when the incident took place, making the rescue work all the more difficult.

Chouhan said he has assured the Maharashtra government that the state government will provide all possible help to the accident victims. "I have spoken to Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and assured them that the Madhya Pradesh government will provide all possible help to rescue the accident victims. I have asked my Cabinet colleague Kamal Patel to reach the spot and he is on his way," Chouhan said.

Inspector General (IG) of Khargone, Rakesh Gupta, said that five out of the 13 deceased persons have been identified so far.

"Three of them were from Jalgaon (Maharashtra) while two were from Rajasthan. The process of identification and rescue operation are still underway," Gupta said.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government has also announced Rs 10 lakh each for the family members of the deceased and full medical expense for the treatment of the injured persons.

At around 10.15 am on Monday, the MSRTC bus, which left Indore at 7.30 am for Amalner in Jalgaon, tumbled into the Narmada river from a bridge between Khalghat and Tikri in Dhar.

CM EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER DEATH OF CITIZENS IN KHALGHAT BUS ACCIDENT

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has condoled the road accident near Khalghat in Khargone district. About a dozen people are reported to have died in the accident. Chouhan has directed to provide relief amount of Rs. 4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased.

Chouhan took immediate cognizance of the bus accident in Khalghat this morning. As soon as the information about the bus falling into the Narmada river was received, he instructed the administration to reach the venue soon. The rescue operation started without delay for the evacuation of the bus and the people trapped in it. District administration officials and concerned staff immediately reached the spot. On the instructions of Chief Minister, Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Development Minister Shri Kamal Patel has immediately left for the spot.

Chouhan also directed to send SDRF and necessary resources to the accident site. CM also issued instructions to ensue arrangements of proper treatment of the injured. The Chief Minister was in constant touch with the officials of Khargone, Dhar and Indore district administrations. In a telephonic discussion with Khargone collector, he sought detailed information about the rescue operation. Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Manish Rastogi and officials of the Chief Minister's Office were also in touch with Khargone, Dhar and Indore district administrations during the rescue operation.

Chouhan also informed the Chief Minister of Maharashtra about the bus accident in Narmada river. He told the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shinde that all the bodies would be sent to Maharashtra with respect. Chief Minister Chouhan also apprised them with the efforts being made the administration.

Chouhan said that instructions have been given to investigate the incident. He has also discussed with the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra. The affected families will be fully supported by the government.

2 TEENS DROWN IN POND WHILE BATHING

The police official said, a group of boys went to bathe in the pond, when Rajkumar Prajapati (15) started drowning and his friend Manvendra (16) tried to save him.

Tikamgarh: Two teenagers drowned while bathing in a pond at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh district, police said on Monday. The incident took place at Acharra village, around 48 km from the district headquarters, on Sunday evening, said Nasir Faruqui, the in-charge of Mohangarh police station. A group of boys went to bathe in the pond, when Rajkumar Prajapati (15) started drowning and his friend Manvendra (16) tried to save him, he said. The others in the group raised an alarm, but they had drowned by the time the villagers reached the spot, the official said. The police were alerted and the bodies were taken out, he said, adding that a case was registered in this regard.

Counting of votes on July 20 in 214 urban bodies of 43 districts

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the Urban Body Election-2022, the counting of votes will be on July 20 from 9 am in 214 urban bodies of 43 districts and the results will be declared. State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh said that all the preparations for counting of votes have been completed. On July 20, counting of votes will be held in 5 Nagar Nigam, 40 Nagar Palika Parishad and 169 Nagar Parishad.

Counting of votes will be held on July 20 in Nagar Nigam Katni, Ratlam, Dewas, Rewa and Morena. Counting will also be held on the same day in Nagar Palika Parishad Berasia, Narsinghgarh, Sarangpur, Raisen, Begumganj, Mandideep, Ashta, Sironj, Khargone, Barwah, Sanawad, Shivpuri, Chanderi, Chaurai, Parasia, Balaghat, Mahidpur, Khachrod, Nagda, Jawra, Shujalpur, Agar-Malwa, Deori, Bina, Naugaon, Maharajpur, Hata, Tikamgarh, Sidhi, Maihar, Narmadapuram, Pipariya, Seoni Malwa, Multai, Dhanpuri, Anuppur, Pasan, Bhind, Gohad and Sabalgarh.

Counting will also be held for the Nagar Parishad Kurawar, Boda, Pachore, Khilchipur, Jirapur, Machalpur, Talen, Chhapihera, Sanchi, Garatganj, Obedullaganj, Sultanpur, Udaipura, Jawar, Kothari, Ichhawar, Nasrullaganj, Budhni, Rehti, Shahganj, Kurwai, Lateri, Shamshabad, Kasrawad, Karahi, Padlya Khurd, Bistan, Mundi, Pandhana, Mandwa, Meghnagar, Thikri, Niwali Bujurg, Chachoda, Binaganj, Kumbhraj, Aaron, Madhusudangarh, Bairadh, Kolaras, Karera, Pichore, Pohri, Magrauni, Mungawali, Isagarh, Piprai, Bhander, Sevdha, Indergarh, Shahpura, Majhauli, Katangi, Patan, Barkuhi, Lodhikheda, Piplanarayanwar, Chandameta Butaria, Bichhua, Chand, Newton Chikhali, Chhapara, Keolari, Katangi, Lanji, Barhi, Tarana, Makdon, Unhel, Nayagaon, Javad, Diken, Ratangarh, Singoli, Sarvania, Maharaj, Manasa, Kukdeshwar, Rampura, Athana, Namli, Piploda, Baravada, Dhamnod, Pankhedi, Akodia, Polayakalan, Kanad, Nalkheda, Susner, Soytakalan, Baragaon, Malhargarh, Narayangarh, Pipalyamandi, Sitamau, Shamgarh, Suwasra, Bhanpura, Garoth, Bhainseda, Tonkkhurd, Bhunrasa, Sonkachh, Pipalrawan, Banda, Shahgarh, Rahatgarh, Malthoun, Bandri, Barodiakalan, Barigarh, Lavkush Nagar, Chandla, Madhimalhara, Bijawar, Satai, Baramalhara, Dhuwara, Buxwaha, Patera, Tendukheda, Baragaon, Dhasan, Kari, Jatara, Palera, Lidhaura, Jairon, Prithvihpur, Powai, Amanganj, Gunnaur, Govindgarh, Gurh, Manganwa, Sirmaur, Baikunthpur, Semaria, Tyonthar, Chakghat, Dabhaura, Majhauli, Churhat, Rampur Naikin, Nagod, Rampur Baghelan, New Ramnagar, Amarpatan, Kotar, Bankhedi, Makhannagar, Bhainsdehi, Ghoradongri Betul Bazar, Beohari, Khand, Bakho, Manpur, Banagwan (Rajnagar), Dola, Dumarkachhar, Phuf, Akoda, Mau, Mehgaon, Gormi, Malanpur, Vijaypur, Banmore, Jhundarpura, Kailaras and Jaura.

"Tholpava (Laxman)" is third Exhibit of the Week at IGRMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the Latest and popular online series of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) entitled 'Exhibit of the Week' the "Tholpava (Laxman)" (Shadow Puppet made of Leather) collected from 2016 is at display. The Community of Saiva Vellala Soni, Palakkad, Kerala It's Measurement Height- 79cm, Width - 46 displayed in the audience as the Third Exhibit of the month of July, 2022 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that Tholpavakoothu or shadow puppetry is one of the ancient ritualistic art forms of Kerala. It is a composite word of three Malayalam terms, Thol (leather), Pava (puppet), and Koothu (play). Its theme is based on the Epic Kamba Ramayana, which tells the story of Lord Shri Rama from birth to coronation and it is enacted by using leather puppets in a special playhouse called 'Koothu madam', built in the temples dedicated to Bhadrakali. An idol of the Goddess is typically set up on a pedestal in front of the playhouse during the performance to solicit blessings and add charm to the play. This art form is very popular in the Palakkad, Thrissur, and Malappuram districts of Kerala.

Tholpavakoothu puppets are made of animal hide. To produce a decent piece of leather, the skin is put through a variety of processes. The figures are drawn over the skin and carefully trimmed to size for setting up a proper facial expression. Ornaments and dresses are drawn by chiseling the outlines and making holes of different shapes. The puppet is then attached with the hand that could be animated during the play. Natural colours are used to paint the puppets to highlight the charm and beauty of the character. A bamboo stick is fixed vertically along the puppet to control the movement of the play. The master puppeteer who directs the show is called a Pulaver. The performers belong to the Vellalachetti and Nair castes.

Those interested can see this object from home through the Official site (https://igrms.com/wordpress/?page_id=8780) and Facebook site (https://www.facebook.com/NationalMuseumMankind), Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

AAP, AIMIM emerges on MP poll arena

In a state which has majorly seen bipartite politics with the BJP and Congress, no third party whether BSP or the Samajwadi Party could make much progress. For 65 years since the birth of the state, politics has always been the struggle between the Jan Sangh and Congress and later the BJP and Congress. But after Sunday's urban civic poll results, it was apparent that AIMIM has spoiled the chances of Congress win while AAP has cut into BJP votes.

Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal

About one and a half year before the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, two new political parties AAP and AIMIM have made steamy entry into the state, that otherwise has a bipolar history.

In a stunner, AAP mayoral candidate Rani Agarwa registered victory from the industrial town of Singrauli, with a margin of 9,149 votes beating BJP's Chandra Pratap Vishwakarma and Congress' Arvind Singh Chandel.

While in Burhanpur, an AIMIM mayoral candidate polled more than 11,000 votes in her favour resulting in the defeat of Congress' Shanaz Ismail by a narrow margin of 388 votes against BJP's Madhuri Patel. Winning BJP mayoral candidate secured 52,629 votes, Congress candidate Ismail received 52,241 votes while the AIMIM candidate Shayesta Sohail Hashmi pulled 11,322 votes.

AIMIM candidate from ward number 14 in Khandwa Municipal Corporation Shakira Bilal defeated Congress' Noorjahan Begum by a margin of 285 votes. Two more AIMIM corporator candidates from Jabalpur also won - Parveen Mateen from ward no 49 and Samreen Qureshi from ward 51.

AAP mayoral candidate from Singrauli Rani Agarwal had contested the 2018 assembly election on an AAP ticket but lost. However, for the Singrauli municipal corporation elections, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal campaigned for her three days before polling.

The total number of votes cast in Singrauli was 1,06,000 of that Agarwal secured 34,585 while her nearest rival, the BJP's Chandra Pratap Vishwakarma got 25,233 and Congress candidate Arvind Chandel received 25,031.

In a state which has majorly seen bipartite politics with the BJP and Congress, no third party whether BSP or the Samajwadi Party could make much progress. For 65 years since the birth of the state, politics has always been the struggle between the Jan Sangh and Congress and later the BJP and Congress. But after Sunday's urban civic poll results, it was apparent that AIMIM has spoiled the chances of Congress win while AAP has cut into BJP votes.

While campaigning in Bhopal before the urban civic poll, AIMIM leader Assaduddin Owaisi said his party would field candidates for assembly elections next year. AAP which had contested the 2018 assembly elections is also likely to contest 2023. In such a scenario, both BJP and Congress might have to rethink new strategies for the assembly elections next year.

EDITOR'S SPECS

Following in the footsteps of an iconic leader

All across the magnificent nation of South Africa, are written tales of freedom and lessons of liberty. Nelson Mandela, an influential political leader who went on to become the first non-white president in South African history, was at the forefront of this freedom struggle. From serving 27 years in prison to working as a philanthropist, his life was legendary, to say the least. The 'Gandhi of the African continent has received, and rightfully so, more than 250 honours including The Nobel Peace Prize and the Bharat Ratna. The Rainbow Nation continues to celebrate his life 104 years later, and encourages residents and visitors to do the same through art, culture, sports, heritage, and more importantly, social inclusion. As the world honours this great revolutionary every 18th of July, by commemorating International Mandela Day, history and travel buffs can follow in Mandela's footsteps by participating in the below tours. Each of these tours offers deeper insights into the life and times of Nelson Mandela, who is a testament to the power of the human spirit. Madiba, as he is fondly known, showcases the ability of a single individual to change the course of history with grit, determination, and standing up for what is right. Nelson Mandela spent 18 immensely challenging years in prison on this little island situated off the coast of Cape Town and yet emerged from it filled with forgiveness instead of hatred. On 5th August 1962, the police flagged down a car driven by Nelson Mandela in a chauffer's uniform while he was returning from a secret meeting with the African National Congress president - this incident would go on to shape the future of an entire country. To mark the historic spot is a sculpture comprising 50 steel rods, that align to create a magnificent portrait of Mandela.

THE CURRENT PARADIGMS OF INTERNAL SECURITY

DC Pathak

Security is essentially a combination of measures designed to protect the nation from the 'covert' offensives of an enemy. Security is not a one-time event as the threat scenario can change over a period of time -- it is also in principle to be regarded as a 'matter of degree' always open to improvement.The spectrum of friends and enemies is not static and therefore an ongoing evaluation even of existing friendships is a requirement of security. Intelligence is the anchor of security- being the information that throws light on the hidden plans of the adversary.

Intelligence is defined also as 'information for action' and it is easy to understand how security classically fails when there is 'lack of information', but why it also fails -- and this is not uncommon -- for failure of 'communication' to the action taking authorities or for 'failure of action' itself.

Intelligence is not easy to come by in these times of covert offensives in which terrorism was used as an instrument and logically therefore no piece of Intelligence howsoever small can be dismissed as 'in actionable' for it might as well prove to be the proverbial tip of the iceberg.A major task of the Intelligence set up is to operationally develop the available Intelligence for reducing the 'gap between information and action' and trace the source, place and time of the 'threat' for making its neutralisation possible.The profession of Intelligence requires specially trained people who accepted anonymity by choice, had infinite persistence and worked with a commitment for the 'national cause'.In the backdrop of this all, the challenge of handling the current threats to national security has become formidable calling for maximum Intelligence coordination and integral responses. Apart from the operational skills, Intelligence also depended on competent analysis of open-source information and it in this direction that data analytics and scan of cyber communications had emerged as the new Intelligence tasks of ever-growing importance.

NATGRID is the central data bank that would yield information of both operational and strategic value and NIC is the network facilitating information sharing and action. What is new on the security front is the advantage social media had provided to the adversary to conduct clandestine operations for raising 'sleeper cells', raising 'lone wolves' for acts of terrorism and spreading radicalisation.

Running scan of social media has to be made comprehensive enough and suspect websites have to be examined in depth to pick up signals of hostile activity. The cases of terrorists killing of two Hindus at Amravati and Udaipur to avenge the allegedly insulting remark about Prophet Mohammad made by now suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma during a TV programme, have brought out how Pakistan linked WhatsApp groups were used in the run up to these gruesome events.

Intelligence -- both central and local -- has to identify all suspects for prompt Police action and legal pursuit. A far more audacious form of terror activity directed from across the border has come into play and a deterrence has to be created against it without losing time.

Pakistan's ISI is using both extremist Deobandi and Bareilvi streams of Islamic spectrum as instruments in the proxy war against India -- the vulnerability of India to this mischievous intrusion from outside has to be fully assessed and measures both punitive and sociological evolved for maintaining internal security.

Representative Muslim organisations must be persuaded to condemn the advocacy of Jehad for dealing with any Minority issues in democratic India that had a secular constitution. The Indian democratic State should give no quarters to political elements voicing 'separatism' and secession and - what is worse - doing so on a note of violence.A new danger has arisen from a certain kind of civil society groups and 'think tanks' that devoted themselves -- for political reasons -- to building subversive narratives of majoritarianism, autocratic rule and anti-minority disposition of the Modi regime and in concert with foreign lobbies and elements of the opposition even questioned the need for India to have a 'national' identity.Many of them deliberately project 'nationalism' as a symbol of Hindu India ignoring the fact that the Preamble of our Constitution called upon the people of India to promote unity and integrity of the 'nation'. All this amounts to playing 'politics by proxy' and makes it necessary to ascertain the undesirable links of that small number of NGOs which were different from the vast body of genuine forums working for philanthropy and public service.

India is presently facing a situation where our adversaries next door are focusing on fishing in our troubled waters and exploiting the internal differences here of creed, region and ideology.

Our domestic scene had always been vulnerable to these contradictions but a conscious policy of some opposition groups, of playing the 'Minority' card for political gain, has pushed the Hindu-Muslim divide in a direction of 'separatism' that was never in evidence even when the country witnessed stray communal riots arising from local causes in the decades after Independence.

The Constitution of India did not distinguish between one citizen and another on the basis of caste, creed or gender. The democratic process here firmly established the principle of 'one man one vote' to the advancement of all.

India had in the years after Independence also encountered regional separatism -- a striking illustration was the Dravidsthan movement of Ramaswamy Naikar-led Dravid Kazhgam (DK) that gave rise to the militant anti-Hindi agitation of mid-sixties in what is now Tamilnadu -- but the democratic assimilation of the regions soon made this particular state a front-line player of Indian nation with its representatives enjoying a significant place in the Central political executive as well as the national bureaucracy.

It is a matter of concern from the angle of internal security that some leaders are again fanning communal and regional sentiments for their narrow political ends. The democratic state of India should counter these harmful trends through socio- political and legal means. All communities want to live in peace with each other and a few of their leaders cannot be allowed to create internal divides for their vested interests -- some of them possibly doing this under external influences.

Post-Cold War, the world transited to a unipolar order a noticeable feature of which was the replacement of open warfare by 'proxy wars'. A record number of cross-border conflicts, insurgencies and 'covert' attacks have occurred in this era.The anti-Soviet armed campaign in Afghanistan that succeeded in causing dismemberment of the mighty USSR was in effect run in the format of an 'asymmetric' war -- on the slogan of Jehad -- and it is ironic that Afghanistan subsequently became the hub of the new global terror resting on motivation of faith that would take on the US -- the remaining Superpower.

The 'war on terror' was a combat between Islamic radicals and the US-led world coalition. Both India and Pakistan came on board with this coalition -- Pakistan had to be coerced by US President George Bush to join in -- but Pakistan was able to start a parallel 'proxy war' against India by using Islamic militants as an instrument of cross-border terrorism against this country.Down the years, Pakistan has drawn in radical elements of Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS- apart from outfits like Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkare Toiba and Jaishe Mohammad that were already under its control- in this proxy war.

Following the reinstallation of Taliban Emirate at Kabul with its total support, Pakistan ISI has stepped up its operations to spread radicalisation by exploiting communal issues and extend terrorist activity from Kashmir to other parts of India. The national Intelligence agencies are covering this threat but the top-down Intelligence they produced needs to be extensively backed by information of Intelligence value garnered by local units of state and district Police.

Finally, the Sino- Pak axis working against India is another new frontier required to be closely monitored by our central Intelligence agencies- China like Pakistan has a certain potential for interfering with the internal scene here particularly in the North East.

A new level of escalation of threat to internal security from this axis has arisen because of the collaboration of these prime adversaries of India in the matter of despatching drones from across our western borders, for surreptitiously dropping narcotic drugs, arms and explosives on our side. In recent months BSF is reported to have seized scores of such miniature drones. This has added a new dimension to the proxy war conducted by Pakistan against India over the years.

(The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau. The views expressed are personal)

international

PAKISTAN GETS OFFERED FOR UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATURE

Pakistan has been offered to launch its candidature for the permanent membership of the UN Security Council by some powerful western countries, who have suggested Islamabad to opt for the option in order to break the ongoing deadlock to reform the UN's charter.

Islamabad | Agencies

Pakistan has been offered to launch its candidature for the permanent membership of the UN Security Council by some powerful western countries, who have suggested Islamabad to opt for the option in order to break the ongoing deadlock to reform the UN's charter.

Interestingly, sources revealed that Pakistan has rejected the offer as the country viewed it as part of a deliberate tactic to weaken the group that is opposed to the expansion of permanent seats at the UNSC. Confirming the news about offer to Pakistan by some influential western countries, a diplomatic source said the idea was turned down because there were questions on its genuineness."Some powerful countries have approached us and said Pakistan should launch its bid for the permanent seat at the UNSC. Pakistan turned down the idea since it knew the offer was not genuine but the ploy to push Islamabad to leave the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group that is opposed to the expansion of the UNSC," said the official. This comes at a time when Pakistan-Italy led group UFC was able to foil the latest push by the G-4 group, comprising India, Brazil, Germany and Japan to seek expansion in the UNSC permanent members.UFC, a group comprising at least 13 countries including Pakistan, Italy, Canada, South Korea, Argentina, Spain and Turkey, has been lobbying against increasing the permanent seats at the UNSC.The United Nation General Assembly recently decided to roll over the inter-governmental negotiations (IGNs) on the Security Council reform to the next General Assembly session. UFC claims it to be its success.UFC, in contrast to G4, has proposed additional non-permanent seats with longer duration in term and possibility to get re-elected.

"The process to reform the UNSC had to kickstart from the UNGA. For any reforms, it required a vote of the two-thirds members of the 193-strong UNGA. At present, neither side has the required number," said an official from the foreign office.

"Unlike the G-4, the UFC is not merely seeking reforms through the two-thirds vote but a wider consensus in order to avoid any hiccup in the reform process, which involves several delicate and complicated steps. G-4 had been pushing for years for moving from oral negotiations to text-based negotiations. But Pakistan, along with other countries of UFC have been opposing the move because agreement on text-based negotiations means locking the proposals and discussions, which the G-4 desperately wants," the official added.At present, the UNSC has at least five permanent members with veto powers while 10 non-permanent members get elected for a two-year term.

Indian Army Chief in Dhaka on a four-day visit

Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pande arrived in Dhaka on Monday morning on a four-day visit to further strengthen the defence ties between the two nations.

Dhaka | Agencies

Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pande arrived in Dhaka on Monday morning on a four-day visit to further strengthen the defence ties between the two nations.

General Manoj Pande is visiting Dhaka at the invitation of General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh.

This is the first foreign visit of General Manoj Pande after taking over as Indian Army Chief, as per a statement issued by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

The visit of General Manoj Pande will further strengthen the close and fraternal ties existing between the armed forces of the two countries, it added.

The Indian Army Chief is accompanied by his spouse Archana Pande and a three-member delegation.

He is scheduled to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Security Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, service chiefs of Bangladesh Army, Navy, Air Force, PSO Armed Forces Division of Bangladesh and meet other senior officers of the Bangladesh Armed Forces, it said.

Seoul's top diplomat leaves for Tokyo for talks on warming bilateral ties

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin on Monday headed to Japan for his first official visit there since taking office in May, a move reflecting the Yoon Suk-yeol administration's efforts to resolve pending bilateral issues, especially drawn-out disputes over compensating the Korean victims of wartime forced labour.

It marks the first time for Seoul's top diplomat to travel to Japan in more than four years in order to have one-on-one talks with his or her local counterpart. In December 2017, then Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha visited there for such a bilateral session, Yonhap news agency reported.

Park is scheduled to meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi later in the day.

During his three-day stay in Japan, the minister is also expected to pay a courtesy call on Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida as well as other senior officials and politicians.Speaking to reporters just before his departure, Park said the two sides plan to have "comprehensive discussions" on various pending issues, including an intelligence-sharing pact. He earlier raised the need for Seoul and Tokyo to "normalise" the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which is widely regarded as having been underused since 2019, when the Moon Jae-in government decided to "conditionally" put off its expiration in protest at Tokyo's unilateral export curbs against Seoul.It remains uncertain whether his trip will produce a breakthrough in efforts to put the GSOMIA operation back on normal track and mend Seoul-Tokyo ties long strained due to history and territorial rows.In particular, the two sides face the urgency of resolving the problem of how to compensate Koreans forced into hard labour during World War II, when Korean was under Japan's brutal colonial rule, as South Korea's Supreme Court is expected to hand down its final verdicts on whether to allow the liquidation of assets held by two Japanese companies as early as in August.Tokyo officials have called on the Seoul government to come up with reasonable solutions to avoid liquidation of the Japanese firms, which have refused to pay Korean victims, claiming that all reparation issues were settled under a 1965 accord aimed at normalizing bilateral diplomatic relations.

South Korea's new government-private body, launched earlier this month, is still working to come up with specific proposals on ways for a resolution to the thorny issue.

The conservative Yoon administration has repeatedly stated a commitment to improving Seoul's relations with Tokyo in tandem with a push for bolstering trilateral security cooperation involving Washington against growing threats from Pyongyang.

UKRAINE WAR: ZELENSKYY SUSPENDS SECURITY CHIEF, TOP PROSECUTOR

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has suspended the head of Ukraine's spy agency (SBU) and the prosecutor general in the wake of treason cases in the two organisations.

Kiev: Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has suspended the head of Ukraine's spy agency (SBU) and the prosecutor general in the wake of treason cases in the two organisations. President Zelenskyy on Sunday suspended Ivan Bakanov and Iryna Venediktova. However, the officials are yet to comment on their suspension.

Over 60 former employees were now working against Ukraine in Russian-occupied areas, BBC reported quoting the Ukrainian President.

"Such an array of crimes against the foundations of the national security of the state... pose very serious questions to the relevant heads (of the two organisations)," President Zelenskyy said in a video address late Sunday night.

On the suspensions, Deputy Head of the President's Office Andriy Smyrnov said that the President's decision did not mean the dismissal of officials, Ukrinform reported.

Official checks will be carried out, after which the President will decide whether to file an appropriate motion at the parliament, Andriy Smyrnov said.

President Zelenskyy has assigned temporary duties of the chief of the Security Service of Ukraine to Vasyl Maliuk.

MAHA BUS TRAGEDY: SHINDE SPEAKS WITH MP CM, DIRECTS RESCUE-RELIEF

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER EKNATH SHINDE SPOKE WITH HIS MADHYA PRADESH COUNTERPART SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN AND DISCUSSED THE RESCUE AND RELIEF OPERATIONS FOR THE ST BUS TRAGEDY WHICH HAS KILLED AT LEAST 13 PASSENGERS AND AROUND TWO DOZEN STILL MISSING, OFFICIALS SAID HERE ON MONDAY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde spoke with his Madhya Pradesh counterpart Shivraj Singh Chouhan and discussed the rescue and relief operations for the ST bus tragedy which has killed at least 13 passengers and around two dozen still missing, officials said here on Monday.

Shinde also directed Jalgaon Collector Abhijeet Raut to provide all medical assistance to the injured and coordinate with the MP government for other aspects like bringing the bodies of the victims, etc.

The CM has also announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh for the kin of each deceased victim and full medical expenses for the injured.

He also asked the district authorities to hand over the victims' bodies to their families after completing due process.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is also monitoring the situation, Nationalist Congress Party state President Jayant Patil is rushing to Jalgaon while Congress and Shiv Sena have also asked their activists to help in the relief works.

Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar said that among the passengers are residents of Jalgaon, Pune, Nandurbar and other places in the state, while bodies of 8 fatalities, including 4 men and 4 women, have been identified so far.

This morning, at around 10.15 a.m., a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus No. MH-40-N-9849, which left Indore at 7.30 a.m. for Amalner in Jalgaon, tumbled into the Narmada River on a bridge between Khalghat and Tikri in Dhar. As per latest information, 13 persons have perished in the tragedy, around two-dozen missing or washed away in the flooded river water, besides a few injured, and the cause of the accident is being investigated by the MP Police.

On his part, Collector Raut has started a control room to provide information to the families of the passengers (Tel: 02572-223180 /02572-217193).

CBI grills ex-Mumbai top cops Parambir Singh, Sanjay Pandey

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday grilled former Mumbai Police Commissioners Parambir Singh and Sanjay Pandey in connection with a Rs 100 crore extortion case filed against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh and his two personal secretaries, Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday grilled former Mumbai Police Commissioners Parambir Singh and Sanjay Pandey in connection with a Rs 100 crore extortion case filed against former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh and his two personal secretaries, Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde.

Both the former top Mumbai police officers were grilled by the CBI for hours. The CBI has also recorded their statements which could be used in the supplementary charge-sheet.

Mumbai Police had filed five FIRs against Singh and others which have been taken over by the probe agency.

All the five cases have been re-registered by the CBI as per the directions of the apex court.Rakesh Arora, a social worker, had levelled allegations of bribery and corruption against Singh and Pradeep Sharma -- a former Mumbai Police personnel.

He had alleged that Sharma and Singh were allegedly extorting money from gambling clubs.

On April 21, 2021, the CBI filed the FIR against Deshmukh and others started the probe.

Uddhav Thackeray 'expels' two Shiv Sena ex-ministers

Continuing with his desperate measures to consolidate the party, Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray on Monday expelled two senior leaders and ex-ministers for anti-party activities.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Continuing with his desperate measures to consolidate the party, Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray on Monday expelled two senior leaders and ex-ministers for anti-party activities.

The expelled leaders are former state minister Ramdas Kadam and former Union minister Anandrao Adsul, who have been accused of indulging in anti-party activities as the ground for their expulsion. The move came amid intense speculation in Mumbai and New Delhi that a dozen Shiv Sena MPs are likely to join the group of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and could announce their decision soon.

Earlier on Monday, Kadam, whose MLA son Yogesh Kadam had joined the Shinde camp last month, had tendered his resignation as the deputy leader of Shiv Sena. In his resignation letter, he said that after the demise of Balasaheb Thackeray, the post of deputy leader had lost value and also highlighted how he and his son were harassed by the party leadership. Kadam expressed his grouse over how he was reportedly 'gagged' by the party leadership for the past nearly three years, when he was not allowed to speak to the media for reasons still not known to him. He reminded Uddhav Thackeray of how he "requested with folded hands" not to ally with the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party after the 2019 Assembly elections, as it would be contrary to the thoughts of Balasaheb Thackeray, but he was ignored.Last week, Thackeray had appointed around 100 office-bearers in the party organisation at various levels in Mumbai and other districts in a bid to consolidate the grassroots apparatus and prevent 'leaks' to the Shinde side.The spokesperson of the Shinde group, Deepak Kesarkar, reacted by saying that nobody has the right to expel senior Sena leaders like Kadam and Adsul.

Cong to take out 'padyatras' in Maha districts from Aug 9-15

In a massive public outreach programme, the Maharashtra Congress will take out 'padyatras' (foot march) in all districts of the state from August 9-15, coinciding with the Quit India Movement and Independence Day, followed by a 'Bharat Jodo' campaign on October 2, a top party leader said here on Monday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a massive public outreach programme, the Maharashtra Congress will take out 'padyatras' (foot march) in all districts of the state from August 9-15, coinciding with the Quit India Movement and Independence Day, followed by a 'Bharat Jodo' campaign on October 2, a top party leader said here on Monday.Maharashtra party chief Nana Patole said that just as Mahatma Gandhi had given a call to the British to 'quit India' 80 years ago on August 9, 1942, the Congress will now give a slogan of 'Save the Constitution, Save the Country' and spread the message across the state right up to the village levels.

During the 75-km-long 'padyatras' in each district, Congress workers and leaders will also explain the anti-people decisions of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre."We shall highlight before the people the regressive policies of GST on essential food commodities levied from today (July 18), the effects of the Agniveer Scheme for the Armed Forces, the economy and increasing inflation, unemployment and other public issues," said Patole.

This will be followed by a 'Bharat Jodo' (Unite India) campaign on October 2, marking the 153rd birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, to challenge the BJP's 'Bharat Todo' politics, he said.

Patole said the Congress will implement a 100-day action programme taking up various initiatives to strengthen the party apparatus up to the grassroots level and focus on failures of the BJP government on various public welfare schemes.

Patole also announced the Shirdi New Sankalp Manifesto & Action Programme through which the 100-day activities shall be carried out under the leadership of senior party leaders and implement the series of resolutions passed at the party's national conclave in Udaipur held in May.

Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway Till Shirdi To Be Inaugurated In August

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The first phase of the 701-km long Mumbai - Nagpur expressway is expected to be inaugurated by 15 August this year.

"Infrastructure projects under our government are being given priority. We are giving a push to the work of Samruddhi Mahamarg, named after Hindu Hriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray. Nagpur to Shirdi stretch will be opened on 15 August," said Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

According to a report, the project's first leg, which is between Nagpur and Shirdi, is around 500 km long.Officials estimate that the entire project may be completed in 2023 as the work on the Mumbai to Shirdi expressway section is underway.Conceptualised and initiated by former CM and present deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, the 701-km six-lane super expressway crosses through 10 districts. It is set to cut the travelling time from Mumbai to Nagpur to eight hours from 14 hours.The high-speed corridor designed for a top speed of 150 km per hour is being built at around Rs 55,000 crore.

Besides Deputy CM Fadnavis, the present CM Shinde, too, is deeply involved in this expressway project as he held the public works (public undertakings) department in both BJP and MVA governments and headed the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), which is building the Mumbai - Nagpur expressway.

MAHARASHTRA RAINS: ORANGE ALERT ISSUED FOR 2 DISTRICTS TODAY, YELLOW ALERT FOR REST

Mumbai: Predicting heavy to very heavy rain, Regional Meteorological Centre in Mumbai issued an orange alert for Maharashtra's Gadchiroli and Gondia districts for Monday. Meanwhile, flood situation continues to prevail in Sironcha town of Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district where large swathes of land are still under water.

The Regional Meteorological Centre, Mumbai, on Sunday said "An orange alert has been issued for Gadchiroli and Gondia on Monday predicting thunderstorm and lightning with heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places, while for the other districts of the state the weather forecasting agency issued Yellow alert."

Several districts have been facing the aftermath of torrential rainfalls, this season, after which the government of Maharashtra has positioned 13 NDRF and three SDRF teams in these states.

Maharashtra cabinet expansion likely within fortnight

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government is likely to expand its cabinet in couple of days. Shinde on June 30 took oath as the chief minister with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis as his deputy after the rebel group toppled the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. Currently, there are only 2 members in the cabinet.

Though no official date has been announced by the BJP or the Shinde-led Shiv Sena faction over the Maharashtra cabinet expansion but speculations are that chief minister Eknath Shinde will soon add more faces in his cabinet

Meanwhile, the monsoon session of the Legislative Assembly that was scheduled to begin on July 18 was postponed. "There is a possibility of distributing cabinet portfolios on July 20 or 21, followed by swearing-in and holding the monsoon session within the next 10 days. This would enable ministers to learn about their new ministries so that they can answer questions on the floor of the House," a senior BJP leader said on Sunday. Notably, The BJP has 106 MLAs in the 288-member House and is expected to get more cabinet berths in the expansion, while eight ministers in the erstwhile Uddhav Thackeray-led government who later joined Shinde, are also likely to be inducted. The BJP leader said the party needs to strike a balance in terms of distribution of berths as only 18 months are left before the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra assembly elections. "Once the election code of conduct comes into effect, one cannot take any crucial or policy decision. Since there will also be a code of conduct in place for the Assembly polls likely in October 2024, ministers would get very limited time (for development works)," he claimed.

Maharashtra CM Shinde steps in, gets two kids injured in AC blast airlifted to Pune

CM Eknath Shinde had lost his two children in a boat accident twenty years ago

Team Absolute | Pune

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who lost his two children in a boat accident twenty years ago, stepped forward to lend a helping hand to a Maharashtrian family living in Patna on Saturday. The chief minister arranged two private ambulances to airlift two children, aged 10 and 12, who had suffered severe burn injuries after an air conditioner exploded at their home early on Friday morning.

Shinde himself footed the Rs 20 lakh bill of the two private ambulances, Shiv Sena medical wing chief Mangesh Chivate said on Monday.The family of Amol Jadhav, a native of Gursule village in Khatav taluka of Satara, has been living in Patna for 20 years and is involved in the jewellery business. Early on Friday morning, gas leaked out of their air conditioner which led to an explosion. While Amol Jadhav suffered minor injuries, his wife and two kids suffered severe burns and were admitted to a hospital in Patna.

"However, doctors there told the family that they need to be shifted to Pune or Mumbai hospitals for better treatment," said Dr Aparna Jadhav, a close relative who runs the Pune hospital at which the family has now been admitted.The family then alerted their relatives in Satara who, in turn, tried to contact MLAs and MPs. They also tried to get private ambulances, but the cost of ferrying the patients was too high. "We managed to get one air ambulance for Amol's wife. It cost Rs 10 lakh. She was brought to Surya Hospital in Pune on Saturday. Amol, who suffered minor burns, arrived in Pune by plane. He has been admitted to our hospital," said Dr Jadhav.

The family members in Maharashtra then spent a day trying to get air ambulances for the two children. Kisant Sawant, their relative who lives in Satara, contacted Shiv Sena MLA Anil Babar and informed him about their situation. "I first contacted top officials in the government and the Mumbai collectorate and sought their help. They promised to help. I then contacted the Shiv Sena medical wing and urged them to alert the chief minister," said Babar.

Chivate, who heads the Sena's medical wing, told The Indian Express that after private ambulances could not be made available to airlift the two kids, Shinde and his son Shrikant Shinde, an MP, got in touch with Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. "The chief minister himself spoke to the Union minister, but due to a technical problem he was told that the air ambulances could not be made available. The chief minister then himself requisitioned the services of two private air ambulances. He paid Rs 20 lakh from his pocket," Chivate said."The chief minister monitored the entire operation closely. He directed the officials to shift the two kids from Patna to Pune by morning under any circumstances," he added.The two kids, a girl and a boy, were then brought to Surya Hospital in Pune on Sunday. "The first child was brought in at 6 am on Sunday and the second by 11 am. One has suffered 40 per cent burns, while the other has suffered 75 per cent burns," Dr Jadhav said.

Deepak Kesarkar, spokesperson of the rebel faction of Shiv Sena led by Shinde, said, "The chief minister put in his best efforts to get the kids airlifted from Patna to Pune. This is after the family and local MLA approached the CM's office."

Prez polls: BJP eyes 200 votes from Maharashtra as voting takes off in Mumbai

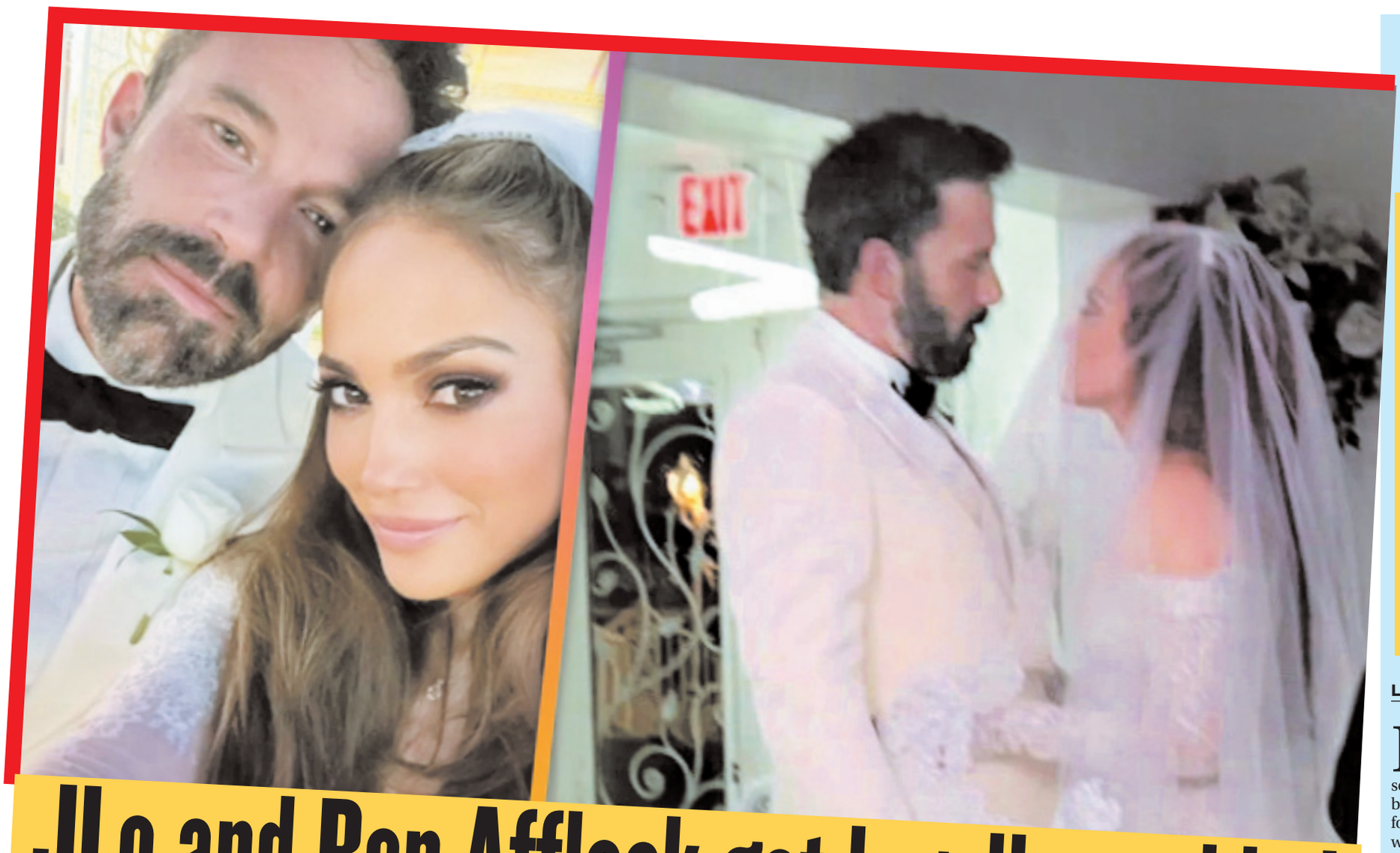
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Polling for the election of the President of India is underway in Maharashtra; with the opposition Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) struggling to keep their MLAs in check amidst reports of cross-voting from their ranks.

The Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena has expressed its support for Droupadi Murmu, the nominee of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Uddhav Thackeray's group, which has the support of 15 out of 40 Shiv Sena legislators, has also extended support to Murmu instead of former finance minister Yashwant Sinha, who is the nominee of the joint opposition. The Congress and NCP, which are backing Sinha, have a bench strength of 44 and 53 respectively. Two NCP legislators, namely former ministers Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik are in jail. Former energy minister Nitin Raut of the Congress was the first to cast his vote, followed by Babanrao Lonikar of the BJP. The polling will take place till 5 pm. Shinde, NCP leaders Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil and others have also cast their votes.

Maharashtra chief minister Shinde has claimed that 200 of the 288 legislators from the state will vote for Murmu, triggering speculation about a split in the votes of the Congress and NCP. The government has the support of 165 legislators, and the Sena's 15 MLAs have also supported Murmu.

The cross-voting by MVA legislators, especially those from the Congress, whose seven legislators are said to have broken ranks during the legislative council polls last month, and the abstention of 12 Congress MLAs during the Shinde government's floor test, had added fuel to these rumours.



JLo and Ben Affleck get legally wedded

Los Angeles | Agencies

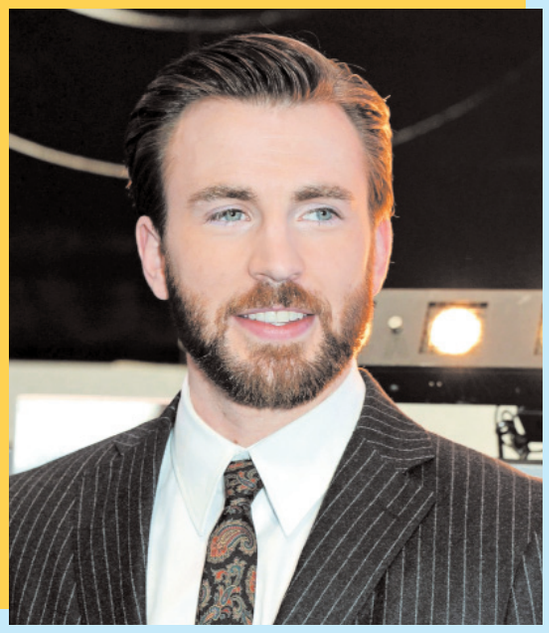
Hollywood stars Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck have finally tied the knot in Las Vegas. According to a marriage license on the online records for Clark County, Nevada, the couple's official marriage was filed on Saturday, reports Variety. The record is in both of their legal names: Benjamin Geza Affleck and Jennifer Lynn Lopez. Significantly, the record also indicates that Jennifer Lopez took Affleck as her legal last name. Lopez confirmed her and Affleck's nuptials through a new edition of her newsletter "On the JLo" later Sunday afternoon. "We did it!" Lopez wrote, alongside a black-and-white photograph of her holding a bouquet and Affleck kissing her cheek.

"Last night we flew to Vegas, stood in line for a license with four other couples, all making the same journey to the wedding capital of the world," Lopez shared.

The singer went on to say that they "Barely made it to the Little White Wedding chapel by midnight," and concluded her newsletter with sweet enthusiasm writing, "Stick around long enough and maybe you'll find the best moment of your life in a drive through in Las Vegas at twelve thirty in the morning in the tunnel of love drive through, with your kids and the one you'll spend forever with.

Love is a great thing, maybe the best of things "and worth waiting for". She signed the letter as "Mrs. Jennifer Lynn Affleck." The news of Lopez and Affleck's engagement first broke in April. In an edition of 'On the JLo', the singer and actress shared a teary-eyed video for her fans while sporting a green diamond engagement ring.

CHRIS EVANS IS 'LASER FOCUSED' ON FINDING A LIFE PARTNER



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Chris Evans says he is "laser focused" on finding a life partner. The actor has reportedly been single since 2018 but is now ready to find someone to settle down with because a career in show business is "full of doubt." "Okay, good question. Thank you for a good question. My goodness. Laser focus - you know what? We're gonna do this. I'm gonna give you a good answer. Maybe (I'm) laser-focused on finding a partner, you know, someone that you want to live with," he said when speaking on 'Shondaland', reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I mean, look, I love what I do. It's great. I pour all of myself into it. But...even this industry is full of pockets of doubt, hesitation and recalibration in terms of really trying to find someone that you really can pour all of yourself into," he elaborated. "Maybe it's about trying to find someone that you're looking to spend your life with."

Chris last had a public relationship with 'Big Mouth' actress Jenny Slate, who is now married to writer Ben Shattuck. When that relationship came to an end in 2018 after two years, the 'Captain America' star said at the time he was still in search of a wife and hoped to have children one day. "I really want kids. Yeah, I do," he said at the time.

"I like pretty pedestrian, domestic things. I want a wife, I want kids. I like ceremony. I want to carve pumpkins and decorate Christmas trees and s*** like that."

Peter Andre removed his natural curls after racist bullying

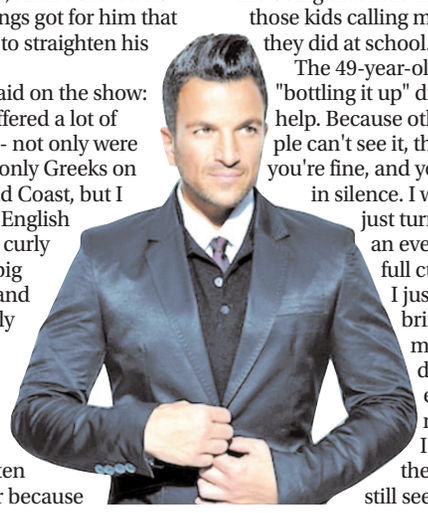
Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Peter Andre was forced to straighten his hair as a child when he was left scarred for life by racist bullying.

The singer has spoken about the heartbreaking reason why he had to make the change to how he looked, reports mirror.co.uk.

He said things got so bad in Australia when he was growing up that he had no choice but to remove his curls. Peter was targeted when his Cypriot-Greek family moved from the UK to live Down Under.

Talking on Carol Vorderman's 'Life Changing Stories The Pride of Britain' Podcast, Andre shared how bad things got for him that he had to straighten his hair.



He said on the show: "We suffered a lot of racism - not only were we the only Greeks on the Gold Coast, but I had an English accent, curly hair, a big nose - and we really stood out. I still straighten my hair because the curly hair reminds me of me being that little kid and those kids calling me what they did at school.

The 49-year-old says "bottling it up" didn't help. Because other people can't see it, they think you're fine, and you suffer in silence. I wouldn't just turn up to an event with full curly hair. I just can't bring myself to do it, even now, and I've had therapy. I still see what those kids called me when I look in the mirror."

He went on: "I still wouldn't be seen dead in a nightclub because I associate it with trauma. These guys were serious. I kept thinking, 'What have I done wrong?' And that's when I started to internalise the fear."

Andre last week confirmed that he is planning to put out new music next year.

He promised fans a brand new album in 2023 after years of waiting and says he is excited about stepping back into the studio.

The 'Mysterious Girl' hitmaker credits his children for keeping his drive to succeed strong.

Sylvester Stallone is miffed with 'Rocky' films producer Irwin Winkler

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone has claimed that Irwin Winkler - the producer behind the 'Rocky' films and its sequel series 'Creed' is withholding a significant financial stake in the franchise from him.

The 76-year-old Stallone shared a portrait of Winkler as a knife-tongued serpent through his Instagram on Sunday morning, reports Variety. The image came alongside a caption calling for a 'fair gesture' from the 93-year-old producer.

Stallone wrote on his Instagram: "A very flattering portrait of the great 'Rocky'/'Creed' producer, Irwin Winkler, from one of the country's greatest. After Irwin controlling 'Rocky' for over 47 years, and now 'Creed', I really would like to have at least a little (of) WHAT'S LEFT of my rights back, before passing it on to ONLY YOUR CHILDREN , I believe that would be a fair gesture from this 93-year-old gentleman?"

Variety further states that although Stallone received first-dollar gross on the early "Rocky" sequels and earned net points off of the 1976 original which cost just over $1 million to produce and grossed $225 million globally the actor maintains that he's been deprived of an equity stake in the franchise.

"This is a painful subject that eats at my soul, because I wanted to leave something of Rocky for my children, but it's always great hearing from the loyal fans, Keep punching," Stallone's Instagram post concluded.

EMILIA CLARKE ASTONISHED BY HER SPEECH ABILITY AFTER TWO BRAIN ANEURYSMS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Emilia Clarke did not expect to retain her speech ability after suffering from two brain aneurysms. Getting candid about her health troubles in a new interview, the Daenerys Targaryen of 'Game of Thrones' was surprised she was still able to speak and communicate normally despite missing parts of her brain, reports aceshowbiz.com. Having gone through several surgeries to treat her brain aneurysms, the actress offered updates on her health during an appearance on BBC One's 'Sunday Morning'. "The amount of my brain that is no longer usable - It's remarkable that I am able to speak, sometimes articulately," she shared her astonishment. "And live my life completely normally with absolutely no repercussions," she continued in the interview airing on July 17. She went on to express gratefulness for being one of the lucky ones, saying: "I am in the really, really, really small minority of people that can survive that."

Clarke then brought up the result of her brain scans. "There's quite a bit missing! Which always makes me laugh," she lightheartedly spilled, adding, "Because strokes, basically, as soon as any part of your brain doesn't get blood for a second, it's gone. And so the blood finds a different route to get around but then whatever bit it's missing is therefore gone." Back in 2019, the actress said that she couldn't bear to look at her own reflection in the mirror post-surgeries.

AMBER ROSE CLAIMS SHE SAW KIM, KANYE'S DIVORCE COMING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Model Amber Rose was not entirely surprised by rapper Kanye West and reality TV star Kim Kardashian's divorce.

Weighing on the end of her ex-boyfriend and Kim's nearly seven years of marriage, the model said she saw it coming, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Rose, who dated the rapper herself from 2008 until 2010, talked about the highly-publicised divorce during an appearance on TMZ's 'It's Tricky with Raquel Harper' podcast.

"I don't have any feelings about it," she said when asked about the superstar couple's separation.

When pressed to answer if she saw it coming, the 38-year-old responded: "Of course. I mean I always hope for the best, for people to be happy."

She went on explaining: "I have my own - I don't want to say 'feelings' for him, because that sounds like it's a positive thing for Kanye - I have my own issues and feelings, how I feel about how our relationship was."

Rose, however, claimed that she never wished ill on the former couple.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Emily Ratajkowski

Shooting World Cup

MAIRAJ AHMAD KHAN BECOMES FIRST INDIAN TO WIN MEN'S SKEET GOLD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Two-time Olympian and India's shining light in Skeet shooting, Mairaj Ahmad Khan, won the country's first ever individual gold in the event, shooting 37 hits out of a possible 40 in the final of ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun at Changwon, Korea on Monday.

The Khurja top gun, first shot 119/125 over two days of qualifying in the men's Skeet and then came through a five-way shoot-off en-route to gold.

His efforts helped India stay on top of the medal standings with five gold, five silver and three bronze medals with two more days of competitions left. India also won a bronze today with the 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) women's team of Anjum Moudgil, Sift Kaur Samra and Ashi Chouksey, winning their bronze medal match up 16-06 against Austria.

But the day undoubtedly belonged to the seasoned Mairaj. After finishing with 119, he found himself vying for two final qualification spots along with four others, among them being two-time Olympic medallist Abdullah Al Rashidi of Kuwait. When Shotaro Toguchi of Japan missed his eighth shoot-off shot, he was assured of top-eight spot.

In the ranking round he was up against German Sven Korte, Korean Minki Cho and Cypriot Nicolas Vasilou for another round of 30-targets. He topped the round with 27 hits as Sven followed him to the medal round with 25-hits.

In the 40-shot medal round, Mairaj missed just three targets for 37-hits, to clinch the deal from Korean Minsu Kim who shot down 36-targets.

In other action, Vijayveer Sidhu in the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol reached the ranking round but did not make the medal rounds while Anish and Sameer could not cross the first hurdle in the event. Vijayveer shot 584 in qualifying to finish sixth while Anish shot 582 for 12th spot and Sameer 566 for 30th position. Mufaddal Deesawala finished 23rd in the Women's Skeet shooting a total of 108.

FOLLOWING ODI SERIES WIN AGAINST ENGLAND, INDIA CONSOLIDATE NO. 3 POSITION IN ICC RANKINGS

Manchester | Agencies

India's series victory over England has seen the Rohit Sharma-led side further consolidate their third place ahead of Pakistan on the latest ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings.

India, with 109 rating points, are now three ahead of Pakistan (106), as New Zealand continue to be the No.1 side with 128 rating points. Jos Buttler's England, in spite of losing the three-match ODI series, are second with 121 rating points.

A maiden One-day International century by wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant helped India clinch a 2-1 series victory over England on Sunday and in the process ensured they held on to third spot.

That situation could change over the coming weeks, with sixth-placed South Africa currently only seven rating points behind Pakistan and with the opportunity to rise as high as fourth if they can sweep their upcoming three-match series against England. India have their own three-match series against the West Indies later this month and could put further pressure on the likes of Pakistan, Australia and South Africa with a good performance in the Caribbean.

Pakistan are currently battling it out on the Test arena against Sri Lanka, with the next 50-over assignment for Babar Azam's side in August in the

JAMAICAN LEGEND FRASER-PRYCE WINS FIFTH WOMEN'S 100M WORLD TITLE

Eugene (United States) | Agencies

Jamaican legend Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce dashed across the finish line first to lift her fifth 100m world title at the World Athletics Championships here.

The 35-year-old multi-Olympic and world champion led the pack of Jamaican sprinters to sweep the podium in a championships record time of 10.67 seconds.

Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Shericka Jackson clocked a personal best of 10.73 for the silver while Elaine Thompson-Herah, Tokyo and Rio Olympic champion in the event, bagged bronze in 10.81. American athletes won big on the third day of the 10-day competition, claiming four out of seven gold medals on offer on Sunday.Grant Holloway successfully defended his 110m hurdles title in 13.03 seconds, beating American compatriot Trey Cunningham by five hundredths of a second. Spain's 2021 European U-23 champion Asier Martinez finished with a bronze in a personal best of 13.17, Xinhua reports. On the field, two-time Olympic champion Ryan Crouser reinforced his dominance in the men's shot put by winning his first senior world title in a championships record of 22.94 metres. Two-time world champion Joe Kovacs and Josh Awotunde finished the American podium sweep in 22.89 and 22.29 respectively.Elsewhere, Tokyo Olympic champion Katie Nageotte edged her fellow American Sandi Morris as she cleared 4.85m with a single attempt for the pole vault gold. Morris cleared the same height with one more try. Australian Nina Kennedy came third.Brooke Andersen of the United States claimed the women's hammer throw gold medal with an effort of 78.96 meters. Canada's Camryn Rogers took the silver with 75.52m, and American Janee Kassanavoid pocketed the bronze with 74.86m.

China's Luo Na finished eighth with 70.42m.

Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei, the world record holder, defended his 10,000m title after he held off all challengers on the final lap to clock a winning time of 27 minutes 27.43 seconds. Kenya's Stanley Waithaka Mburu took silver in 27:27.90, and Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda claimed bronze in 27:27.97.Tamirat Tola from Ethiopia stood on top of the men's marathon podium with a championships record time of two hours, five minutes and 36 seconds.

He was followed by another Ethiopian Mosinet Geremew in 2:06:44 and Belgium's Bashir Abdi in 2:06:48.

Ben Stokes to retire from ODIs after Tuesday's match against SA

Durham | Agencies

England all-rounder Ben Stokes announced on Monday that he will retire from ODI cricket after Tuesday's match against South Africa at his home ground, Riverside Ground, in Durham.

Stokes made his ODI debut against Ireland in 2011 and has scored 2919 runs in 104 ODIs, including three centuries, and picked 74 wickets. He captained the ODI side during last summer's 3-0 series victory against Pakistan when first-choice members were unavailable due to Covid-19 outbreak.

"I will play my last game for England in ODI cricket on Tuesday in Durham. I have decided to retire from this format. This has been an incredibly tough decision to make. I have loved every minute of playing with my mates for England. We have had an incredible journey on the way."As hard as a decision as this was to come to, it's not as hard dealing with the fact I can't give my teammates 100% of myself in this format anymore. The England shirt deserves nothing less from anyone who wears it," said Stokes in an official statement by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Stokes will be remembered for his Player-of-the-Match performance in the 2019 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup final at Lord's, where he slammed an unbeaten 84 to send the match into a Super Over as England claimed their first ICC Men's Cricket World Cup title on home soil in the most thrilling of circumstances.

India's golden boy Neeraj Chopra finds his Armour!

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Global athletic performance brand Under Armour's India distributor and licensee, Underdog Athletics, has signed India's golden boy, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, as its brand ambassador.

Chopra made Olympic history by becoming the first and only Indian track and field athlete to bring home a gold medal. Since then, Chopra has continued pushing his limits. Recently, he broke his national record in Stockholm at the Diamond League.

With this collaboration, the brand aims to build sustainable long-term growth for Under Armour in India.

On the occasion, Neeraj Chopra shared that he is excited to be a part of Under Armour's family, and he looks forward to inspiring young and aspiring athletes.

"I am really excited to represent Under Armour, and hope that together we will be able to inspire millions of aspiring athletes across the country. I believe that the right athletic gear makes a significant difference in an athlete's performance, and I look forward to using the brand's innovative products to further improve my fitness and perform better," Chopra said.

INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM LEAVES FOR CWG FROM BARCELONA

Barcelona: The Indian women's hockey team, led by goalkeeper Savita Punia, left for London from Barcelona on Monday morning. Upon reaching London, the national side will take a bus to Nottingham, England.

The team will carry out a final preparatory camp in Nottingham before they leave for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The Indian team finished joint-ninth with China at the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup Spain & Netherlands 2022, which was played from July 1-17. Savita expressed that the national side is determined to turn their form around, "Unfortunately, we couldn't play to our potential at the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup, but we are determined to turn our form around at the Commonwealth Games 2022. "We have a great squad with a fantastic balance of experienced and young players. We'll take a fresh start at CWG 2022 and I am certain that we will be able to take on the best of teams in the competition," she said.Savita added the team will be working on a few aspects of their game before the start of the competition.

Pant hopes to remember his match-winning maiden ODI century for rest of his life

Manchester | Agencies

After playing a historic knock in India's thumping five-wicket win over England in the 3rd ODI, the explosive wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant said that he wants to remember his match-winning maiden century in the 50-over cricket for the rest of his life.

Pant's unbeaten 125 off 113 deliveries and Hardik Pandya's impressive all-round show (71 runs and 4 wickets) led India to a convincing five-wicket win over England in the third and final ODI and 2-1 win in the three-match series at Old Trafford on Sunday.

"Hopefully, I remember (this knock) for the rest of my life. I was focusing on one ball at a time when I was batting. When your team is under pressure and you bat like that... something I aspire to do," Pant said in the post-match presentation ceremony.

Pant, who got the Player of the Match award for his batting heroics, said that he enjoys playing in England."I always enjoy playing in England, and at the same time enjoy the atmosphere and the situation. The more you play the more experience you gain," he said.

The 24-year-old also credited the Indian bowlers for doing a fantastic job as England were bundled out for 259 on a batting-friendly pitch in Manchester."Nothing to take away from the bowlers, it was a good wicket to bat on and the bowlers did a commendable job to rest

Not Test cricket but future of ODIs look uncertain, says Pragyan Ojha

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Indian spinner Pragyan Ojha feels the future of One Day International (ODI) cricket looks uncertain vis-a-vis Test cricket.

Ojha's comments came after England all-round Ben Stokes announced that he will retire from ODIs following Tuesday's match against South Africa. England and South Africa will lock horns in an ODI series which gets underway from Tuesday.

According to ECB, Stokes has played 104 ODI matches and is set to end his international career in the one-day format on his home ground at the Seat Unique Riverside."We were worried about TEST cricket's future but the future of ODIs looks uncertain! In future we may see many crickets preferring to move away from this format #SomethingToThinkAbout #Cricketonkoo," Ojha said on the Koo app. Coming to Stokes, the 31-year-old's ODI career will forever be remembered for his Player-of-the-Match performance in the 2019 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup final at Lord's.

Stokes' unbeaten 84 helped to send the match into a Super Over as England claimed their first ICC Men's Cricket World Cup title in the most thrilling of circumstances.

"Three formats are just unsustainable for me now. Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give Jos and the rest of the team their all. It's time for someone else to progress as a cricketer and make incredible memories like I have over the past 11 years," Stokes said in a statement.After making his ODI debut against Ireland in 2011, Stokes has scored 2919 runs, including three centuries, and taken 74 wickets.He captained the ODI side during last summer's 3-0 Royal London Series victory against Pakistan and has been an inspirational leader.

Weeks after abdominal tear at Wimbledon, Nadal set to compete in Canadian Open

Montreal (Canada) | Agencies

Spanish tennis stalwart and winner of 22 grand slam singles titles, Rafael Nadal is likely to compete in the North American hard-court swing, including the Canadian Open, as he has made his hotel reservations for the event which runs from August 8-14.

Nadal had aggravated an abdominal injury during his Wimbledon last-eight win over Taylor Fritz of the US and withdrawn from his semifinal clash against Australia's Nick Kyrgios.

While experts felt the 36-year-old might be forced to skip the last grand slam of the year, the US Open, Nadal has revealed he should recover completely in 3-4 weeks to carry on with a "normal calendar" after that.

Canadian Open tournament director Eugene Lapierre has confirmed the Spaniard, who has won the opening two grand slams of the year -- Australian and French Open -- is expected to play in the ATP Masters 1000 event, according to a report in Tennis365.

"He's made hotel reservations and he has asked us to send him a case of the balls we're using for the tournament," Lapierre said. "He should return to training."

Following the Canadian Open here, Nadal is likely to also play in the Cincinnati Masters the following week before the North American campaign culminates with the US Open at Flushing Meadows from August 29 to September 11.

Aneri Vajani eliminated from stunt-based reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

TV actress Aneri Vajani, has recently got evicted from the stunt-based reality show, 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 12'. Aneri is the second contestant after Erika Packard to be eliminated from the show.

Aneri shares her experience of being on the show and how host Rohit Shetty guided her throughout her journey.

"This journey has been a flux of all emotions. My intent was to perform every stunt without giving up, and I am glad I did that. 'Khatron Ke Khiladi' has taught me how to face and overcome all my fears and I am deeply grateful to Rohit Sir for guiding me throughout the journey."

In the elimination round, Aneri competed against Faizu (Faisal Shaikh) and Shivangi Joshi. The contestants, while being in a box filled with creepy-crawlies, had to form the code displayed on the monitor by unlocking the numbers in the box. The ones who completed the stunt in less time cleared the round. Despite trying her best, Aneri failed to perform well and compete with the rest.

She said further: "This show has given me the experience of a lifetime, where I have learnt to push my limits and be prepared for the path ahead. I am taking back a box of unforgettable memories with me. I wish my fellow contestants all the best for the challenges ahead."

'Khatron Ke Khiladi 12' airs on Colors.

PC and Ranveer support Sush after she shuts down trolls for calling her Gold Digger

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sushmita Sen and former IPL founder Lallit Modi took the internet by storm after they informed about their relationship. Since then, the two have been facing flak for various reasons. Hitting back at the trolls they even gave a befitting reply.

On 17 July, Sushmita penned a long note along with her picture condemning trailers calling her gold digger.

The moment she shared this post, a number of celebrities reacted to her post showing their support for the actress. Ranveer Singh reacted with multiple heart emojis to the post, while Priyanka Chopra wrote, "Tell em Queen!"

The for Miss Universe was earlier dating model Rohman Shawl. However, the two parted ways a few months backs and are cordial with each other. On the work front, Sushmita was praised for her performance in Ram Madhvani's Aarya.

Sajid Nadiadwala announces his next project with Kartik Aaryan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Kartik Aaryan has all the reasons to be on cloud nine these days. After all, his last release Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, which also featured Kiara Advani and Tabu in lead, has witnessed a massive success at the ticket windows. It won't be wrong to call Kartik Aaryan a busy actor as he has several interesting projects like Shehzada, Captain India, Satyanarayan Ki Katha and Freddy in his kitty. And now there is another feather added to his already glorious hat. Recently, Sajid Nadiadwala kept everyone wondering after he informed us about unveiling an interesting news today. And here it is! Spilling beans about the project the makers informed that it will be helmed by 83 director Kabir Khan and star Kartik Aaryan. The makers wrote, "Happy to announce our next, directed & jointly produced by @kabirkhankk starring@kartikaaryan. Going on floors early next year! Marking the coming together of #SajidNadiadwala, #KabirKhan & #KartikAaryan. This big scale spectacle is based on a true story!". If reports are to be believed, Kartik Aaryan will also make an appearance in Luv Ranjan's next yet-untitled project starring Ranbir Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna.

SAMANTHA PRABHU TO GRACE INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE 2022

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Samantha Prabhu is a household name in the south film industry. The diva recently made her Hindi project debut with The Family Man 2 for which she is receiving rave reviews.

Apart from South and Hindi Film industry, her popularity is growing immensely overseas as well.

Taking forward her popularity, the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne has invited Samantha as one of the key guests for their 2022 festival.

To note, the coveted festival is coming back physically after a gap of two years owing to the pandemic restrictions. The festival which will begin on 12th August will have Samantha meet her fans in the capital city of the Victorian State in Australia. Samantha will interact with her fans, deliver a speech, and talk about her career during her appearance at IFFM.

Speaking of this, Samantha said, "Last year, even though I was a part of IFFM virtually, I could feel the energy and vibe because of the enthusiasm of all the participants. With the world opening up and given the opportunity to travel to Australia to be part of it in person, to experience that energy first hand, is something I'm looking forward to.

Celebrating Indian cinema, in all its diversity with communities of both Indians and cinema lovers unanimously together is an exciting feeling".

On the work front, Samantha will be seen next in director duo Hari and Harish's Yashoda. Her film, Shaakuntalam, with Gunasekar, is currently in the post-production phase. Meanwhile, the actress has signed a film with Taapsee Pannu. If reports are to be believed, she is roped in for Vicky Kaushal starrer The Immortal Ashwatthama.

Aamir has his fanboy moment with Neetu Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan said that he is a huge fan of Neetu Kapoor on the sets of 'Dance Deewane Juniors'. He appeared for the finale episode on the show to promote his film 'Laal Singh Chaddha'.

He also mentioned that since his uncle, Nasir Hussain, directed her first film, 'Yaadon Ki Baraat', he became her fan and feels blessed to share the stage with Neetu.

"Neetuji's first film 'Yaadon Ki Baraat' was directed by my chacha and since then I have been a big fan of her," he said. It was interesting to watch Aamir dancing with Neetu Kapoor on 'Aati Kya Khandala', from his 1998 movie 'Ghulam'. He added: "Today I feel blessed that I have the opportunity to share the same stage with you as I have been an admirer of your work since the inception of your career."

Moreover, Aamir enjoyed looking at the kids performing on his famous tracks and he in fact shook his legs with the contestants and their mentors to 'Dhinka Chika'.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Shirley Setia

KAJOL SET TO MAKE OTT DEBUT WITH UNTITLED SERIES

Mumbai: After making her digital debut in 2021 with the trilingual streaming film 'Tirbhanga', Bollywood actress Kajol is set to make her foray into long-format content with her upcoming web series. Sharing her excitement, Kajol said in a statement: "Exploring new formats is always a challenge; but it's a great thing as I love to take challenges head-on. Being an avid fan of digital series, the concept has always been intriguing; and after following cool shows such as Aarya and Rudra, I knew there was no other platform than Disney+ Hotstar to start my series journey." The yet-to-be-titled series, a drama, will see the actress in an all-new avatar. Kajol's husband Ajay Devgn has earlier explored the digital medium in the capacity of both the producer ('The Great Indian Murder') and an actor ('Rudra'). Both the series premiered on OTT platform Disney+ Hotstar. Taking a cue, the actress will be soon making her series debut on Disney+ Hotstar. Gaurav Banerjee, Head - Content, Disney+ Hotstar & HSM Entertainment Network, Disney Star shared that "We are elated to have a celebrated actor like Kajol join us and charm viewers with her ethereal screen magic. With the beloved star, we are setting out on an all-new journey to bring a unique story of love, emotions and family."

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