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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

NATION

>02



Cong suspends 3 MLAs, FIR filed for conspiracy to topple.....

HOLLYWOOD

> 06



The unoffical 'Bridgerton Musical' creators sued by Netflix...

SPORTS

> 07



CWG 2022: Bowlers, Mandhana help India thrash Pakistan...

NIA RAIDS 13 PREMISES ACROSS 6 STATES IN CONNECTION WITH ISIS LINKS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

NIA on Sunday conducted searches at 13 premises of suspects in six states in connection with activities pertaining to ISIS. According to the details, the raids were underway in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

The agency conducted searches at Bhopal and Raisen districts in Madhya Pradesh; Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Ahmedabad districts in Gujarat and Araria district in Bihar, Bhaktal and Tumkur City districts in Karnataka, Kolhapur and Nanded districts in Maharashtra and Deoband districts in Uttar Pradesh.

The case was registered suo-moto by NIA on June 25, 2022, under sections 153A, and 153B of IPC and sections

18, 18B, 38, 39 & 40 of UA (P) Act.

The searches conducted today have led to the seizure of incriminating documents/material. Further investigations in the case are in progress. Moreover, the probe agency has been conducting raids at multiple locations in Bihar including Nalanda district since Thursday morning in connection with the Phulwari Sharif case having links with extremist outfit Popular Front of India (PFI).

The sources said that these raids were conducted almost a week after the NIA registered a case and started a thorough probe into the case. It is being told that the places where these raids are being carried out, all these places belong to people associated with the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

The raids which are being

conducted for the last three hours, the NIA team is searching the entire house and everything is being investigated. According to the information received from the sources, many people have been taken into custody so far. Heavy security personnel have been deployed in the area. The NIA registered the case on July 22 night under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act following an order issued by the Counter Terrorism and Counter Radicalisation division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directing the agency to take over the investigation from Bihar Police.

The PFI "terror module" case was recently unearthed by Bihar Police with the arrest of three people for their alleged links with the group and their plans to indulge in "anti-India" activities.

LASHKAR TERRORIST KILLED IN KASHMIR GUNFIGHT

Srinagar: The terrorist, who was killed in a gunfight with the security forces in the Binner area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district, has been identified as a local member of the proscribed outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), officials said on Sunday.

"Killed terrorist has been identified as Irshad Ahmad Bhat of Pattan Baramulla, active since 5/2022 and linked with proscribed terrorist outfit LeT. One AK rifle, 2 magazines and 30 rounds recovered," police said in a tweet.

Earlier, the gunfight started after a joint team of police and security forces got an input about the presence of terrorists in that area.

The security forces cordoned off the area. And the terrorists hiding there started firing drawing retaliation by the security forces. There have been a series of encounters between the terrorists and security forces across Kashmir over the last few months. Many terrorists and their commanders have been eliminated. Most of the operations have been jointly conducted by the police and the Army on the basis of specific intelligence inputs. One terrorist was killed and two Army jawans and a policeman were injured in an encounter in the Wanigan Bala area in Baramulla on Saturday.

OFFERED MONEY TO TOPPLE JHARKHAND GOVT, CALLED TO MEET ASSAM CM: CONG MLA

New Delhi / Ranchi | Agencies

A Congress MLA from Jharkhand on Sunday alleged that his three fellow legislators, who were caught in West Bengal with cash, had asked him to meet Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati for negotiation to topple the JMM-Congress government in the state.

Congress' Berimo MLA Kumar Jaimangal alias Anoop Singh lodged a complaint regarding officer.

He alleged that Congress MLAs Naman Vixal Kongadi and Rajesh Kachhap called him to Kolkata and offered him money, promising Rs 10 crore per MLA.

"Irfan Ansari and Rajesh Kachchap want me to come to Kolkata and then take me to

Guwahati where they will make me meet Himanta Biswa Sarma who will give me assurance of a definite ministerial berth, apart from the money. Ansari has told me that he has already been promised the Health Ministry in the new government. He also told me that he shall be reaching Kolkata on Saturday afternoon," he alleged.

"He also said that he will get money transferred to him, once he reaches Guwahati and promises it in front of the Assam CM. He assured me that Sarma is doing it with the blessings of top shots of BJP in Delhi," Jaimangal

"I do not want to be part of this unconstitutional, illegal and downright criminal activity and hence informing you that please take action against them who

are in Kolkata with token amount and pressurising me to come to Kolkata and accompany them to Guwahati," he alleged.

Congress on Sunday suspended the three MLAs caught with cash on Saturday in West Bengal for anti-party activities.

Addressing a press conference, party General Secretary and Jharkhand in-charge Avinash Pandey said: "The three MLAs are suspended with immediate effect."

On Saturday, three Congress MLAs from Jharkhand - Ansari, Kongadi and Kachhap - were detained in West Bengal's Howrah district by the police after cash worth more than Rs 48 lakh was seized from a vehicle in which all of them were travelling.

Govt prepares to turn the tables on Oppn over price rise, inflation

Team Absolute | New Delhi



The opposition parties keep targeting the BJP government at the Centre for rising inflation in the country. Since July 18, when the Monsoon session of Parliament opened, the opposition has been incessantly creating a ruckus in both the houses of the Parliament demanding a discussion on the issue of GST on food items and inflation. Leaving aside the proceedings of July 28 and 29 (when there was an uproar in both houses over the statement of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury), for eight consecutive days, there was a commotion in the Parliament over inflation and GST.

The opposition parties may feel that they can expose the government by discussing inflation and GST imposed on food items, but instead of being defensive about the matter, the government is batting it aggressively. While the leaders of opposition parties are preparing to grill the government with their list of questions, BJP and its ministers have geared up for the duel.

A senior minister told IANS that the opposition is extracting political mileage from the issues of inflation and GST. The opposition ministers of

their respective state governments supported the proposal for GST in the GST Council meeting but outside, these political parties pretend to oppose. He said that if the issue is raised in the House, then the opposition will be exposed.

The BJP has a long list of questions ready for discussion in the Parliament. The government will put forth the questions to the parties that are creating an uproar - primarily Congress, TMC, TRS, DMK, AAP and Left - about what their state governments have done so far to bring relief to people in the face of inflation. Why did

their state governments not reduce VAT on petrol and diesel as on the lines of NDA governments? Regarding the political ruckus over GST imposed on food items, the government is ready to question the opposition about how the ministers of the state governments of Congress, TMC, TRS, DMK, AAP and Left allowed the GST Council to pass this resolution unanimously. "After all, what kind of politics is this that the same resolution which the ministers unanimously passed in the GST Council meeting are now opposing it vehemently and not allowing the proceedings of the house

to continue," the source said.

It is learnt that citing the rate of inflation during UPA regime, the government will also stand by the fact that despite the global crisis, due to the efforts of the Modi government, the inflation rate in India has remained between 4-6 per cent on an average. In contrast, the rate of inflation has increased from one-and-a-half per cent to 11 per cent in America and European countries. Despite all the difficulties and global problems, the rate of inflation in India is around 7 per cent which is very low as compared to the global situation.

After two weeks of uproar in the Parliament, on Monday, the issue of inflation would be discussed in Lok Sabha under Rule-193. Notice has been given by Congress MP Manish Tewari and Shiv Sena MP Vinayak Raut to discuss the issue of inflation under Rule 193, which has been accepted. The opposition parties may want to corner the government on the pretext of this discussion, but the source is confident that BJP, which specialises in surprising the opposition parties, is now working on a strategy to expose the opposition by raising counter-questions on the same issue.

Ahead of SC hearing, ED swoops on Sena MP Sanjay Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day before the Supreme Court hearing on MLAs disqualification issues, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) swooped on Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut here on Sunday.

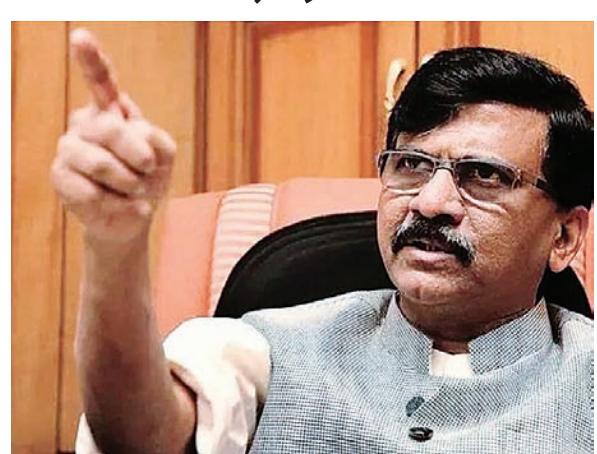
A team of ED along with a posse of police and Central security agency landed at Raut's Bhandup residence at dawn as part of the investigations into the Patra Chawl land scam case.

Raut tweeted: "Shiv Sena zindabad. Will keep fighting", even as scores of his supporters staged a sit-in protest outside his home.

The ED has in the past recorded the statements of Raut and his wife Varsha Raut.

Earlier, the ED had attached properties worth Rs 9 crore linked to Raut's aide Pravin Raut besides assets valued at around Rs 2 crore, belonging to his wife Varsha.

The stormy petrel of Shiv Sena, Raut (60), is a four-time MP and Shiv Sena's Parliamentary Party leader, faces a case that has been



registered against him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act vis-a-vis the Rs 1,034 crore land scam.

Sena Mumbai South MP Arvind Sawant termed the ED action as "an act of vengeance done with political motive".

He also said that both Raut and his wife had appeared before the ED and their statements have been recorded.

Congress Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe slammed the raids and said that now all the Central agen-

cies have become "political tools" of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to harass politicians and opponents.

Nationalist Congress Party's Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar declined to comment saying that he has not got the full details of the ED action against Raut.

BJP's Kirit Somaiya, Ram Kadam and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Group MLAs welcomed the ED action on the Sena leader.

Detailed report on Maharashtra page

Prez, PM congratulate Jeremy Lalrinnunga for bagging gold at CWG

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Heartiest congratulations to @raltejeremy for bagging a gold medal in Men's 67kg weightlifting competition at @birminghamcg22. My best wishes for his future endeavours." Congratulating Lalrinnunga, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, "Our Yuva Shakti is creating history! Congratulations to @raltejeremy, who has won a Gold in his very first CWG and has set a phenomenal CWG record as well. At a young age he's brought immense pride and glory. Best wishes to him for his future endeavours."

millions. Your podium finish has filled Indians with pride. Wishing you more such moments of glory." Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, in a tweet, said, "Our weightlifters continue to make India proud with their stupendous performances."

INDIA TO UNLOCK TRADE POTENTIAL WITH CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH CHABAHAR: SONOWAL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India will be unlocking trade potential with the Central Asian region through the use of Chabahar Port in Iran, Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Sunday.

"Our vision is to make Chabahar Port a transit hub under the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to reach out to CIS countries," he said in his address on 'Chabahar Day', where Indian officials interacted with the high-level diplomatic dele-

gation from Central Asian countries. Chabahar Day is celebrated to mark the beginning of INSTC - an Indian vision to economic movement of cargo between India and Central Asia. The Chabahar Port located in Iran is the commercial transit centre for the region and especially Central Asia. The high level diplomatic delegation present on the occasion included representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and others.

First Information Reports (FIRs) were lodged against the threats and had been assigned to the Special Task Force STF by DGP P.K. Agrawal to investigate.

4 Hr MLAs received death threat calls from Middle East: Police

Chandigarh | Agencies

Four legislators in Haryana received death threat and extortion calls from multiple phone numbers tracing to the countries in the Middle East from June 24 to 28, the police said on Sunday.

First Information Reports (FIRs) were lodged against the threats and had been assigned to the Special Task Force STF by DGP P.K. Agrawal to investigate.

Technical analysis of these mobiles has confirmed that these numbers are registered in the Middle Eastern countries and were being operated from Pakistan, said an official statement.

Some former legislators of Punjab

had also received similar threats from these numbers.

Different tones and conversational styles, like Mumbai tone and Punjabi language, were used during these conversations with these legislators.

IGP (STF) Satish Balan had formed an SIT under the leadership of SP (STF) Sumit Kumar to investigate these cases.

The two-week long operation was personally monitored and supervised by DGP Agrawal. In this context the DGP was aided by central agencies. STF conducted a technical analysis of these mobile numbers and IP addresses.

This involved five separate teams working on this technical analysis.

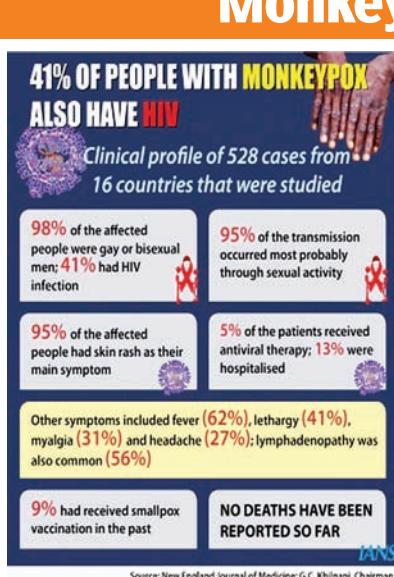
MAN IN TN WITH SKIN RASH KEPT IN ISOLATION

Chennai | Agencies

A 35-year-old man who arrived at Tiruchi airport on Friday and had a skin rash -- a symptom of monkeypox, is kept in isolation at Pudukkottai Medical College Hospital in Tamil Nadu.

The man was sent to Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital, Tiruchi on Friday but he went missing from the place. The hospital authorities informed the police and the health department about it. Later, he was found at his residence in Pudukkottai on Saturday and taken to the Medical College Hospital there.

The authorities instructed the family of the person to isolate themselves until a complete diagnosis is made. The hospital authorities told media persons that the person has not displayed any symptoms of monkeypox in the initial diagnosis. Doctors said that the rashes found on the skin could be due to some skin ailment. The doctors also told media persons that he was kept in isolation at the hospital as a precautionary case and that his swab samples have been sent to the National Virology Institute, Pune for testing. He would be kept in isolation till the test report of his swab samples is received.



SUSPECTED MONKEYPOX DEATH: KERALA HEALTH DEPT WAITING FOR VIROLOGY LAB REPORT

Thiruvananthapuram: After a 22-year-old youth who reached Palakkad district of Kerala from a middle eastern country died on Sunday, the state health department has asked the district health officials to create a route map of

Team Absolute | New Delhi

TWO WEEKS WASHED OUT IN PARLIAMENT, 32 BILLS REMAIN PENDING

The Centre had listed 32 Bills for passing in Parliament in this Monsoon Session, but after two weeks there is less sign of completing the government business following the face-off with the Opposition on the issue of GST hiked rates and inflation.

During the Monsoon Session so far, the Lok Sabha has worked approximately 16 hours and the Rajya Sabha 11 hours, however the Houses were scheduled to work for six hours daily. During the face-off, four Lok Sabha members and 23 Rajya Sabha members were suspended and in the last two days of the past week, the government was up against the Opposition on

the remark against the President issue.

Amid the din, the government cleared the anti-doping Bill and Family Court Bill in the Lok Sabha.

Now, the government sources say they are ready to discuss the price rise issue, but the Opposition is in no mood to relent and it is unlikely that the Houses will see a smooth functioning. The Congress has called a nationwide protest on August 5 against the price rise.

The government had emphasized that it is ready for discussion. Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha, Piyush Goyal, had said, "We are ready for discussion, but despite that the opposition members are repeatedly disrupting the House proceed-

ings. We have been saying that we are hopeful that as soon as the Finance Minister gets well, the discussion on the price rise will take place." However, the Opposition is slamming the government, alleging that it is not willing to hold discussion and is trying to corner the opposition.

A total 27 MPs have been suspended as the government seems to be in no mood to relent. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh tweeted, "With the suspension of Opposition MPs from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, it is abundantly clear that Modi Sarkar is in no mood to allow the Opposition to raise Real, URGENT issues being faced by the people of our country in Parliament."

Meanwhile, Congress' Bermo region MLA Kumar Jaimangal alias Anoop Singh lodged an FIR against these three MLAs at Argora police station in Ranchi on Sunday morning, accusing them of conspiracy to topple the state government.

On Saturday evening, three Congress MLAs from Jharkhand - Dr. Irfan Ansari, Rajesh Kachhap and Naman Vixal Kongadi - were caught with bags of notes at Rani Haat of Panchla police station under Howrah district of West Bengal. When the notes were counted, the total amount was found

Cong suspends 3 MLAs, FIR filed for conspiracy to topple Jharkhand govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi | Ranchi

Congress on Sunday suspended its three Jharkhand MLAs - Dr. Irfan Ansari, Naman Vixal Kongadi and Rajesh Kachhap - who were caught with a large amount of cash in Howrah district of West Bengal, for anti-party activities.

Addressing a press conference, Jharkhand Congress in-charge and party's general secretary Avinash Pandey said that the top leadership of the party has taken this decision in view of the allegations against the three MLAs.

Meanwhile, Congress' Bermo region MLA Kumar Jaimangal alias Anoop Singh lodged an FIR against these three MLAs at Argora police station in Ranchi on Sunday morning, accusing them of conspiracy to topple the state government.

On Saturday evening, three Congress MLAs from Jharkhand - Dr. Irfan Ansari, Rajesh Kachhap and Naman Vixal Kongadi - were caught with bags of notes at Rani Haat of Panchla police station under Howrah district of West Bengal. When the notes were counted, the total amount was found



to be Rs 48 lakh. These three MLAs were travelling in an SUV along with two other associates.

On the basis of intelligence inputs, the West Bengal police caught them during checking. This SUV had the board of Jamtara MLA of Jharkhand. It is reported that the three MLAs who were taken into police custody could not give clear information about the cash found

from the vehicle. Jharkhand Congress Legislator Party leader Alamgir Alam said "It is the tradition of the Congress Constitution that if any MLA of the party is found involved in anti-party activities, he/she is immediately suspended. All the three MLAs have been suspended under the rule of the Constitution. Now the whole matter is being investigated. They will also be interrogated. Whatever comes out in the investigation, the party will take further action at the same level." Congress MLA Anoop Singh has given a written complaint in this regard at Argora police station in Ranchi, on the basis of which FIR has been registered. Congress state president Rajesh Thakur was also accompanied by MLA Anoop Singh, who came to register the FIR. Earlier, the Congress alleged that 'Operation Lotus' stands exposed, which is meant to topple the alliance governments in the state.

The Congress has sought a report from its state unit. "The game plan of 'Hum Do' in Delhi is to do in Jharkhand what they did in Maharashtra by installing E-D duo," tweeted Jairam Ramesh.

Heroin valued at Rs 8 crore seized in Assam

Guwahati | Agencies



The Assam police on Sunday seized heroin valued at around Rs 8 crore, and arrested two persons on charges of drug peddling from Bokajan area of Karbi Anglong district.

The Congress has sought a report from its state unit. "The game plan of 'Hum Do' in Delhi is to do in Jharkhand what they did in Maharashtra by installing E-D duo," tweeted Jairam Ramesh. On Saturday, three Congress MLAs from Jharkhand were detained in West Bengal's Howrah district by the police after cash worth more than Rs 48 lakh was seized from a vehicle in which all of them were travelling. The vehicle belonged to one of the three Congress legislators who was arrested on Saturday evening along with the other two party MLAs.

The three detained Congress MLAs - Irfan Ansari from Jamtara Assembly constituency, Rajesh Kachchap from Khijri (Scheduled Tribe) Assembly constituency and Naman Vixal Kongari from Kolebira (Scheduled Tribe) Assembly constituency. They have told the police that the cash was meant for purchasing sarees from the renowned wholesale market at Burrabazar in central Kolkata.

Police held two persons who were in the vehicle. They were identified as Soleman Thuyer and Simaan Thuyer.

According to sources, the duo transported the contraband from

Dimapur and may have had a plan to head towards Guwahati. A case has been registered against them under the NDPS Act and further investigation is underway, an official added.

Notably, the Assam police on Saturday torched the drugs worth rupees more than Rs 2,000 crore that were seized in the last few months from different locations of the state.

Drug peddling has gone up in the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts in recent times and it is a matter of concern.

Court remands 3 Jharkhand MLAs to 10-day CID custody in Bengal

Kolkata | Agencies

Three Congress MLAs, who were nabbed with huge quantities of cash by the West Bengal police at Panchla in Howrah district on late Saturday evening, were remanded to 10 days Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody by a lower court on Sunday afternoon.

The three MLAs are Irfan Ansari from Jamtara, Rajesh Kachchap from Khijri (ST) and Naman Vixal Kongari from Kolebira (ST). Besides the three MLAs, one more person travelling with them and driver of the vehicle where the cash was seized was also remanded to the CID custody for 10 days. The vehicle had the board of Jamtara MLA, Irfan Ansari. A little over Rs 49 lakh was seized from that vehicle.

On Sunday morning, a special team of CID - West Bengal officials reached Panchla police station, where the three MLAs were interrogated throughout the day about the sources of this huge cash. After the court order, the CID team took the three MLAs, the driver and the fifth person travelling in the car to the CID headquarters at Bhabani Bhavan in



Kolkata. "They will be interrogated again by us tonight only," confirmed a CID official.

However, all the three MLAs are sticking to their earlier point that they represent tribal-dominated constituencies in Jharkhand and they came to Kolkata to purchase sarees in large quantities from Burrabazar wholesale market for the purpose of

distribution in their respective constituencies on the occasion of the forthcoming World Tribal Day on August 9, 2022.

However, the police have not found their statements convincing as none of them could specify on the sources of the funds. Meanwhile, Congress has already suspended these three MLAs from the party.

'OPERATION LOTUS' EXPOSED IN JHARKHAND, SAYS CONG

New Delhi: After its three MLAs from Jharkhand were caught with huge cash in West Bengal, the Congress has alleged that "operation lotus" stands exposed, which is meant to topple the alliance governments in the state.

The Congress has sought a report from its state unit. "The game plan of 'Hum Do' in Delhi is to do in Jharkhand what they did in Maharashtra by installing E-D duo," tweeted Jairam Ramesh. On Saturday, three Congress MLAs from Jharkhand were detained in West Bengal's Howrah district by the police after cash worth more than Rs 48 lakh was seized from a vehicle in which all of them were travelling. The vehicle belonged to one of the three Congress legislators who was arrested on Saturday evening along with the other two party MLAs.

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K'taka serial killings: Muslim bodies slam Bommai govt for 'partial' treatment

Dakshina Kannada (Karnataka) | Agencies

Muslim organisations have slammed the preferential treatment of the ruling BJP government in terms of providing compensation to families of slain Muslim and Hindu youths in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.

Following the death of Praveen Kumar Nettare, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai visited the family and issued a cheque of Rs 25 lakh as compensation from the government. The party had also given Rs 25 lakh separately to the victim's family.

However, CM Bommai did not visit the family of Masood, who was killed by a gang of eight persons. Masood's family lived 5 kilometers away from Praveen's residence. The family of Mohammad Fazil Mangalpet, who was brutally killed after Praveen's murder, has also not received any compensation.

The Muslim Central Committee has decided to provide Rs 30 lakh compensation each to the bereaved families of Masood and Fazil. The committee has slammed CM Bommai and ruling BJP for paying visit only to Praveen's residence and not bothering to



sympathise with the other two families. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Karnataka unit has stated that the ruling BJP is adopting a divide and rule policy. Its state chief Dr Mohammad Saad Belagami said that due to the partial treatment of the ruling BJP, fundamentalist organisations are getting empowered. The government should treat all communities on an equal basis, he said.

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He also spoke of 'Azadi Ki Railgadi, Aur Railway Station', an effort to make people understand the role of Indian Railways in the freedom struggle. "Seventy-five such railway stations have been identified spread over 24 states across the country. These stations are being decorated very ornately. Many types of programs are also being organized in these. I urge the students of the nearby school, and the teachers to take the small children of their school to the station and narrate the whole chain of events to those children, explaining them."

Modi also said that farmers are performing

Postage stamp to be released in memory of Pingali Venkayya

The Central government will release a special commemorative postage stamp in memory of Pingali Venkayya, the designer of the national flag, on August 2.

Vijayawada | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the stamp at a programme to be held in New Delhi to mark the birth anniversary of the freedom fighter.

This was announced by union minister for tourism and culture G. Kishan Reddy here on Sunday. He revealed that the original flag designed by Pingali will be displayed at the event.

The Central government has invited family members of Pingali for the programme to be held in the national capital. Union home minister Amit Shah will honour them. The Prime Minister will also interact with the family members of

Pingali.

Born near Machilipatnam on August 2, 1876, Pingali had designed many models of the national flag. In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi approved a design during the Indian National Congress meeting in Vijayawada. Kishan Reddy noted that there is a demand to confer Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, on Pingali Venkayya.

The minister said he had no information about the Andhra Pradesh government sending a proposal to the Centre in this regard.

"The issue will be examined and an appropriate decision will be taken," he said.

Kishan Reddy said the programme was being organised at a time when India was celebrating 75 years of independence.

The Central government is organising a 'Har

Ghar Tiranga' campaign to mark 75 years of independence. Tiranga yatra will be held in Delhi on August 3. The union minister said the state governments, non-governmental organisations and all political parties have been asked to organise the celebrations in every village, city, town and every street in the name of Prabhat Pheri from August 9 to August 13. He said since a large-scale massacre took place on August 14 during India's partition, programmes will be organised on that day to pay tributes to those who lost their lives. Candle light marches will also be taken out.

He appealed to people to hoist tricolour on every house on August 15. Kishan Reddy also revealed that the Central government has decided to organise birth centenary celebrations of well-known composer Ghantasala.

Put Tricolour as social media pic from Aug 2, says PM Modi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday suggested people to put the Tricolour as profile pictures on their social media accounts from August 2.

Addressing his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', the Prime Minister said: "I have a suggestion that from August 2 to 15, all of us can place the Tricolor in our social media profile pictures."

He said that under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative, a programme called 'Har Ghar Tiranga' will be organised from August 13-15. "By becoming a part of this movement, from August 13 to 15, you must hoist the Tricolor at your residence, or adorn your home with it. The Tricolor connects us, inspires us to do something for the country," Modi said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that August 2 also has a special connection with our Tricolor.

"This day is the birth anniversary of Pingali Venkayya ji who designed our national flag. I pay my respectful homage to him. Talking about

our national flag, I will also remember the great revolutionary Madam Cama. Her role in shaping the Tricolor has been very important," he said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is taking the form of a mass movement and people from all walks of life and from every section of the society are participating in the initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence.

He also spoke of 'Azadi Ki Railgadi, Aur Railway Station', an effort to make people understand the role of Indian Railways in the freedom struggle. "Seventy-five such railway stations have been identified spread over 24 states across the country. These stations are being decorated very ornately. Many types of programs are also being organized in these. I urge the students of the nearby school, and the teachers to take the small children of their school to the station and narrate the whole chain of events to those children, explaining them."

Modi also said that farmers are performing

similar wonders in the production of honey which in turn is increasing their income.

"The country started campaigns like the 'National Beekeeping and Honey Mission' and farmers worked hard... The sweetness of our honey started reaching across the world. There are still huge possibilities in this field. I would like our youth to join these opportunities and take advantage of them and realize new possibilities," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that India has full potential to become a powerhouse in toy exports. "Today, when it comes to Indian toys, the echo of Vocal for Local is being heard everywhere. You will also like to know that now the number of toys coming from abroad in India is continuously decreasing. Earlier, where toys worth more than Rs 3,000 crore used to come from outside, now their import has reduced by 70 per cent and it is a matter of joy that during this period, India has exported toys worth more than Rs 2,600 crore to foreign countries. Whereas earlier, only toys worth Rs 300-400 crore used to go out of India," he added.

TN to promulgate ordinance to ban online games

Chennai | Agencies

Tamil Nadu government is set to promulgate an ordinance with immediate effect to ban online games that include betting and gambling and also regulate games that are addictive in nature by restricting the time and money spent on them. A high-level committee constituted by the state government headed by retired Judge of Madras High Court, Justice K Chandru had recommended the banning of online games. The committee submitted its report to Chief Minister MK Stalin on June 27. State Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu had held a meeting of top officials on Saturday to bring out a ban on online betting

and gambling but will not go for a strict ban on all online games. Instead, the government is planning to restrict and regulate the games and limit the time spent on online games to one a day or once in a week. The amount of money to be spent on online games will also be restricted. Seventeen people have committed suicide in the past three years due to online games. The committee constituted by the government has given a report that online games have turned into an addiction in nature for those playing and money is lost in huge volumes. The Central government is also in discussions with the states to bring in new legislation or changes in the existing legislation to regulate the

industry. A study by the Union government has pegged the number of people playing online games in the country at 400 million and expected to reach 700 million by 2025. Several political parties in the state including Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) have been vociferously campaigning in the state for effecting a ban in the state for online games.

However, sources in the government told IANS that if a total ban is implemented, it would lead to several legal battles, and hence it is contemplating a regulation of the game and to allow only a restricted amount to be spent in a fixed period of time to play online games.



SENA MP SANJAY RAUT DETAILED, ED WHISKED HIM OFF FOR PATRA CHAWL SCAM PROBE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) detained Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut in connection with an alleged money-laundering case in the Patra Chawl land scam, here on Sunday evening.

He was earlier grilled for several hours prior to shifting him to the ED office for further action -- with arrest not ruled out -- on alleged grounds of 'non-cooperation' with the probe.

As he was escorted out of his 'Maitri' bungalow, Raut waved at the hundreds of supporters waiting outside, while his wife Varsha, mother and other family members looked on grimly.

En route, Raut told a private news channel on phone that he was "fully cooperating with the ED" and would not be cowed down by the political tactics employed to destroy the Shiv Sena.

"I am not scared... There's no question of non-cooperation with the law, I am ready to sacrifice myself for the Shiv Sena. The ED team came without giving any notice early morning, no papers have been found from me on this so-called case," Raut said.

He reiterated that he was being pressurised in the past to help topple the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi government (which fell on June 29), and termed the ED allegations against him



as 'false', declaring he would not bend before anybody, but continue to fight against the Bharatiya Janata Party. Raut said that he had sought time from the ED since he was tied up in the upcoming Vice-Presidential elections for which he was coordinating with various Opposition parties.

"The party is behind me, Uddhav Thackeray is supporting me... We shall not surrender before such pressures, intended to silence us and finish off Shiv Sena," Raut declared.

Earlier, his brother MLA Sunil Raut told a private news channel that the ED could not locate certain documents pertaining to the Patra Chawl case, leading to Sanjay Raut's detention and he would be taken to the ED offices. The ED action came after its

sleuths swooped on Raut's Bhandup residence, 'Maitri' at dawn on Sunday and carried out searches for over 9 hours. The developments followed Raut skipping two ED summons and then seeking time till August 7 as he was tied up in parliament-related commitments. Hundreds of Shiv Sainiks converged outside and staged protests, raised slogans and condemned the detention and arrest of Raut.

The ED move comes a day ahead of the crucial hearing before the Supreme Court pertaining to the disqualification of 16 rebel Shiv Sena MLAs which could chart the further course of Maharashtra politics, in an upheaval since June 20.

The government had deployed tight

security by the Mumbai Police and Central Reserve Police Force, to avoid any untoward incident.

ED had earlier questioned Pune businessman Avinash Bholase into custody in DHFL Yes Bank case, and sources claimed that they wanted to grill Raut in this matter too.

Sources claimed that Patra Chawl case of ED is also linked to DHFL case. Raut earlier took to Twitter to allege that he was being victimised on the instructions of the Centre.

In April, the ED had attached Raut's property in connection with the land scam. A property worth Rs 9 crore of Raut's associate Pravin Raut and assets worth Rs 2 crore belonging to Varsha Raut, the wife of Sanjay Raut, were attached by the ED.

Pravin had eight land parcels in Alibaug and a flat registered in the name of Varsha Raut which were attached.

The ED had arrested Pravin in connection with the matter.

"We had filed a chargesheet in the matter against Pravin, Sarang Wadhwani and Rakesh Wadhwani of HDIL and Guru Ashish Construction and others were named as an accused in the chargesheet," said an ED official.

The ED came to know during the probe that Pravin allegedly paid Rs 55 lakh to Varsha. This was paid from the bank account of Pravin's wife.

'A MINORITY TYRANNY WITHIN THE HOUSE', SHINDE OPPOSES UDDHAV FACTION IN SC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Constitution gives sole discretionary powers to the Governor to appoint the CM.

"The immunity of the Governor is absolute and beyond the writ jurisdiction of this court. Therefore, appointment of the Chief Minister by the Governor cannot be questioned before this court through a petition under Article 32... This power is subject to the Chief Minister proving his majority on the floor of the House, which admittedly the respondent No. 4 has already proved through a completely valid floor test," said Shinde's common counter-affidavit to the petitions filed by Subhash Desai and Sunil Prabhu, the general secretary and the chief whip of the Shiv Sena appointed by Uddhav Thackeray.

Shinde's plea contend that accepting the argument of the Uddhav Thackeray's faction would result in: 'A minority tyranny within the House; anti-democratic and minority Government to continue illegally in office; a Chief Minister, who has lost the confidence of his own party to continue in the office'.

The petition, filed through advocate Abhikpal Pratap Singh, said petitions filed by Uddhav Thackeray's faction clearly demonstrates that the issues being agitated before the top court have become infructuous by the resignation of the then CM.

On the aspect of actions of the Governor, Shinde's plea said Article 164 of the

submits that the appointment of a Chief Minister by the Governor, who subsequently proved his majority through a completely valid floor test on the floor of the House, cannot be called into question before any Court," added the plea.

It added, "In a parliamentary form of democracy, the underlying basis for testing the validity/invalidity of any action is numbers. A group of 15, cannot call a group of 39 as rebels/delinquent. It is in fact the other way around."

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana, Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli will hear the petitions on August 3.

Uddhav Thackeray's faction filed the petitions challenging the decision of the Governor to swear-in Eknath Shinde as the CM, the election of Rahul Narvekar as the Speaker, the recognition of Bharat Gogawale (appointed by Shinde group as the chief whip of Shiv Sena) and against the disqualification proceedings initiated by the newly elected Speaker against the MLAs of Uddhav group for voting in alleged violation of the whip.

Record 62 patients of BA.4 and BA.5, 79 of BA.2.75 sub-variant of Omicron detected-

As per the latest report from Pune's BJ Medical College, 62 patients comprising 52 of BA.5 and 10 of BA.4 have been found in Maharashtra on Sunday. Along with these patients, 79 patients of the BA.2.75 variant of Omicron were also detected in the state.

Team Absolute | Pune

According to the state public health department, while 8 cases of BA.2.75 were from Solapur, all remaining cases were from Pune.

Detailed epidemiological investigation of these cases was underway, it added.

This has taken the BA.4

and BA.5 patients' tally to 258 and that of BA.2.75 to 199 in the state.

The district-wise BA.4 and BA.5 patients included Pune 163, Mumbai 51, Thane 16, Raigad 7, Sangli 5, Nagpur 8, Palghar 4 and Kolhapur 2.

The district wise 2.74 patients comprised Pune 127, Nagpur 33, Yavatmal 12, Solapur 8, Mumbai 5, Akola 4, Thane 3, Washim 2 and Amravati, Buldhana, Jalna, Latur and Sangli one each.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) last week designated the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron sub-variants as variants of concern (VOC) and said they could fuel increases in infections.

So far 10 states have reported cases of BA.2.75 variant including Delhi and Maharashtra, which saw a massive surge in infections during previous COVID-19 waves.

"If Gujaratis and Rajasthani are removed from Maharashtra, especially Mumbai and

Thane, no money would be left here," he said.

"Mumbai would not be able to remain the financial capital of the country," the Governor said.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) state President and former Maharashtra Cabinet minister condemned Bhagat Singh Koshyari's remarks and said that Mumbai was standing on the hard work of Marathi workers.

In a tweet, the former water resources minister of Maharashtra said that certain dignitaries seemed to be trying hard to please their bosses in Delhi. "The governor is insulting the Marathi people of Maharashtra by staying in a five-star system. Is this statement acceptable to BJP in Maharashtra? Why is the governor repeatedly insulting the Marathi people and the glorious history of Maharashtra?" asked Jayant Patil.

"People who love other states should go there happily," Jayant Patil said.

"Mumbai has money not because of people from other states, Mumbai is standing on the hard work of Marathi workers of this

state," he added.

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole also condemned the governor's remark and called for his immediate removal.

"We condemn the remarks made by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. He should apologise to the public. He should be removed from his position with immediate effect," Patole said.

Congress leader Sachin Sawant said the insult of the Marathi people by the governor of Maharashtra is terrible. He said, "It is terrible that the Governor of a state defames the people of the same state. During his reign, the level of the institution of the Governor and the political tradition of Maharashtra has not only deteriorated, but Maharashtra has also been continuously disrespected."

Bhagat Singh Koshyari in his speech praised the Marwari Gujarati community and said that wherever they go, they contribute to the development of the place by creating hospitals, schools, etc. Earlier on Thursday, the NCP's state chief Jayant Patil took a dig at the delayed allotment of portfolios by the Eknath

Shinde government in Maharashtra and said only a "two-man cabinet" was functional and problems of people due to the flood-like situation and other issues were being ignored.

Jayant Patil also suggested that differences between the alliance partners - BJP and Shiv Sena's Shinde faction - could be the reason for the delay in portfolio allotments.

The NCP leader's comments come at a time when the BJP and the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena have come together to form the government in Maharashtra. While key portfolios are yet to be distributed, Eknath Shinde has taken over as the chief minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis has assumed office as deputy chief minister.

Jayant Patil termed the state of affairs a 'sad' one and said just a two-man cabinet was in place. "The oath ceremony was on June 30. It has been nearly a month but still, cabinet expansion has not taken place, only chief minister and deputy chief minister are functioning as the whole state cabinet. It's still a two-man cabinet of the Maharashtra Government," the NCP leader said.

Maharashtra govt asks cooperation dept to ensure all housing societies hoist tricolour on Aug 15

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government has asked the state cooperation department to ensure that every housing society hoists the tricolour for Independence Day on August 15 as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, an official said on Sunday.



ed to ensure that every cooperative housing society hoists the tricolour in its premises.

All the government and semi-government buildings have been asked to hoist the tricolour, while the theatres and cinema halls have to play songs and jingles of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the order stated.

Software to verify authenticity of sports certificates of government job aspirants

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Candidates submitting fake sports certificates to join government jobs have been menace for long, but now a software has been developed to check the authenticity of these documents and bring transparency in the recruitment process.

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has come up with an application that would verify the authenticity of sports certificates submitted by candidates at the time of applying for jobs in Maharashtra government departments. "The software is in its final stage of testing and will go live soon," Om Prakash Bakoria, Maharashtra sports commissioner said. There is a five per cent quota, for the candidates who have won at least state-level tournaments, in all departments of the

Maharashtra government. However, in March this year the then-Maharashtra sports minister Sunil Kedar had admitted in the state Assembly that several people had produced fake sports certificates to get government jobs. At present, the process to verify genuineness of sports certificates submitted by government job aspirants under the five per cent quota is tedious and time-consuming.

Once a candidate applies for a government job via sports quota, he or she has to submit a proper certificate of his/her excellence. However, the number of recognised sports (to qualify for benefit under quota) by the government, its several tournaments held in various parts of Maharashtra or the country and their certificates - in itself is a huge data to process.

"There is no standard format of design, size or shape of the certificate issued by sports organisations. It is nearly impossible for the scrutiny officer to verify genuineness of such documents in a short period of time," said a senior official in the state sports commission. This is where the NIC software is going to be of big help to authorities involved in recruitment process. "The NIC was brought in to fix the problem," Bakoria said, adding, "Certificates submitted by athletes will be uploaded on NIC's cloud storage platform called 'Meghraj'. Its current capacity of storing data is 70 GB and will be increased gradually as more certificates are digitised." "We are planning to go live with the new software on August 8. Once we go live, every new certificate will have a QR code. It can be scanned anywhere and by

any officer to check its authenticity," he explained. Job aspirants will be kept in the loop during the certificate verification process. "When a candidate submits his sports certificate while applying for a government job, the department concerned, with the help of the software, will update the applicant with SMS from time to time about verification stages. When the certificate is accepted or declined by the software, it will be intimated immediately to the applicant," the sports commissioner said. Asked about the size of data the sports commissionerate will be handling, Bakoria said, "In the last calendar year, as many as 19,000 certificates were issued. The number of certificates to be issued every year will vary and depend on how many sports tournaments have been organized in that year."

ELLORA CAVES TO BECOME FIRST MONUMENT IN THE COUNTRY TO GET HYDRAULIC LIFT: ASI

Aurangabad | Agencies

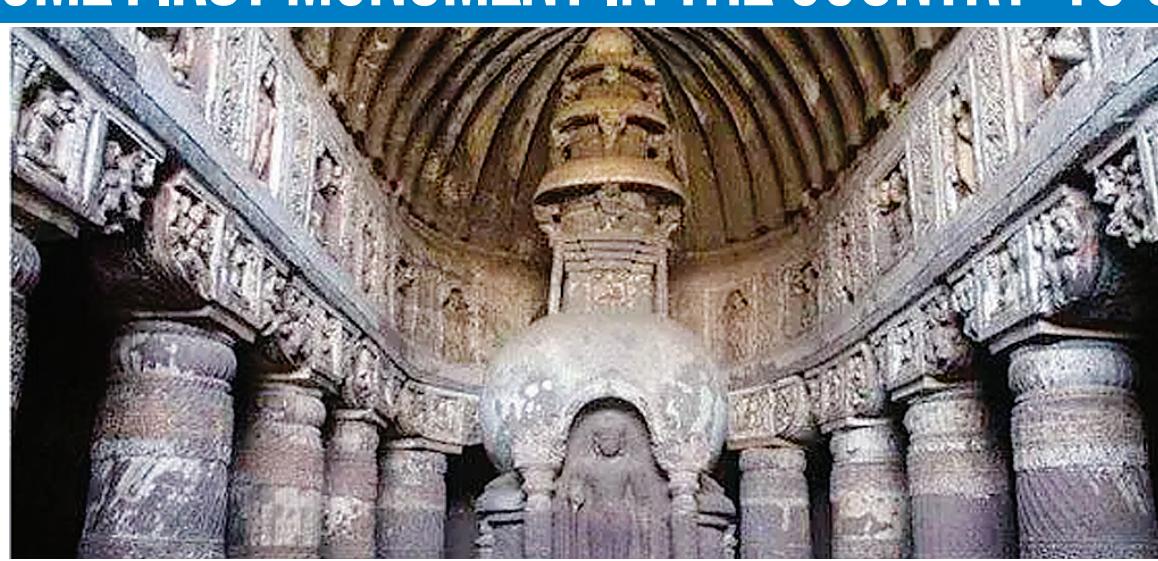
Ellora Caves, the UNESCO world heritage site in Aurangabad district, will become the first monument in the country to have a hydraulic lift, a senior official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) said on Sunday.

Situated around 30 km from Aurangabad city, Ellora is the one of the largest rock-cut temple complexes in the world, housing Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sculptures, and witnesses the highest tourist footfall in the region.

"The ASI has been undertaking several projects to make Ellora Caves, which is spread across a stretch of 500 metres, more tourist-friendly. These projects are either in the process of being sanctioned or being executed," superintendent archaeologist of Aurangabad circle Milan Kumar Chauley said.

Of the 34 caves in the complex, cave number 16, popularly known as Kailash Cave, is a double-storey structure and tourists have to climb a staircase or go up a ramp to enjoy the view from the top, he said.

While the cave has a staircase and a ramp for smooth movement of wheelchairs, the ASI has proposed the installation of small lifts on both sides of the structure, he said.



"There will be no construction activity for installing these lifts. The mechanism will be small with 9 square feet area, in which a person in a wheelchair can easily go to the first floor,"

the official said.

The move will make Ellora the first world heritage site in the country under the ASI to have a lift facility, Chauley said,

adding that the higher authorities had given principle approval for the project earlier this month.

Tourists will also be able to see Kailash Cave, a single monolithic structure surrounded by hills, from the top and a route for the same will be constructed on the upper hill, he said. The ASI plans to install lights for some paintings and carry out conservation work on some parts and the paper-work is underway to figure out the cost of the project, the official said.

The ASI has been undertaking several small improvements to make the cave complex, which sees the footfall of 2,000 to 3,000 visitors including international travellers on a regular day, more accessible and tourist friendly. "We plan to increase the number of ticket counters at Ellora and set up a centralised counter for visitors who want to hire guides. There will be a single entry and exit point for the complex and we also plan to do some landscaping with selfie points for tourists to make the experience more enjoyable," Chauley said. The ASI plans to set up three to four toilet blocks with sanitary pad disposal machines as well, he said, adding that the electric vehicle service in the cave premises will commence next month. All these projects were in different stages of sanction and implementation, and may take a year to complete, Chauley said.

NIA RAIDS IN BHOPAL-RAISEN, FIVE SUSPECTS DETAINED

► THE NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (NIA) ON SUNDAY CONDUCTED SEARCHES IN THE BHOPAL AND RAISEN DISTRICTS OF MADHYA PRADESH IN A CASE PERTAINING TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TERROR GROUP ISIS, THE AGENCY SAID.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

NIA is conducting raids in many states of the country regarding ISI. NIA has also conducted raids in State capital Bhopal and its neighbouring Raisen district. Five suspects have been taken into custody from both

these places. All the suspects are being questioned. It is being said that the NIA has found their activities suspicious. After this, they have been taken into custody for investigation. All the suspects are being taken into custody and interrogated.

NIA has conducted raids in Abbas Nagar of Bhopal. Two suspects have been taken into custody from here. The name of the suspect taken into custody is Anas. Anas lived with his family in Abbas Nagar, Bhopal. Anas is survived by wife, son and mother. He lived with all three in a three BHK flat in Abbas Nagar. He also runs a school in Abbas Nagar area. The name of the second youth taken into custody is Mansoori. Both are under investigation.

Simultaneously, raids are going on in Silwani of Raisen district. Three people have been taken into custody from

there. There is a young boy from whose accounts transactions worth crores of rupees have been done. It is being told that he is a student of Anas's school living in Bhopal. Agencies are probing from where so much money has come in his account. This action has created a stir in the state.

According to the information given by the NIA, a case was registered on 25.06.2022 under sections 153A, and 153B of the IPC and sections 18, 18B, 38, 39 and 40 of the UA (P) Act. Incriminating documents/materials have been confiscated in the search conducted on Sunday. Further investigation in the matter is on.

The searches on Sunday in Bhopal and Raisen led to the seizure of incriminating documents and material, it said. Further investigation into the case is in progress, the agency said.

BHAGWAT TO ADDRESS PROGRAMME ON AUGUST 7



Bhopal: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat will visit Bhopal on August 7 to attend the concluding meet of Vishwa Sangh Shiksha Varg, a RSS leader said on Sunday.

A Bhopal-based senior RSS functionary told IANS that Bhagwat will be attending the concluding ceremony of an ongoing training programme to infuse Indian values among Hindus living abroad as chief guest, and also address the gathering. "The training programme is the part of Vishwa Sangh Shiksha Varg, which was started on July 18 in Bhopal, and to be concluded on August 7," the functionary said.

MP govt to hoist 1.50 cr Tri-colours on 75th I-Day

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday reviewed the preparation of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' (Tri-colours at every home) programme, a Centre's initiative to mark 75th anniversary of Independence Day.

During the two-day campaign from August 13 to 15, fixed by the Centre, the Madhya Pradesh government has set a target to hoist 1.50 crore Tri-colours across the state. Out of total 1.51 crore tri-colours to be hoisted, 51 lakh of them will be received from the Centre, while the rest one crore will be made in the state itself. The review meeting was attended by cabinet min-



ister Bhupendra Singh, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, DGP Sudhir Saxena, Personal Secretary (cultural) Shivshankar Shukla and some more.

During the meeting, the chief minister was apprised that the society has so far

received around 20 lakh Tri-colours from the Centre and remaining 31 lakh will be received soon.

Further, around 63 lakh Tri-colours have been prepared by 'self group' of women. "Tri-colours are being made by self group of women across

Madhya Pradesh. The government will set up around 36,000 centres across 52 districts to distribute and sell these Tri-colours. Individuals will also be allowed to buy Tri-colours and distribute them in the society," Shukla added.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister directed district administrations to hold meetings and prepare a detailed plan regarding 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme.

He also appealed religious and social leaders along with politicians and other groups in the state to encourage people to hoist Tri-colours at their homes on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the Independence Day.

The next review meeting will be held on July 8.

CHIEF MINISTER PLANTED SAPLINGS IN SMART GARDEN

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Peepal, Neem and Khrni in Smart Garden, Shyamala Hills, Bhopal.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Padma Piyush Pandey, CEO, ONM and Ladli Laxmi daughters Malviya, Khushita Palihi, Avni Yadav, Aaradhy Verma and Ira Sharma also planted saplings. Former Bhopal Mayor Alok Sharma was present. On this occasion, Kuldeep Shukla planted saplings along with Chief Minister Chouhan on his late mother's death anniversary. Apart from this, mountaineer Vishal Takey Maratha, who is the fourth person from Madhya Pradesh to reach the height of Everest, also planted saplings. Fashion photographer Sudesh Nagar also participated in the plantation. Peepal planted today is a shady tree. It purifies the environment. It has religious and Ayurvedic significance. Rich in antibiotic elements, Neem is known as the ultimate medicine. Khrni tree grows in India in places like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu etc. Its fruits are like Neem fruits. They are called khrni. The taste of khrni fruit is very sweet and the effect is hot.



■ As soon as Bundelkhand is mentioned, the plight of the people from the rural areas flashes in front of the eyes as the biggest problem in this area is the exodus for employment. Like every year, this year also the people have started migrating towards the cities, the pace is a little slow, but it will pick up after Raksha Bandhan.

Team Absolute | Bhopal/Chhatarpur

As soon as Bundelkhand is mentioned, the plight of the people from the rural areas flashes in front of the eyes as the biggest problem in this area is the exodus for employment. Like every year, this year also the people have started migrating towards the cities, the pace is a little slow, but it will pick up after Raksha Bandhan.

Bundelkhand is an area which is rich in civilization, culture and mineral wealth, but the

water crisis eclipses its prosperity. The life of the people here is completely dependent on the rains -- if the rain is good then the migration is less and if the rain is less then the migration is more.

Bundelkhand region is spread over Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as seven districts from each of these states fall in this region and the condition of most of these districts is almost the same.

If one looks at the situation so far this year, there has been very little rain in Bundelkhand but with the active monsoon it is expected that this time there will be good rains here.

This area was once known for its water structures, but gradually these structures became grounded and no one was left behind in looting in the name of water saving and conservation. This is the reason why the water does not stop and despite sufficient rainfall, this area has to face a water crisis.

Rambabu Tiwari, a research student working on water conservation in the Bundelkhand region, says that migration has become a necessity for the hard working labourers here. "Agriculture depends on rain and the only source of income here is agricul-

ture. The labourers have to go to the cities to work and this time also the exodus of labourers has started," he states.

"During my visit to the rural areas, I was told that the wages which the labourers were getting before the corona outbreak, have now reduced. The contractors and businessmen are calling the workers, but they are talking about paying less than what they used to pay earlier. Overall, a labourer going to work under compulsion will also be a victim of exploitation, this cannot be denied," Tiwari says.

Social worker Manoj Choubey says that migration happens in Bundelkhand, the administration knows it. In July and August, the pace of migration is very slow but after that it picks up. "In such a situation, it is necessary that the administration and the government together work out such a strategy and plan that the people here do not have to migrate."

Reacting to the issue, Ravindra Vyasa, a senior journalist from Bundelkhand region, says "Many schemes came to change the picture of Bundelkhand. Even during the tenure of the UPA government, a package of about Rs 7,500 crore was approved, but this package went in vain, this can be understood by look-

ing at the situation here. To stop the migration, it is necessary that an effective strategy should be made from now on, because the period of migration has more than a month to intensify." If the government of both the states provides work to the labourers through various schemes including MNREGA, then migration can be stopped, but the question is, will this happen? Otherwise, thousands of people will be seen going towards the cities with bundles on their heads, whether it is railway station or bus stand," he adds.

Vyas says "As soon as the period of migration starts, the activities of those who loot the government money and NGOs by showing the painful pictures from here in the name of social service increases. The government thinks that it has done the right thing to change the situation by allotting funds, but the ground reality is different. If an audit is done to check how much money has been spent so far for water conservation in this area, then the reality will be revealed."

According to experts on this area, by September more than 25 per cent of the population would have migrated from many villages.

DISTORTION OF DEMOCRACY: MONEY, MUSCLE POWER IN MP'S URBAN, PANCHAYAT POLLS

The municipal and three-tier panchayat elections in Madhya Pradesh finally concluded for the posts of president in Zila and Janpad respectively

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The municipal and three-tier panchayat elections in Madhya Pradesh finally concluded for the posts of president in Zila and Janpad respectively. The Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission (MP-SEC) had announced the poll schedule following the direction of the Supreme Court permitting it to conduct elections with OBC reservation in urban bodies in May.

However, after the election process began, OBC reservation, which has been the main issue in the face-off between the BJP and the Congress got less prominence as both the parties fielded candidates as per their political arithmetic of seats. But the issue that sought more attention was that even the panchayat polls were fought like assembly and general elections. From money to muscle power and from factionalism to horse-trading of councillors, mayors and zila and janpad members was done by both the national parties. The latest instance was Friday's incident during the zila panchayat president's election in Bhopal when a scuffle broke out between Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and a couple of BJP MLAs. The Congress led by Singh was opposing the alleged 'bogus voting', however, the BJP MLAs managed to get entry of its members and won the president's post in the Bhopal zila panchayat.

As the prestige of top politicians was at stake to gain maximum support and to get their favourite candidates elected in their area, they made all possible attempts to grab the zila, janpad and mayoral posts.

Horse-trading and camping of zila and janpad members began after the direct voting process ended. As the members had to vote to elect the presidents, both the parties did what they usually do either for proving their majority in the assembly, parliament or for toppling and forming the government. Surprisingly, it happened even within the party. For instance, two days before Dabri (in Gwalior district) Janpad's members had to elect the president, state minister Imarti Devi took at least 18 members to Delhi to Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's residence. A video went viral on social media showing Scindia interacting with these

members.

State home minister Narottam Mishra and Scindia wanted to have their own favourite winning the janpad president's post. This led to an escalation of the "old Vs new" BJP leaders within the saffron party in Madhya Pradesh. Later, Mishra reached the BJP headquarters in Bhopal and held close door discussion with state president VD Sharma and others. However, it was not only the BJP's Imarti Devi who drove members out of Bhopal or from their respective areas. Many such cases were noticed where BJP and Congress leaders took elected zila and janpad members and camped

in luxury hotels. Tourist hotspots like Goa, Pachmarhi, Khajuraho, Ujjain etc. were the favourite destinations for camping. As the panchayat (gram, janpad and zila) elections are held without party symbols, both the BJP and the Congress were in the race for gaining power in the rural areas ahead of the assembly polls due in November 2023.

Ironically, many members had to hide themselves from the leaders of political parties, claiming that "they are independent" and do not want to disclose whom they will support for the presidents posts. On the other hand, political cadres were camping at the members' residences. Many members complained that they were held hostage by political parties and were not allowed to meet the opposition party. For instance, a video went viral showing nearly a dozen zila panchayat members being taken in a bus in Rewa district. "I don't know where I am going. BJP leaders are taking all of us out of Rewa and we have been told that we will return on voting day only," a member was heard saying in the viral video. Also, there have been several instances of post election rivalries and elected representatives were either killed or beaten up in revenge. For instance, an incident was reported from Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's home district in Sehore. An elected panchayat member was kicked, hit by sticks and dragged by a group of people on Friday.

In another incident, the husband of a newly elected Sarpanch was burnt alive in Rewa district on Thursday. There have been several such cases where elected members were beaten up, especially in the Gwalior-Chambal division.

Results:

Out of the 16 mayoral posts in Madhya Pradesh, the ruling BJP has won nine, the opposition Congress managed to win five and the AAP and Independent one each.

In the zila panchayat elections, out of a total 51, the BJP claimed to have won 41 president posts and the Congress nine. Similarly, in the total 331 posts for janpad president, the BJP claimed to have won 227 and the Congress 65, while independent candidates won 21 seats.

In panchayat elections, the BJP emerged victorious in a one-sided manner in all three formats - Gram, Janpad and Zila. People have supported the BJP in a major way in villages, towns and cities," said Chief Minister Chouhan on Friday. The MP Congress leadership accused the BJP of using power and money to influence the election results. The opposition also accused the MP-SEC, bureaucrats and police of supporting the BJP out of fear.

Leading the party from the front during the elections, former MP CM and state Congress president Kamal Nath said, "These elections results have made it clear that the people of Madhya Pradesh are fed up with the BJP's false propaganda and promises and they are ready for change at every level. After 14 months, the people are going to make a big change, for that every Congress worker should get ready from now."



'Stranger Things' star Joseph Quinn jams with Metallica

Los Angeles | Agencies

Quinn's character Eddie did have a crucial scene with that very track in the show, reports eonline.com.

In a video shared to Metallica's Instagram, Quinn took viewers with him as he met the iconic group.

And while it's safe to say Joseph (and his character Eddie) are fond of Metallica, the admiration is mutual.

In the clip, Metallica vocalist James Hetfield told Joseph he's a "big fan" of the Netflix series, reports eonline.com.

"Have been since season one,"

Hetfield said. "My kids and I, it's been

Actor Joseph Quinn, who plays a heavy metal fan on 'Stranger Things', not only got to meet band Metallica at Lollapalooza, but share a jam session to the song 'Master of Puppets' with the band backstage.

a bonding experience for us." On the topic of "Master of Puppets", Joseph noted that he had the song on repeat for two years. He added: "I feel very connected to you guys." The actor became

even more connected to the rockers when they asked him "to go jam" backstage.

After shredding on the six-string with the band, Joseph was gifted a red guitar equipped with all their signatures.

Although the 29-year-old teased that he was "bit rusty," the group was more than impressed.

"You're hired," lead guitarist and songwriter Kirk Hammett joked.

Meanwhile, drummer Lars Ulrich looked at the camera and said: "We'd like to make an announcement. Metallica is now a five piece."

The unofficial 'Bridgerton Musical' creators sued by Netflix

Los Angeles | Agencies

The team which designed the unofficial 'Bridgerton' musical, finds itself at the receiving end of an infringement case filed by streaming giant Netflix in a Washington, DC US District Court, reports Variety.

Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, the songwriting team behind the project, initially developed the musical on social media. The duo went on to score the No. 1 slot on iTunes U.S. pop charts and even won a Grammy this year in the category of best musical theatre album.

According to Variety, Netflix alleges that it made "repeated objections" against the team as they planned to mount a live stage show of the project. "The Unofficial Bridgerton Musical Album Live in Concert" performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. earlier this week, selling out the venue with ticket prices that ranged up to \$149. The stage show report-

edly featured more than a dozen songs that involved exactly copied dialogue, character traits, expression and other elements from 'Bridgerton.' Variety further states that the streamer has alleged that 'The Unofficial Bridgerton Musical Album Live in Concert' misrepresented to audiences that it used the "Bridgerton" trademark "with permission."

Netflix also objects to an allegedly planned line of merchandise and the production's upcoming tour dates.

Netflix wrote in a statement, accessed by Variety: "Netflix supports fan-generated content, but Barlow & Bear have taken this many steps further, seeking to create multiple revenue streams for themselves without formal permission to utilise the 'Bridgerton' IP. We've tried hard to work with Barlow & Bear, and they have refused to cooperate. The creators, cast, writers and crew have poured their hearts and souls into 'Bridgerton' and we're taking action to protect their rights."



Hannah Dodd is thrilled to join the cast of 'Bridgerton' for the third season

Los Angeles | Agencies

British actress Hannah Dodd is set to join the 'Bridgerton' family and she can't contain her excitement. She recently opened up about her new role as Francesca in the third season of 'Bridgerton', telling TVLine in a recent interview that she's "so excited."

Quoted by People magazine, Hannah said: "Everybody's been so lovely. I just wanted to do a good job."

According to People, Netflix announced in May that Dodd will be joining the cast as the Bridgertons' sixth-oldest sibling, a character that was previously played by Ruby Stokes

in seasons 1 and 2. Stokes, 21, exited the record-breaking show to lead Lockwood & Co., another series on the streamer.

Netflix said in a statement accessed by People: "Francesca Bridgerton is a bit of a mystery within her chatty, extroverted family. Despite her reserved nature, she goes along to get along when it comes to society affairs, fortified with a dry wit and pragmatism that confound the fickle ton yet seem to draw attention when she least desires it." Based on the books by Julia Quinn, 'Bridgerton' became Netflix's most-watched English-language TV show in April.



MENA SUVARI SAYS EX 'MANIPULATED' HER INTO THREESOMES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Mena Suvari, who is known for films such as 'American Pie' franchise, 'Rumour Has It' and 'Kiss The Girls', has claimed her ex-boyfriend 'manipulated' her into having threesomes with other women. The 43-year-old star has opened up about the past relationship in a very honest interview, but chose not to name the man, reports mirror.co.uk.

Suvari has reported that the lighting engineer verbally and sexually abused her as a teenager, and it was only years later that she realised what he'd done.

In an interview with The Guardian, the actress said that the mystery man would force her to pick up women to have threesomes with - including ones she had met on set, reports mirror.co.uk. Years later, when she bumped into one of the women, Suvari was left mortified when she had a conversation with her and realised what she had been subjected to. Suvari explained: "I said, 'I want you to know that I never wanted to do any of those things.' She was surprised. She said, 'Oh, he told me you wanted to do that.' It was a huge eye-opener for me, how I was being manipulated and I had no idea."



Jennifer Aniston wishes 'Friends' co-star Lisa Kudrow on birthday

Los Angeles | Agencies

The companionship between the cast members of the iconic American sitcom 'Friends' is wrapped in the fabric of eternity. Recently, Jennifer Aniston, who played the fashionista Rachel Green, took to her social media to wish Lisa Kudrow on her birthday, reports People magazine.

Lisa, who essayed the eccentric Phoebe Buffay on the show, celebrated her 59th birthday on Saturday (Pacific Standard Time) with help from her Friends co-star Jennifer, who paid tribute to Kudrow with some fond throwbacks of the two of them.

"Happy birthday @lisakudrow," Aniston, 53, captioned a photo of them at the 29th People's Choice Awards in 2003, in the story section of her Instagram. "I love you," she wrote with a GIF of them



jumping up and down and cheering as their Friends characters Rachel and Phoebe, People further stated.

Kudrow has said that her son Julian Stern, 24, used to think Aniston was his mother when he visited the Friends set as a kid. "He got a little confused, I know that he was really obsessed with Jen

Aniston," she said on Conan last year. "He'd fly into her lap," she recalled. "Well, she's a love bug, and that made sense. And I was always glad for anyone that Julian fell for and felt from." But then at home, she'd be on TV, and he'd go, 'Mommy!' Kudrow shared with a laugh. "I'm kind of analytical so I'm like, 'Is this wishful thinking? Do they have some kind of higher soul connection that I don't have with him?' I'm happy for both of them." The Comeback star previously recalled how Aniston and fellow Friends alum Courteney Cox showed up to support her after her mother died at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as she appeared on SiriusXM's The Howard Stern Show last year. "These women came running to support, that was really nice," she said. "They came to the funeral, it wasn't a lot of notice, and they were there."



Emily Ratajkowski

SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE AGAINST PAUL HAGGIS DISMISSED BY ITALIAN COURT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Canadian screenwriter-director Paul Haggis, who is known for his work in 'Million Dollar Baby', 'Crash' and 'Casino Royale' has got a relief in the non-consensual sex case.

A judge in the southern Italian city of Lecce has ruled that there are no grounds to further pursue an investigation into allegations that the Oscar-winning director had sex without the consent of the young girl, reports 'Variety'.

Haggis' lawyer Michele Laforgia in a statement accessed by 'Variety' said, "After viewing the evidence and hearing arguments from both sides, the District Court of Lecce, an appellate court with three judges, unanimously rejected a prosecutor's appeal to have Haggis' house arrest reinstated."

Haggis was arrested on June 19 in Ostuni, a location in the southern region of Puglia on the heel of the Italian boot, on charges of sexual assault allegedly inflicted to a 28-year British woman over the course of two days in June.

According to 'Variety', the 69-year-old director spent 16 days under house arrest in a hotel, before being released from detention. Laforgia further mentioned in the statement, "Two weeks ago, Judge Vilma Gilli of the Court of Brindisi questioned the alleged victim and then immediately overturned Haggis' house arrest." The Prosecutor of Brindisi appealed her decision to the Court of Lecce, where Haggis' lawyer presented what he says is "irrefutable and objective evidence that the woman told multiple lies to investigators and the court, with facts and witnesses completely contradicting her story". 'Variety' further states that there was no immediate comment from the alleged victim's legal team. Laforgia stated that Haggis' arrest was the result of a judicial error and, based on the evidence, the prosecutors must now close the case. This is expected to happen in the coming weeks, unless new evidence surfaces. The Court of Lecce contacted attorneys for both parties to inform them of the court's decision, rejecting the public prosecutor's appeal and confirming the decision made by judge Gilli. Four judges have now ruled in favour of Haggis.

Haggis is also facing court proceedings in the US where he is being sued by film publicist Haleigh Breest, who alleges that Haggis raped her in January 2013.

Breest originally filed suit in December 2017, although proceedings were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A trial date has now been set for October 11 in Manhattan. Haggis says the encounter with Breest, which allegedly took place after a premiere, was consensual.





CWG 2022: JEREMY LALRINNUGA FIGHTS THROUGH PAIN BARRIER TO LIFT INDIA'S SECOND GOLD IN BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham | Agencies

Indian weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga was in a daze as he set about to warm up for the Men's 67 kg division competition at the Commonwealth Games here. The 19-year-old weightlifter, the favourite for the gold medal going by past performance, felt pain in his left thigh and hips region and it was so uncomfortable that he could not lift his usual weights during warm-up, managing a below-par 140 in clean and jerk.

But the star Indian weightlifter fought through the pain barrier on Sunday and came up with a brilliant performance to clinch a gold medal in the Men's 67 kg division at the NEC Hall 3 at Solihull -- the total aggregate of 300kg helping him write and rewrite the Games Records on four occasions in all.

Lalrinnunga won the gold medal with a total of 300, after lifting 140 in snatch and 160 in clean and jerk. Samoa's Vaipava Nevo Ioane took silver with a total of 293 kg and a Games Record in clean and jerk after lifting 166kg. Nigeria's Edidiong Joseph Umoafia bagged the bronze medal with a total of 290kilos.

Lalrinnunga completed his last two lifts in clean and jerk and fell down on the mat on both occasions, clutching



his back and thighs after the second, and wrist and elbow after the third. He had an advantage of 10 kilos on Nigeria's Edidiong Joseph Umoafia (130) and a further three kilos on Samoa's Vaipava Nevo Ioane in

snatch. Lalrinnunga started at 154 in the first attempt and lifted 160 in his second before he fell on the mat, clutching his leg and rolled around. Coach Vijay Sharma rushed out to the podium and escorted him back

to the warm-up zone. The physio, who was at the weightlifting venue since the morning tending to his muscles, tried to treat the muscle pull further.

The Samoa lifter successfully lifted 166, thus overtaking the Nigeria with a total of 293, and a gap of only seven kilos between gold and silver. Lalrinnunga attempted to lift 165 in his third turn but failed, thus leaving the door ajar for Samoa's Ioane to go for 174 in his last attempt and go past Lalrinnunga and win the gold medal. But he failed in that attempt and Lalrinnunga secured the gold, and the coaches heaved a sigh of relief.

"I felt this uncomfortable pain in his thighs and hip from the morning itself and actually completed the clean and jerk as if in a daze. I had no idea what weights I was lifting and what were the others doing," Lalrinnunga said after the medal ceremony. "My coach, Vijay Sharma was amazing and guided me through the entire event with care. He picked up my weights with care, first assuring that I get the medal. I am very thankful to him," said Lalrinnunga.

Indeed it was a great performance - both by Jeremy Lalrinnunga and his coach Vijay Sharma that India managed to win their second gold medal.

CWG 2022: Weightlifter Bindyaran Devi wins silver, India's fourth medal in Birmingham



Birmingham | Agencies

Bindyaran Devi won India a fourth medal on a successful day at the Commonwealth Games weightlifting arena in Birmingham, bagging a silver medal in the Women's 55 kg weight class. The 22-year-old from Manipur lifted a total weight of 202 kg with a superb attempt of 116 kg in her final turn in clean and jerk to leapfrog England's Fraer Morrow (198) and finished just 1kg off Nigeria's Adijat Adenike Dilarindye, who ended with a total of 203 kg, a Games record.

Bindyaran Devi, who managed a best effort of 86 kg in the snatch category, placing behind the Nigerian 92 kg and the English girl 88 kg, came back strongly in clean and jerk, which is her stronger side as she made up for the gap with two superb lifts. She started the clean and jerk with 110 kg in the first attempt while the Nigerian girl failed to lift the same weight. Adijat lifted 110 kg in her second attempt and then added one more kg to her total, while Bindyaran Devi failed to clear 114 kg. That pushed the Indian weightlifter from Imphal to third position as

England's Morrow 109 kg to move up to a total of 198 kg. In a desperate attempt in her third and final chance, Bindyaran Devi lifted 116 kg in her final clean and jerk effort, to break the Games record and move to 202 kg and claim the silver medal. This was Bindyaran Devi's first medal in the Commonwealth Games. Earlier on Saturday, Mirabai Chanu won gold medal in women's 49 kg, Sanket Sargar took silver in men's 55 kg and Gururaja Poojary bagged a bronze medal in men's 61 kg as India started its medal hunt with four medals from the weightlifting arena.

CWG 2022: Indian men's table tennis team reaches semis with 3-0 win over Bangladesh

Continuing their winning run, defending champions India reached the semifinals of the men's table tennis team event at the Commonwealth Games 2022 with a 3-0 clean sweep of Bangladesh in the quarterfinals, here on Sunday.

Birmingham | Agencies

The Indian men's team fielded its top-ranked players Sathiyan Gnanasekaran and Harmeet Desai for the first doubles match against Ramhiram Bawm and Mohutasin Ahmed Ridoy at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre.

The Indian duo of Sathiyan and Harmeet was clinical and won the opener 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 11-2) against Bangladesh team, which doesn't have any table tennis players inside the top 600 in the ITTF singles rankings.

India men's team, who beat Nigeria to win gold at the 2018 CWG in Gold Coast, kept their foot down with five-time CWG veteran Sharath Kamal defeating Rifaat Sabir 3-0 (11-4, 11-7, 11-2) in the second match. Sathiyan, ranked 35th, then brushed aside the challenge from world No. 602 Mohutasin Ahmed Ridoy to win 3-0 (11-2, 11-3, 11-5) and set up India's clash against Nigeria in the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals, India will face a strong challenge from the Nigerian men's



table tennis team which has world No. 15 Quadri Aruna in its ranks.

"It was a rather easy outing today. We are a pretty strong team against Bangladesh. We know them, we are neighbours and we are good friends off the table," said veteran Sharath Kamal after the win.

"(We are) now sailing into the semifinals against Nigeria who are the bottom seeds. Last time (Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games) we won gold and I hope this time we can defend it. It is one match at a time. I hope we can continue our good run and winning form," he added.

Talking about the learning from the match, he said, "We tried a few combinations in doubles and singles (about) how we would play in the semifinals; which pair is better. We will have some team discussions this evening and then the best team will come back tomorrow."

Earlier, the Indian men's team dominated the group stage with 3-0 wins over Barbados, Singapore and Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the Indian women's team, led by their top table tennis player Manika Batra, suffered a major upset against Malaysia after going down 3-2 in the quarterfinals.

CWG 2022: Bowlers, Mandhana help India thrash Pakistan by eight wickets; reach top of table

Birmingham | Agencies

India's bowlers, led by off-spinner Sneh Rana (2-15) and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (2-18), put out an impressive show to set the base for a comprehensive eight-wicket win over Pakistan in their second Group A match of Commonwealth Games 2022 at Edgbaston.

After bowling out Pakistan for just 99 in an 18-overs a side affair due to rain, opener Smriti Mandhana slammed an unbeaten 63 and played magnificent shots which oozed class and delight in equal measure to chase down the total with 38 balls remaining.

The eight-wicket thrashing of Pakistan, after a three-wicket defeat to Australia in the opening match, means that India keeps their semi-final hopes alive and are on top of the table with their net run rate jumping from 0.56 to 1.17.

Smriti gave India an attacking start by slog-sweeping Anam Amin for six and followed it up by dancing down the pitch to loft over bowler's head for four. Smriti's elegant Sunday extended by using her crease and feet very well to hit Diana Baig for three boundaries, with her bisecting backward point and short third man being the standout.

India continued to deal in boundaries as Shafali Verma smashed Anam for a brutal six over long-on and

ended the over with a loft over wide long-off for four. In between, Smriti snatched a four off Anam with a slice over backward point.

It was pacer Fatima Sana's turn to get some thrashing from Smriti as the left-hander nailed a pull through mid-wicket for four and brought up India's fifty in just 29 balls by dancing down the pitch to loft over mid-on.

Smriti and Shafali took a boundary each off Tuba Hassan's first over. But the leg-spinner had the last laugh as Shafali tried to slice a quicker ball but



nicked behind to Muneeba, ending the 62-run opening partnership.

Smriti reached her 15th T20I fifty in 31 balls by dancing down the pitch and lofting Tuba for a sensational six straight down the ground. S Meghna, who joined the team late due to Covid-19, got some batting time with a 16-ball 14 before being cleaned up by Omaima Sohail. Smriti finished off the chase in style by dragging Fatima over long-on for four to keep India in the hunt for the knockouts. Earlier, despite losing the toss and rain delay coming in, everything went right for the Indian bowlers. The pacers got the ball to nip around and then the spinners bowled slow and got some turn as well to keep things tight and never let Pakistan break free. Sneh was the pick of the bowlers, with her double-wicket strike in the ninth over triggering Pakistan's wobble, where they lost their last five wickets in eight balls.

After Renuka Singh began with a maiden in the opening over, Meghna Singh tested Iram Javed with balls outside off-stump and eventually succeeded in getting her nick behind to wicketkeeper Yastika Bhatia.

Muneeba Ali came out of her shell by slamming Renuka for back-to-back boundaries - a slash over point was followed by hoick through mid-wicket. She then found boundaries against Meghna - a four off top-edge on pull was followed by a crunched slog over deep mid-wicket.

Her 50-run stand with captain Bismah Maroof came to an end when the latter was trapped lbw while trying to sweep off Sneh. One brought two for India as Muneeba gave a simple return catch back to Sneh operating with round-the-wicket angle for the left-handers.

Renuka had her first wicket of the day by getting Ayesha Naseem to

mistime a slog to running deep mid-wicket taking a sharp catch. A confusion in the middle caused the run-out of Omaima. Aliya Riaz hit two boundaries in a bid to give Pakistan a good finish. But a direct hit from Meghna at mid-off caught her a yard short of the crease. On the very next ball, Shafali completed a stunning low return catch to send Fatima back to the pavilion. Radha Yadav then took the last remaining wickets barring a run-out to end Pakistan's sorry show with the bat.

Brief scores

Pakistan 99 all out in 18 overs (Muneeba Ali 32, Aliya Riaz 18; Sneh Rana 2-15, Radha Yadav 2-18) lost to India 102-2 in 11.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 63 not out, Shafali Verma 16; Tuba Hassan 1-18, Omaima Sohail 1-20) by eight wickets

CWG 2022: Nikhat wins, Shiva loses on mixed day for Indian boxers at Birmingham

Birmingham | Agencies

India had mixed results in the morning session at the Commonwealth Games boxing venue here as reigning World Champion Nikhat Zareen made a confident and comfortable start while seasoned Shiva Thapa crashed out in the pre-quarterfinals stage of the competition.

Nikhat got the outplayed Helena Ismael Bagao of Mozambique in a women's light flyweight (over 48-50kg) division, getting a Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) verdict, two minutes and two seconds into the third round of their bout.

Nikhat was so dominant that she knocked down her opponent once in the third round before the referee decided enough was enough and ended the misery for the Mozambique boxer by calling off the contest.

Nikhat, who won the World Championship title a couple of months back, was in superb form as she started her campaign on a dominant note, totally outclassing her opponent.

Unleashing a flurry of punches, the 25-year-old from Telangana took charge of the contest early and used her superior technique to outclass her opponent. Nikhat was very happy on winning her maiden bout in the Commonwealth Games.

"This is my first Commonwealth Games and I was really excited for this. Finally, after a long time, I am getting this opportunity to play in his competi-



tion," said Nikhat after her match.

"I am really happy. I am looking forward to winning more matches for my country. I am here to win a gold medal for India, and my preparations have been good for that."

"WE trained in the national camp in Delhi under Bhaskar Bhatt. So, it's been good preparation and training," she added. She will get to put that good preparation, hard work and training to full use when she faces tougher opponents in the subsequent rounds.

But things were not that good for Shiva Thapa as his campaign ended in the second round on Sunday, losing to Scotland's Reese Lynch, bronze medallist in the recent World Championship, in the Men's light welterweight division. The former

world championship and Asian Championship medallist went down 4-1 in a split decision, ending up without a medal after his second Commonwealth Games after failing to do so in 2014 too. Thapa, who had defeated Suleiman Baloch of Pakistan in the first round on Friday, started well and won the first round as per all five judges. He unleashed some good combinations and got 10 points from all five judges.

With a big batch of Indian supporters extending his vociferous support, Thapa went into the second round with a lot of confidence, but that was denoted as four of the five judges rated it in favour of his Scot rival. Lynch kept his guard up and did not give Thapa many chances in the third and final round as the judges rated in the Scottish boxer's favour once again.

"He is a very good fighter and I had to be at my best to beat him. I kept my hands a lot higher in the second and third rounds as I knew he had had a good first round."

On the issue of the crowd cheering for his Indian opponent, Lynch said "I heard the Indians in the crowd so I knew where I stood after the first round. Maybe it was nerves in the first round. I was a bit jumpy. In the second and third rounds, I started working better. That's a good win against a good boxer." India has put up a big squad of 12 boxers, including four women, in the Commonwealth Games.

India women's hockey team overcomes Wales 3-1, rises to the top of Pool A

Birmingham | Agencies

The Indian women's hockey team beat Wales 3-1 to register their second consecutive win at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 here. With this win, India have risen to the top of Pool A with six points in two matches.

Vandana Kataria (26th, 48th) starred with a brace, while Gurjit Kaur (28th) scored a goal for India. Xenna Hughes (45th) got on the score-sheet for Wales.

Riding high on confidence, India started aggressively, earning a penalty corner in the first minute of the match on Saturday evening. But they missed out on taking an early lead due to a weak execution. India continued their attacking instinct and ran riot in the Welsh circle with as many as eight penetrations, creating various goal-scoring opportunities. But, they couldn't find a way to get on board in the first quarter.

India continued to put pressure on Wales and earned a Penalty Corner in the second minute of the second quarter. But the Welsh defence stood tall to deny them a goal. Despite missing out on opportunities, India remained patient in their approach and were rewarded when as experienced striker Vandana broke the deadlock in the 26th minute. Vandana deflected Gurjit's attempt at PC. In their bid to make the score-line 4-1, India went on to dominate the latter stage of the final quarter and created various goal-scoring opportunities, but couldn't make much of it.



penalty corner in the 28th minute of the match. Leading 2-0, India started the second half with the same intensity and continued to pile pressure on their opponents. They even earned a PC in the 39th minute, but the Welsh defence remained resolute and kept the Indians at bay. Wales, not giving up easily, got rewarded for their efforts and reduced the deficit to 2-1 at the end of the third quarter. It was Xenna Hughes who converted the penalty corner in the last minute of the third quarter. India started the final quarter with the same attacking instinct and went on to extend their lead to 3-1 through Vandana (48th), who yet again smartly deflected the ball from close range through Monika's attempt at PC. In their bid to make the score-line 4-1, India went on to dominate the latter stage of the final quarter and created various goal-scoring opportunities, but couldn't make much of it.



SHOW
PETS YOUR LOVE AND THEY'LL LOVE YOU BACK A HUNDRED FOLD, SAYS KANIHA



Chennai | Agencies

Actress Kaniha, who has been a part of several Tamil films and is best known for her role in the Malayalam superhit, 'Pazhassi Raja', has urged her followers on social media to adopt a pet.

Taking to Instagram, the actress posted a picture of herself with her

dog and wrote: "I adopted Maggie during the Covid 2020 season."

"The moment I spotted her on Dogs of Madras, I knew I wanted to give her a home. I was initially skeptical to have another pet after I lost my first. I was scared to go through the whole love, loss rollercoaster."

"But this girl, the moment she landed on my lap changed my

world...filled it with so much of love, naughtiness and craziness. She's a big part of us today. She turns two today." In case you are reading this and contemplating on becoming a pet owner, I have a little teeny weeny request: Please adopt a pet. Give them a home, Show them love. They will love you back hundred folds," she concluded.

Boban You find more meaning in life seeing smiling faces of real fighters: Kunchacko



Chennai | Agencies

Actor Kunchacko Boban and his team from the upcoming Malayalam film, 'Nina Thaan Case Kodu' paid a surprise visit to Malabar Cancer Centre to attend Survivors Meet arranged by the centre.

Taking to Instagram, Kunchacko Boban shared pictures and a video clip of his visit to MCC and wrote: "You find more meaning to your life seeing the smiling faces of the real fighters in life!! Made a surprise visit to Amritam 2022, the Survivors Meet conducted by the Malabar Cancer Centre, Thalassery. God bless the team of Dr Sathesh Balasubramanian and MCC. Thank you A. N. Shamseer

COMEDIAN YOGI BABU'S NEXT WITH DINESH MASTER GETS A TITLE: 'LOKAL SARAKKU'

Chennai: Comedian Yogi Babu will be seen playing the lead along with popular choreographer Dinesh Master in director S. P. Raj Kumar's upcoming film, which has now been titled 'Lokal Sarakku'.

Actor Soori, who has now turned hero with director Vetri Maran's 'Viduthala' after having been a comedian, released the title and the first look of the film. Taking to social media, Soori wrote: "Here is the title and first look (poster) of actor / dance master Dinesh and actor Yogi Babu, 'Lokal Sarakku', directed by S P RajKumar."

The first look has Yogi Babu riding a moped with dance choreographer Dinesh master seated in front. The film has cinematography by M. Moovendar and K S Palani and editing by Castro. VR Swaminathan Rajesh has scored the music for the film, which has art direction by Mujibur Rahman. 'Lokal Sarakku' is being produced by Valentina Swaminathan and Dr. Padma Venkatasubramanian.

Hubby Ajay pens special note for Kajol on her completing 30 years in film industry

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Bollywood actress Kajol has completed three decades in Hindi cinema. On this occasion, her husband, actor-producer-director Ajay Devgn took to his social media to share a special message for his wife. The 'Runway 24' actor shared a still from his film 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior' on his Instagram where he and Kajol can be seen together in a Maharashtra folk dance. Ajay wrote in the caption: "Three decades in cinema! And, you are all fired up! Frankly, you're just getting started. To many more milestones, movies & memories."

Kajol, who started her film journey with the 1992 film

'Bekhudi', has delivered an array of hits in her 30 year career, most notably 'Baazigar', 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', 'Karan Arjun', 'Gupt', 'Pyar To Hona Hi Tha', 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' and 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Ghham'. Her on-screen pairing with the Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan

has always ensured a good footfall at the theatres.

The actress made her digital debut in 2021 with her streaming film 'Tribhangi: Tedhi Medhi Crazy' and is now all set to foray in the world of long-format content with her upcoming webseries which will drop on OTT platform Disney+ Hotstar.

Two years of 'Lootcase': Rasika recalls attempting comedy for the first time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rasika Dugal, who is gearing up for 'Mirzapur 3' and 'Delhi Crime' Season 2, has talked about attempting comedy for the first time as her film 'Lootcase' clocked two years in Hindi cinema. Directed by Rajesh Krishnan and also starring Kunal Kemmu, 'Lootcase'

released on OTT and was appreciated by critics and audience alike. Remembering the film, Rasika says: "Lootcase" marked many firsts for me. It was one of the first movies to directly stream on OTT, it was my first brush with comedy and it gave me the opportunity to do the Bollywood-esque song-and-dance routine for the first time!

Dulquer Salmaan becomes a fan of Vijaywada's Ulavacharu biryani

Chennai | Agencies

Actor and producer Dulquer Salmaan, who is busy promoting the release of his upcoming film, 'Sita Ramam' in Vijaywada, has become a big fan of the world famous Ulavacharu biryani available there.

On Sunday, Vyjayanthi Movies, the production house of 'Sita Ramam', tweeted a brief clip of Dulquer silently but swiftly polishing up a plate of the world famous Ulavacharu biryani in Vijaywada.

Dulquer, in between mouthfuls of biryani, says: "Hi guys, trying the world famous Ulavacharu biryani, it is so yum."

Dulquer Salmaan and Mrunal along with the team of 'Sita Ramam' on Sunday headed to Vijaywada to promote their film - a beautiful love story set against the backdrop of war in 1965. Dulquer Salmaan plays the character of Lieutenant Ram, an orphan, serving the nation in snow-clad mesmerising terrains and gleaming lakes of Kashmir.

Pairing with Dulquer is Mrunal Thakur as Sita Mahalakshmi, the leading lady of the film, along with Rashmika Mandanna in an impressive role. The film is presented by the 50-year-old Vyjayanthi Movies and produced by Ashwini Dutt for Swapna Cinema.



Subhashree spills the beans on her OTT debut with 'Indubala Bhaater Hotel'

Kolkata: Bengali actress Subhashree Ganguly has made her entry into OTT space with upcoming series 'Indubala Bhaater Hotel'. She says that she is a tad bit nervous but also extremely excited to star in the web-show.

Directed by Debaloy Bhattacharya and starring Subhashree, this series will drop on Hoichoi. Talking about making her OTT debut and her character in the series, Subhashree Ganguly said: "First of all I'm extremely excited to finally make my OTT debut and that too with a platform like hoichoi, that is the leading Bengali OTT platform and has a plethora of quality content that 'Indubala Bhaater Hotel' will soon be a part of!" She added: "This series honestly feels like the right one to make my OTT debut with as the character is extremely layered and that's a challenge. Indubala is complex, inspirational and powerful and I am a tad bit nervous but also extremely excited to play it." Also, I have wanted to work with Debaloy Bhattacharya for a long time and this series provides me with the opportunity to do so. I look forward to it and I'm sure the entire team will work super hard to make this a success." 'Indubala Bhaater Hotel' tells a story about Indu, a young girl from east Pakistan's Kalpotra village in Khulna. Married to a drunkard in Kolkata, Indu becomes a widow with an infant, at a very tender age. Her story takes a turn the day east Pakistan became Bangladesh; the hearthy by and Indubala's hotel flourishes as more and more people, food and every bengali's desire to return to their birth land across borders, stays alive in Indubala's Bhaater Hotel. 'Indubala Bhaater Hotel' is all set to start filming from end of August 2022.

Sikandar Kher doesn't think twice before pushing his boundaries

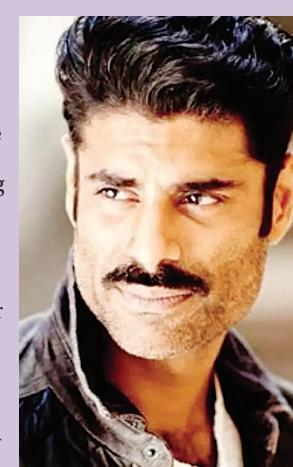
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sikandar Kher, who essayed the role of Daulat in the OTT series 'Aarya', doesn't shy away from pushing his boundaries whenever he gets a meaty role.

He understands that certain characters are written keeping particular actors in mind but when those actors reject the part, they go to the next best lot and that's where such actors step in as performers.

Elaborating on the same, Sikandar says, "I feel that characters and roles are written with certain artists in mind. Most of the time, the team isn't able to bring the ideal actor (according to them) onboard for their projects, but others still work out and manage to impress the audiences quite well - that's where we are, as performers, step in.

He mentions that he is always up for challenges and to surprise himself and the director with his craft, "When it comes to pushing myself in front of directors that I'd want to work with, I don't think twice. I am always hungry for being a part of content that res-



onates with me and the audiences well, and I am more than ready to go an extra mile to achieve these roles/characters through their directors."

As a mantra, he feels that this should be an approach that every actor applies to get work in this industry. "Well, chasing excellence requires one to constantly present themselves with challenges," he says.

Meanwhile on the work front, Sikandar Kher will next be seen playing a Gujarati shopkeeper in his next film, titled 'Dukaan'. The film is being directed by the duo Siddharth Singh and Garima Wahl.



Jacqueline Fernandez

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY