WEATHERWATCH
Max 31°c
Min 26°c
Humidity 91%
FORECAST Haze

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Indian badminton great **PRAKASH PADUKONE** insists that P.V. Sindhu doesn't have any mental block in major finals and urged the media to not put the star shuttler under pressure by focussing on her defeats. P15

IMRAN KHAN, who is set to become Pakistan's new prime minister, was questioned on Tuesday by the country's anti-graft body in connection with the misuse of helicopters of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. P9

DEV, the mega-star of Tollywood, opens up on a variety of subjects — Southern remakes, present-day content, acting and producing films. P6

WINDOW TO THE EAST
EasternChronicle

VOL 1, ISSUE 87 RNI NO. WBENG/2018/75722 PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM KOLKATA GUWAHATI NEW DELHI SILCHAR PAGES: 16 PRICE ₹5 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2018

Mastermind of Burdwan and Bodh Gaya blasts nabbed from Bengaluru

CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA: Mohammed Jahidul Islam alias Kausar, Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) kingpin and a most-wanted man in the Khagragarh blast, was arrested by the NIA on Tuesday morning from Ramanagara near Bengaluru.

Also known as Bomaru Mizan, the 38-year-old man was also wanted in the Bodh Gaya blast of January this year. Kausar, incidentally, ducked out of sight shortly after the Khagragarh blast.

The NIA gradually got to know in course of its Khagragarh probe that the Bangladeshi had entered India in 2008 and started living at Bolpur, in Birbhum district, and at Baburbag, in Burdwan, along with his Khagragarh co-accused Habibur Rehman Seikh.

'They were actively involved in procuring explosives and making IEDs. They were also actively involved in transportating their lethal products to Bangladesh. Kausar was a senior in the JMB and a trainer at the JMB terror camps in Bengal, Assam and Jharkhand," Vikram Khalate, DIG, NIA and investigating officer in the Khagragarh case said over the phone from Mumbai.

Kausar, according to the NIA, was also involved in procurement of chemicals and laboratory equipment for their clandestine bomb-making unit in Khagragarh.

Soon after Khagragarh, the NIA searched his Burdwan house at Baburbag and seized an ACER Lapatop, a camera and a semi-automatic pistol. Forensic tests on the laptop revealed a number of terror-training videos featuring masked men receiving hands-on training in the use of firearms and handling of IEDs similar to those found in Khagragarh.

KAUSAR WENT INTO HIDING AFTER THE KHAGRAGARH BLAST BUT MASTERMINDED ANOTHER ONE AT BODH GAYA

Kausar went into hiding after the Khagragarh blast but masterminded another blast at Bodh Gaya. Sources in the NIA said, in March this year, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) of the Bangladesh Police tipped the off NIA about Kausar and his associates' south Indian whereabouts. The NIA on its part passed the info to the IB and the Counter Intelligence wings of the Andhra and Telengana Police.

The CI wings located Karim and Mustafizur Rehman, the two Bengal men wanted in the Bodh Gaya blast. After the arrest and interrogation of Karim and Rehman on Friday, the NIA got to know about Kausar and his hideout.

On Tuesday morning, NIA officers raided Kausar's rented house at Ramanagara and arrested him. A search of his house yielded some electronic devices and traces of explosives. The NIA then took him to Patna for production in court in the Bodh Gaya case. With cases against him in Bangladesh, RAB officers are likely to arrive soon in Patna and interrogate Kausar.

PROFILE OF A TERRORIST

Name: Md Jahidul Islam alias Kausar alias Bomaru Mizan

Age: 38 years

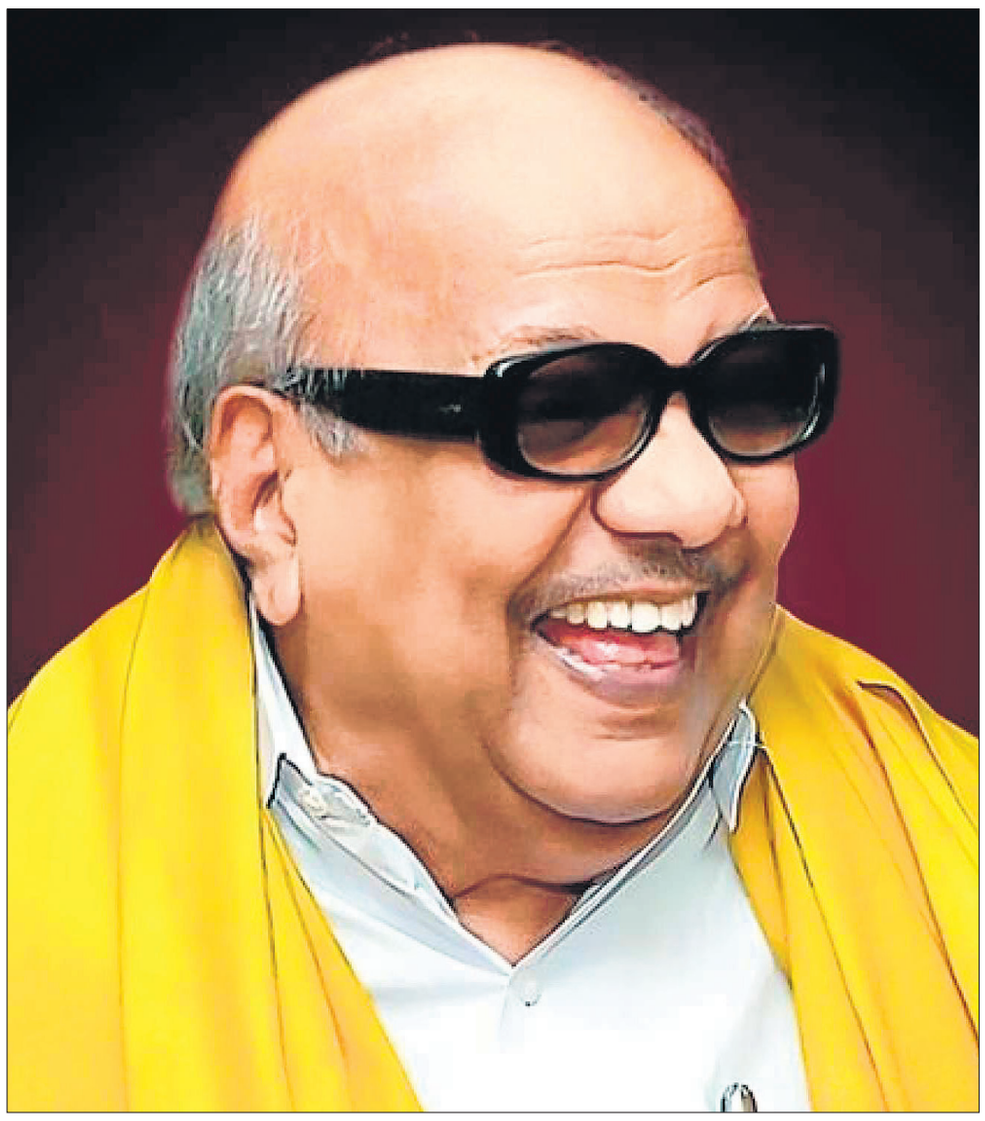
Nationality: Bangladeshi

Affiliation: JMB

Skill set: Explosives making, arms training.

Wanted in: Khagragarh and Bodh Gaya blasts

Endgame: Caught by NIA sleuths at Ramanagara, near Bengaluru.



1924-2018

KARUNANIDHI DEAD

DMK chief and former CM passes away at 94

AGENCIES

CHENNAI: M. Karunanidhi, DMK president and former Tamil Nadu chief minister, died at a private hospital in Chennai on Tuesday after prolonged illness. He was 94.

The Kauvery Hospital said Karunanidhi died at 6.10 pm. "Despite the best possible efforts by our team of doctors and nurses to resucitate him, he failed to respond," said the hospital in a statement, expressing "deep anguish".

The Tamil Nadu government has announced a seven-day mourning and the national flag will fly at half mast.

An ambulance took Karunanidhi's body to his home in Chennai's Gopalapuram, where DMK workers and leaders had gathered. As many as 6,500 police personnel have been deployed in Chennai and superintendets of police in all districts have been asked to keep forces ready to maintain peace. Chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan and Director-General of Police T. K. Rajendran met Chief Minister E. Palaniswami earlier in the day to review arrangements.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter that he was "deeply saddened" by Karunanidhi's death. "We have lost a deep-rooted mass leader, prolific thinker, accomplished writer and a stalwart whose life was devoted to the welfare of the poor and the marginalised," he said.

Congress President Rahul Gandhi also expressed grief over the death of the DMK veteran, saying India has lost a great son, who strode the stage of Tamil politics like a colossus for over six decades. "Loved by the Tamilian people, Kalaignar strode the stage of Tamil politics like a colossus, for over 6 decades. In his passing, India has lost a great son. My condolences to his family as also to the millions of Indians who grieve for their beloved leader tonight," Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI SAID THAT THE COUNTRY HAD LOST A DEEP-ROOTED MASS LEADER, PROLIFIC THINKER, WHOSE LIFE WAS DEVOTED FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

Karunanidhi was shifted to Kauvery Hospital on July 28 after being treated at home for fever and urinary tract infection. Karunanidhi's younger son and political heir M.K. Stalin, his elder son M.K. Alagiri and daughter Kanimozhi met Tamil Nadu chief minister E. Palaniswami at his residence on Tuesday afternoon.

A five-term chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi was a multi-faceted personality — a top politician, a star scriptwriter for Tamil movies, author and an impressive orator. He is survived by sons Stalin, Alagiri, Muthu, and daughters Kanimozhi and Selvi.

Full coverage, Page 3

MUCH ADO ABOUT BURIAL

CHENNAI: The DMK has moved the Madras High Court after the E. Palaniswami-led AIADMK government rejected its request that party patriarch M. Karunanidhi be buried near Anna samadhi on Marina beach in Chennai citing legal issues.

The Tamil Nadu government has offered to give two acre of land near Gandhi Mandapam in Adayar for Karunanidhi's burial.

Details on Page 3

MUST READ

TRADE WITH EITHER US OR IRAN: TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has warned America's trading partners that anyone who does business with Iran will not be doing business with the US, after his administration reimposed blanket sanctions. The US president described the new sanctions, which hit Iran's access to dollars, gold and precious metals, as "the most biting ever imposed". "In November they ratchet up to yet another level," he tweeted. "Anyone doing business with Iran will NOT be doing business with the United States. I am asking for WORLD PEACE, nothing less!" Within hours of the sanctions taking effect, the German carmaker Daimler, which announced a joint venture in Iran last year, said it was halting its business activities in the country. The punitive measures came into force in the early hours of Tuesday, and follow Trump's decision in May to renege on the landmark 2015 deal to curtail Iran's nuclear ambitions. The sanctions also target a range of industries. Page 9

FADNAVIS ASSURANCE ON OBC JOBS

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Tuesday that in no way jobs meant for the OBCs would go to the candidates belonging to other categories. Fadnavis' assurance came against the backdrop of reports that the Other Backward Classes are opposing likely inclusion of the Marathas in the OBC category for quota benefits. The OBC community had reportedly demanded that the OBC quota be raised from the current 19 per cent considering that they make up 52 per cent of the state's population. Fadnavis also announced that his government would assess the extent of representation given to the OBCs in jobs till date and take steps to address the backlog, if any, in a time-bound manner. Page 2

KOHLI IS ALREADY A LEGEND: MS DHONI

MUMBAI: At the helm during Virat Kohli's transition from a gifted youngster to a seasoned master, Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Tuesday said the current India skipper is close to being a legend for all the brilliance he has shown in the last few years. "He (Kohli) is the best, and has already reached a status, where he is close to (being) a legend. So I am very happy for him. And the way he has batted everywhere and in the last few years, he has just been brilliant," Dhoni, who is the brand amabassador and mentor of an app 'Run Adam', said at the launch. The former skipper complimented his one-time deputy for his batting exploits. Kohli played all his cricket under Dhoni's captaincy and blossomed from a talented teenager into a world beater. His 149 against England in the first Test was the final frontier that the current India captain captured. Page 14

RS DY CHAIRMAN'S POST

Vandana Chavan of NCP likely to be joint Opp nominee

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Vandana Chavan of the Nationalist Congress Party is likely to be the Opposition candidate for the Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson's election to be held on Thursday. This emerged from the Opposition meeting on Tuesday.

The Bahujan Samaj Party's Satish Mishra and the Trinamool's Derek O' Brien proposed her name at the Opposition meeting in Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad's chamber in Parliament.

Azad is also believed to be reaching out to the BJD's Naveen Patnaik and the Shiv Sena seeking support for her. The 57-year-old Chavan was recently re-elected to the Upper House from Maharashtra. She has been a member of the Rajya Sabha since 2012.

Her sister Vinita Kamte was married to Ashok Kamte, one of the officers who died fighting the 26/11 terrorists. The BJP-led ruling alliance has decide to filed JD-U's Harivansh Narayan Singh, a first time parliamentarian, amid murmurs of protest from disgruntled ally Akali Dal.

"We don't have any problem with candidate as JD-U is our friend but first they told our candidate Naresh Gujral to prepare. He was preparing and suddenly they nominated JD-U's candidate without informing us," said Sukhdev S Dhindsa after a meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal to discuss RS Vice-Chairman polls.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu announced in the House that the election will be held at 11 am on August 9.

He also suggested that the deputy chairman should be elected by consensus. The nomination papers will have to be filed before noon on August 8.

Vandana Chavan.

The post of the deputy chairman has been lying vacant since June this year following the retirement of P J Kurien, who had been elected to the Upper House of Parliament on a Congress ticket from Kerala.

As things stand, the NDA has support from 93 members while the Opposition has 118 MPs on its side in the 244-member strong Upper House. But the former is banking of 33 fence-sitters including members of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Biju Janata Dal to sail through. The Opposition is banking on cross voting of disgruntled ruling-coalition lawmakers in the poll where no party whip is applicable.

The Deputy Chairman's poll will see the second electoral battle between the two camps in this session. Last month, the Opposition was defeated in the no-confidence vote in the Lok Sabha where it secured 135 votes to the NDA's 330.

Major, three jawans killed in exchange along LoC

IANS

SRINAGAR: A Major and three soldiers of the Indian army were killed in an exchange that also left two militants dead on Tuesday when they foiled and an incursion bid from Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said a group of militants tried to infiltrate to this side of the LoC in Bandipora's Gurez sector, some 180 km north of Srinagar.

"They were challenged when they were seen attempting to infiltrate into our side of the LoC. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed while two others are still trapped in the cordon laid around them.

"Four soldiers including a major and three other ranks were martyred in this operation," Kalia said.

Sources said para commandos were rushed to augment the troops engaged in the gunfight on the border sector that usually remains peaceful.

The identities of the dead soldiers were being withheld till their families are informed.

The spokesman said the militants were given cover fire by the Pakistan Army by resorting to ceasefire violation to divert the attention of the troops on the LoC.

SC raps Assam NRC chief for speaking out of turn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday rapped Assam's NRC coordinator and the Registrar-General of India for speaking out of turn on the NRC issue. The court also told the two that it could have sent them to jail for contempt. It barred them for speaking to the media without its approval.

A Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and R.F. Nariman described as "most unfortunate" statements made to the media by NRC coordinator Prateek Hajela and RGI Sailesh on dealing with claims and objections of those left out of the draft NRC. "Are you in any manner concerned with the claims and objections to be made... What have you said in newspapers? Tell us how are you concerned with that," an agitated Justice Gogoi told the two officials, asking them to read out the news reports in the court.

"Don't forget, you are officers of the court. Your job is to comply with our directions. How can you go to press like this?," the Bench said.

"We should be holding both of you guilty of contempt and sending both of you to jail. Whatever you say they all reflect on us," the Bench said. It said it could have taken a "sterner view" of the matter but was letting them off keeping in mind the future task of preparation and publication of final NRC of Assam.

Hajela said he had consulted the RGI and talked to the media to dispel apprehensions regarding dealing with complaints. However, they tendered unconditional apology to the Bench.

The top court had on July 31 said that there would be no coercive action against over 40 lakh people whose names did not figure in Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC) and observed that it was merely a draft. The top court had asked the Centre to formulate modalities and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including timelines for deciding claims and objections arising out of the publication of the draft NRC.

Two communities battle it out over Facebook post

CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

BASIRHAT: Tension gripped parts of Haroa in the district of North 24-Parganas after a social media post by a youth triggered sporadic clashes between two communities. The affected areas included Gopalpur and Khash Balanda. The government has temporarily suspended internet services in the Basirhat sub-division.

Protesters set up road blockades, damaged shops and homes, and tried to set fire to some vehicles after the allegedly defamatory comment targeting the religion of a particular community. The situation was soon brought under control by the police, though there was tension in some areas till Tuesday night.

According to district police officers, the social media post was done by a teenager. In his comments, the youngster also slammed the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Soon after the post became viral, irate members of the targeted community hit the roads to demand the immediate arrest of the accused.

Senior district officials called for calm and patience and appealed to members of both communities to show restraint. They also cautioned against targeting the religious beliefs of people. No one was, however, arrested till reports last came in.

Talking to reporters, C Sudhakar, senior superintendent of police, North 24 Parganas, said that the situation was under control and the cyber crime department of the state police was investigating the case. The teenager who posted the video would soon be identified and taken into custody, he said.

The situation on the ground was tense, with roads littered with stones and shops and markets closed till Tuesday evening. With Haroa having a mixed population, the administration lost no time to crack down on the rampaging mobs.

The incident at Haroa comes in the backdrop of a steady rise in the number of communal flare-ups in West Bengal over the last three years. The state government has been drawing much flak from the BJP, as well as other opposition parties, for being unable to check the incidence of such cases.