

5 held after 2 groups clash in Phagwara

PHAGWARA, AUG 18 /- Five people were arrested after a clash broke out between two groups in the Shastri Nagar area here, police said today.

They said one Vishal had been nursing a grudge against Sahil Sharma after the duo had an altercation over some issue on Thursday. On Friday, he, along with his supporters, carrying sharp-edged weapons, attacked the house of Sahil Sharma.

The group fled when they were confronted by Sahil Sharma and his men, leaving behind two motorcycles, police said, adding that in the melee gunshots were fired in the air. No one, however, was injured, they said.

Following the incident, over 14 people were booked on charges of opening fire, armed rioting and criminal assault, police said. So far five among them have been arrested and efforts are on to nab the others, they said. Those arrested include Sahil Sharma, Sahib Sharma, Varun Bedi, Karan Sharma and Vasu Sharma, all belonging to one group. Vishal, Lucky Sharma, Anush, Anju, Raju, Abhi Pandit, Romi of Mehli village and Sabhi of Atholi village are still at large, police said.

They added a case has also been registered against some unidentified persons. Police said both Vishal and Nigahan mohalla and Sahil Sharma of Shastri Nagar in Baba Gadhya worked in the Madan Cloth House here.

Ex-MP Chennupati Vidya dies of heart attack

AMARAVATI, AUG 18 /- Former member of Lok Sabha, Chennupati Vidya died of heart attack here in the wee hours today due to age-related ailments. She was survived by a son and three daughters, family sources said.

Vidya (84) was elected to the Parliament as a Congress candidate from Vijayawada constituency in 1980 and in 1989.

In 1980, she defeated former Union minister Dr K L Rao by over one lakh votes in what was then a sensation. She was the daughter of atheist movement leader Goparaju Ramachandra Rao (GoRa). GoRa established the Atheist Centre in Vijayawada and his entire family was involved in social service through the Centre. Vidya won the Jammalal Bajaj Award in recognition of her services to women.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed grief over the former MP's death. "Vidya rendered exemplary services as an MP. Her work for women empowerment, in particular, was commendable," the chief minister said in a statement. He extended sympathies to the bereaved family. Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas (Nani), MLA Gaddi Ramamohan and others attended Vidya's death and paid homage to Vidya.

Panel probing Jaya's death summons AIIMS doctors

CHENNAI, AUG 18 /- The Justice A. Arumugham Commission of Inquiry probing the circumstances leading to former chief minister J Jayalitha's death, has summoned three doctors of AIIMS, who examined her at Apollo Hospital here, to appear before it on August 23 and 24. The commission has summoned G C Khilnani of the Department of Pulmonology, Anjan T. Tripathy, Professor of Anaesthesiology, and Nitish Nayak, professor at the Department of Cardiology. The doctors had periodically examined Jayalitha when she was undergoing treatment at the Apollo Hospital between September 22 and

NDRF launches biggest-ever operation in flood-hit Kerala; deputs 58 teams

Rs 2 cr worth of relief materials despatched

NEW DELHI, AUG 18 /- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has evacuated over 10,000 people from the heavy rains and flood waters affected areas of Kerala till now as it said it has launched its biggest-ever relief and rescue operation in the country till date. The deadliest deluge in Kerala in close to a century has claimed 194 lives since August 8.

A total of 58 teams of the force have been deputed to work in Kerala out of which 55 are working on ground. Three teams are on their way, a spokesperson for the NDRF said. "The force has intensified its rescue and relief operations in the flood ravaged state of Kerala. This is the highest ever deployment of NDRF in a single state since its raising (in 2006) and hence this becomes this becomes our biggest-ever disaster response operation till date," he said. Each team of the federal disaster contingency force has about 35-40 personnel. He said the teams till now have rescued 194 persons and 12 animals while it has evacuated a total



Rescuers help a woman to move through a water-logged road (L). A supply truck transporting boats to flooded areas moves through a water-logged road in Aluva of Kerala —REUTERS

of 10,467 persons. "Pre-hospital treatment has been administered to 158 people till now. Operations are still on," the spokesperson said. The NDRF teams are operational at present in Thrissur (15), Pathanamthitta (13), Alappuzha (11), Ernakulam (5), Idukki (4),

Mallapuram (3), Wayanad and Kozhikode (2 each). The spokesperson said that a control room based here was monitoring the situation round-the-clock and was in close touch with other agencies and stakeholders involved to provide succour to the affected people. As per

information from the control room of the State Disaster Management, since August 8, 194 people have lost their lives and 36 are missing. Over 3.14 lakh people have been moved to relief camps. Meanwhile more than 20 lorries carrying relief materials worth Rs two crore from all

districts in the state was today flagged off to flood-ravaged Kerala. With the chief minister announcing Rs five crore financial assistance to the Kerala Chief Minister's Distress fund again, the relief materials collected from all the districts in the states were despatched,

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Delhi CM directs officials to geo-tag plants under massive plantation drive

NEW DELHI, AUG 18 /- Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today directed officials to geo-tag plants and monitor their survival rate under the government's mega plantation drive in September.

Kejriwal also directed officials to launch a massive awareness campaign for mass public participation in the drive, according to an official statement. Agencies participating in the drive include Forest Department, MCDs, NDMC, Education, Health, CPWD, PWD and Delhi Jal Board who briefed the chief minister on the progress, according to the statement. Kejriwal directed that a helpline be created for the event and publicised for people to call and check the nearest location for participation. He also

directed that various clubs be also involved in the drive to make participation better. The issue of post-plantation care was also raised during the meeting. The chief minister said that all the plants should be geo-tagged and monitoring should be done.

The chief minister also said that a monthly report on the same should be submitted to him. "Responsibility of the survival of the plantation would rest with the respective greening agency. Forest department would be the nodal point for all such coordination," he was quoted by the statement as saying. Twelve Resident Welfare Associations, market associations, school children and their parents in the drive. Make it a mass movement. We have to reach the

grassroots to make it a grand success," deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia was quoted as saying in the statement. A decision was also taken to plant trees, which are at least six feet in height. Kejriwal also sought a detailed report on the survival report of the plantations done in the last five years in Delhi. The chief minister has now called a meeting with heads of department of all the greening agencies on Tuesday for another review. They have been asked to come with a detailed plan on the plantation drive. The Delhi government will carry out a massive drive to plant five lakh trees and shrubs on a single day in September, the city's environment minister Imran Hussain had earlier said. (PTI)

Haryana minister Vij attacks Sidhu for attending Imran Khan's swearing-in

AMBALA, AUG 18 /- Haryana health minister Anil Vij lambasted cricketer-turned-politician and Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu today for attending the swearing-in of former cricketer Imran Khan as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Khan, who famously captained the national cricket team to World Cup glory in 1992, had invited some of his former teammates and friends to witness his formal accession to the top most ceremonial job in the country. Wearing a dark blue suit and a purple turban, Sidhu was among the special guests present at the oath-taking ceremony at the Aitaw-e-Sadr (the President House) in Islamabad today. Vij termed Sidhu's participation in the ceremony as an "act of disloyalty" towards India which "will not be endorsed by any patriotic citizen" of the country. Speaking to mediapersons, the Haryana minister also lashed out at the cricketer-turned politician for "ignoring the sentimental and grieved occasion of his country" which is observing mourning following the demise of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"The Union government has announced a seven-day national mourning following the death of former Prime Minister Vajpayee, but Sidhu preferred to join the swearing-in ceremony in Pakistan, ignoring the sentimental and grieved occasion of his country," Vij said. He said it was beyond doubt that Sidhu has friendly relation with Khan but "friendship was not bigger than the country". The health minister said that at a time when most of the leaders of the ruling as well as opposition parties were present in Delhi to pay their tributes to Vajpayee, Sidhu was "enjoying Khan's celebration" in Islamabad. Vij demanded that the Punjab chief minister should take up the matter seriously and initiate "strict action" against Sidhu for his alleged "anti-national" act.

State Notes

Cloudbursts in Kullu, no loss of life reported

SHIMLA, AUG 18 /- Cloudbursts occurred at two places in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district today damaging properties and agriculture land, a district official said. Cloudbursts occurred in Chahal area of Manikaran valley and Dhundhi in Manali of Kullu district, he said, adding no loss of life was reported. A house, three water-powered grinding mills and agriculture land of six families were damaged in Chahal village, while water pump of a private company was damaged in Dhundhi, the official said.

3 primary school teachers held with arms, ammunition in UP

PRATAPGARH, AUG 18 /- Three teachers of a primary school here were arrested for allegedly threatening to kill a man, police said today. Additional superintendent of police (east) Pooranendu Singh said, "Three teachers, Anoop Singh, Shailish and Anand Singh, were arrested with pistols and ammunition." "These people had threatened to kill a man named Neeraj. On the complaint by Neeraj, a case was registered against the three teachers, and they were sent to judicial custody yesterday," the police official said. Investigation into the case is underway, police said.

Rs 3.36 cr in demonetised notes seized in Surat, 3 held

SURAT, AUG 18 /- Three persons were arrested today and demonetised notes worth a face value of Rs 3.36 crore was seized from them in Surat's Khatodara locality, police said. Acting on a tip-off, police mounted a search of vehicles in the area and found the demonetised notes, of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 denominations, in a car. A Surat Police press release informed. It added that the seizure comprises 24,000 notes of Rs 500 denomination, totalling Rs 1.20 crore, and 21,000 notes of Rs 1000 denomination with a face value of Rs 2.16 crore, apart from three mobile phones. Police identified the three arrested persons, who were travelling in the car at the time, as Gaganjinh Rajput, Mohammad Ali Sheikh and Latif Sheikh. A case has been registered and further investigations were underway, an official said. (PTI)

First probe hearing in Bhima-Koregaon riots in Sept

MUMBAI, AUG 18 /- Eight months after the January 1 caste riots in Bhima-Koregaon rocked Maharashtra's politics, the first hearing by a judicial commission of enquiry will begin here in September, a top official said today. The hearings will be conducted before a two-member Judicial Commission comprising former Chief Justice of Bombay High Court and former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, Justice J.N. Patel, and Maharashtra former Chief Secretary Sumit Mukherjee, from September 5 to 7. "Among other things, the commission will enquire into the incident, its causes and consequences, whether the police and civil administration had made adequate arrangements on that day or not," Special Public Prosecutor Shishir Hiray told a news agency. The Commission will also examine the sequence of events resulting in the violence, the persons/organisations/groups responsible for it and the related security aspects during the gathering of over 200,000 Dalits at the venue.

Soon after the riots shook the state polity with its wide ramifications, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis announced a probe by a Judicial Commission which was appointed on February 9 with a tenure of four months. According to Hiray, the commission -- the highest level ever appointed for any such probe in the country -- has already visited the riots site in Pune district, taken pictures and videos, collected research documents and other documents so far. "A total of around 500 witnesses are likely to be examined during the hearings, starting with around a dozen (witnesses) next month, besides examining the voluminous documents running into more than 10,000 pages filed before the Commission," Hiray added.

Around 500 affidavits have already been filed before the Commission including by the Pune Rural Police, members of the public, various organisations and NGOs, and even by one of the prime accused in the riots, Hindutva leader Mihind Ekte, head of the Hindutva Ekta Samiti, arrested in March and currently on bail.



Bollywood actor John Abraham, who is shooting at the ski resort Gulmarg in Kashmir for an espionage thriller 'RAW', planting a tree near St Mary's Church on Saturday.

Nilgiris bride braves flooded river to rush for her wedding

ERODE, AUG 18 /- Undeterred by a flooded Moyar river, a 24-year-old bride from a hilly hamlet on the slopes of the Nilgiris has undertaken a daunting ride on a coracle to reach the venue of her marriage. A resident of Thengumarhada village, on the fringes of the Sathyamangalam Tiger

Reserve in the Nilgiris district, the woman, Rasathi, undertook a coracle ride along with her family members braving the flooded river, a tributary of Bhavani, district officials said. Since coracle rides are banned in view of the floods, they obtained special permission of forest authorities in

view of their urgency. Rasathi's wedding is scheduled on August 20, and she along with several of her family decided to undertake the ride in two coracles yesterday to reach the venue of her marriage. After crossing the river, she reached the venue of her marriage.

dozen doctors (government and Apollo Hospital), retired and serving government officials and police officers. In September 2017, the Tamil Nadu government constituted the panel under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952. The panel's terms of reference was to enquire into the circumstances leading to the hospitalisation of Jayalitha on September 22, 2016, and treatment provided by the hospital till her demise on December 5, 2016. The Commission had invited all those having "personal knowledge and direct acquaintance" in the matter to furnish information to it. Following Jayalitha's death,

suspicion on the circumstances leading to her demise was raised by several people, including the present deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam and his followers. Then a rebel party leader, Panneerselvam and his followers had demanded a probe into her death, either a judicial inquiry or a CBI probe. After unification of the factions led by chief minister K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam, the government notified constituting the panel. The probe was a key precondition put forth by the Panneerselvam camp for the merger. DMK working president M K Stalin had batted for a CBI probe as well.

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