



Jan Adhikar Party chief Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav during 'Bihar Bandh' demanding special status to Bihar in Patna on Saturday

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Curbs in parts of Kashmir ahead of Burhan Wani's death anniversary



England today clinched its berth for the semi-finals when its players H. Maguire scored its first goal through a tantalising header at 30 minutes. It was followed by another goal by D. Alli through another spectacular header at 58 minutes. Picture shows England's Harry Maguire celebrates scoring their first goal with John Stones — REUTERS

English supremacy comes back

Not averse to working with Cong: Mamata



Mamata Banerjee

I say let's work against the BJP together. If the Congress is strong and gets more seats in some places, let it take the lead. If the regional parties are together somewhere else, they can be the decision-makers

KOLKATA, JULY 7 /- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has said that she is not averse to working with the Congress to oust the BJP government at the centre which is behaving like "a hundred Hitlers". The TMC supremo, in an interview to a magazine, said she shares very good relations with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi but has never worked with Congress President Rahul Gandhi, whom she described as "much junior". To questions about Prime Ministerial ambitions, Mamata said she has "no intent". However, she was ambivalent when asked if she was not ruling herself out of the race. "Instead of preparing for PM candidature, let us work together," she said in the interview to India Today which was posted on its website. The TMC supremo said she has no problems working with anybody as long as their intentions and philosophy are clear. On her ties with the Congress leadership, Mamata said: "What I can say about Rajivji or Sonaji I cannot say about Rahul because he is much junior." "I don't have any problem. My intention will be to unite with all. But it is not my decision alone. It has to be the decision of all the regional parties. I have no problem working with anybody as long as they are efficient, and their intentions, their philosophy, their ideology are clear," she said when asked if she is not averse to dealing with the Congress or having an understanding with the party. The chief minister, while speaking on the issue of some Opposition parties wanting to forge a federal front without the Congress, noted that some parties don't support the Congress as they have their own regional compulsions.

president Rahul Gandhi had on Friday held individual meetings with senior party leaders from West Bengal in the national capital to know their views on strengthening the state unit and on the way forward ahead of the Lok Sabha elections next year. A section of Congress leaders has shown inclination to have a tie-up with the TMC in West Bengal which has a total of 42 Lok Sabha seats. POC chief Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, however, is not in favour of party having any truck with Mamata's party. The TMC supremo expressed confidence that a grand alliance opposition parties is possible. On her idea of fielding a common candidate against the BJP, she said, "I am not saying that, it is done for 75 seats, then the game will be over. If (BJP supremo) Mayawati and (SP chief) Akhilesh (Yadav) work together in Uttar Pradesh, the game will be over. Then after the elections, a common minimum agenda can be prepared. It is a big family, let it be a collective decision." Asked about the possibility of becoming the Prime Minister, she said, "Me? It is a very silly question. First I will say I have no intent. I told you, I am a simple person and happy with my job. But we want to help everybody as members of a collective family. Instead of preparing for PM candidature, let us work together." On whether she is not ruling herself out, she said, "Who am I to rule out anything? I know I am a seasoned politician, a very senior politician now, after my struggles. I have been MP seven times, MLA twice and a CM twice. So I cannot say anything that others may not like." Mamata, who has floated the idea of federal front, has been meeting several influential leaders to cobble up a strong opposition alliance against the BJP. "They are committing atrocities, inflicting torture. Even some BJP people are not supporting them. They are behaving like a hundred Hitlers," she said in a blistering attack on the BJP-led government at the Centre.

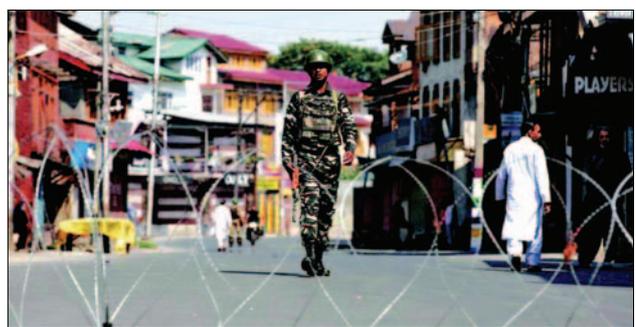
All stranded Indian Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims evacuated from Nepal

KATHMANDU, JULY 7 /- All the 1,430 stranded Indian pilgrims who were stranded while returning from the Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet have been airlifted to safety with the evacuation of the last batch of 160 people from Nepal's mountainous region today, the Indian mission tweeted. "As of today, 1,430 stranded pilgrims were airlifted from Simikot/Hilsa to Nepalgunj/Surkhet and have achieved a zero in both these places," it said. The pilgrims were stuck for the past five-six days as continued downpour in western Nepal had blocked the transportation. The Indian embassy took initiatives to evacuate them and provide necessary medicine and other essential items as soon as they got information, an official said. Commercial flights and Nepal Army helicop-

ters were also deployed for the task over the past few days. "All of them have been airlifted from Hilsa and Simikot to Surkhet and Nepalgunj border towns of Nepal. Two embassy staff were also deployed at the site for facilitating evacuation and establishing communication with the family members of the victims," embassy spokesperson Roshan Lepcha said. "They were evacuated

SRINAGAR, JULY 7 /- Authorities imposed restrictions in parts of Kashmir today as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order on the eve of the second death anniversary of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, even as a strike called by separatists evoked mixed response in the Valley. Restrictions have been imposed in the Valley. The official said security forces have been deployed in strength at sensitive places across the Valley. Meanwhile, the

strike called by separatists against the shifting of Asiya Andarabi, the chief of radical women's outfit Dukhtar-e-Millat (DeM), to Delhi by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), evoked mixed response in the Valley today. The separatists, under the banner of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL), had yesterday called for a strike to protest the shifting of Andarabi and her colleagues.



A policeman patrols a deserted street during restrictions a day before the death anniversary of Burhan Wani, a commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen militant group, in downtown Srinagar — Reuters

The JRL comprising Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik appealed to the people to "observe a complete shutdown and maintain civil curfew". While shops and other establishments were shut in the city centre Lal Chowk here, business continued as usual in other areas of the city, the official said. He said public transport was sparse, but private cars, cabs and auto-rick-

shaws were plying in many areas of the city. The official said similar reports of a mixed response to the strike were received from other district headquarters of the Valley. Cracking a whip on separatist leaders ahead of Wani's death anniversary, the police had on Friday detained Malik in a police station here, while Mirwaiz was put under house arrest. Geelani continued to remain under house detention.

Meanwhile, police today filed a charge-sheet against four Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants in connection with the killing of three youth in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir in April this year. The chargesheet was filed in the Court of Principal District and Sessions Judge Baramulla against four Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists, a police spokesman said here. (PTI)

PM to address rally in West Midnapur on July 16: Shahnawaz

KOLKATA, JULY 7 /- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a rally in West Midnapur district on July 16 on the issue of centre's decision to increase MSP of Kharif crops, a senior BJP leader said today.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a rally in Midnapur (West) on July 16. He will speak on the government's decision to increase the MSP (minimum support price) of the Kharif crops, including paddy. The existing MSP of the Kharif crops is just another example of our several developmental initiatives for the cause of farmers," BJP national spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain told newsmen.

The Union Cabinet has recently approved a substantial increase in the MSP of all 14 notified kharif crops, including paddy. West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said the state unit would felicitate the Prime Minister for his decision to increase the MSP by 1.5 times of the cost of production. Modi's rally in West Midnapur comes just days after BJP national president Amit Shah's public meeting at Purulia district last month. The saffron party has made steady inroads in various districts of West Bengal and has emerged as the main opposition party in the state after recent three-tier panchayat elections and recent by-polls in the state. BJP is making all efforts to increase its tally in the next general election from two at present.

Pro-Pak, pro-China BNP should not be allowed to operate in India: Hasina aide

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /- A close aide of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as "pro-Pakistan and pro-China" and urged India not to allow it to operate in the country. Delivering a talk here on the issue of centre and temporary perspective, Hossain Toufique Imam, political advisor to Hasina, also alleged that the Opposition party in Bangladesh worked against India's interests. Replying to a question on a recent visit by some BNP leaders to Delhi, Imam said: "The BNP is pro-Pakistan, pro-Jamaat-e-Islami. I don't think any sensible government here or in Bangladesh will ever tolerate them. Both countries have to deal with this problem together." "The BNP is an extension of the Jamaat-e-Islami today. It should not be allowed to operate in your country. I know some of the BNP leaders who had been visiting India. If you see their record, they are not only pro-Pakistan, but also extremely

pro-China, and they work together against the interests of India." The talk was organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). According to media reports, three BNP leaders visited Delhi and Kolkata last month to meet two top BJP leaders and also some representatives of the West Bengal government. Imam expressed optimism that the Teesta water-sharing agreement would be signed between India and Bangladesh soon and said the issue was no longer a problem for the governments, even though the opposition parties in his country would try to use it in their poll campaigns. "Today or tomorrow, a formal agreement will be signed between the two neighbours. This is because of the goodwill shared by the two governments. Problems can only be sorted out through discussions and mutual help. We are taking the problems one by one and trying to solve them. In elections also, I think it (Teesta) will not be a major issue," he added. (PTI)

Consultation on draft proposal to widen definition of children in MWPSC Act

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /- The social justice and empowerment ministry's draft proposal to amend an act on the welfare of senior citizens by widening the definition of children to include sons-in-law and daughters-in-law has been circulated for inter-ministerial consultations. In the existing Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, the term includes only sons, daughters, and grandchildren. The proposed amendments include removing the cap on the maintenance payable to the elderly and uniform adoption of age criteria -50 years- across the government and private sectors - for giving them benefits. The draft Act also has proposed increasing the jail term for those who abandon or abuse their elderly parents to six months from the existing three months under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007. "The proposed amendments have been circulated for inter-ministerial consultations," a senior government official confirmed. According to the proposed amendments, the ministry wants to remove the existing Rs 100 ceiling so that the maintenance amount can be decided on the basis of the income of the senior citizens and their children.

Should go over July 4 verdict: Centre, LG should go to SC to clear confusion: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /- Amid an ongoing tussle over transfer and postings of officers, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today suggested the Centre and the lieutenant governor should go to the Supreme Court to clear any "confusion" over its July 4 verdict. The Centre and LG are interpreting the top court's judgement in a "queer" manner, he told newsmen. "My suggestion is that they (Centre and LG) should go to the court. They have confusion, we do not have any confusion. Kejriwal said when asked if the Delhi government will take the services issue to the apex court. "They say they will not go to the court if not sending files to the LG or seeking his concurrence but not on the services matter. I would rather you obey the whole or

der or none of it," he said. The AAP dispensation, following the Supreme Court verdict that empowered it to take executive decisions on subjects other than land, police and public order, has been sparring with the Centre and the LG over the issue of control on the services department. "The Centre had on Friday asserted that it will be against the law to take a final view on the matter related to services matter pending before the Su-

preme Court. Kejriwal earlier alleged that the LG government and the Union were ready to obey the apex court order. The Union home ministry has said it advised the LG, based on a reference received from him, to follow the law. "This advice is based on the ministry of law's opinion that the Constitution bench of the Supreme Court has clearly ordered that the matter be placed before the appropriate regular bench." "In fact, it would be against the law to take a final view on the matter related to services which is still pending before a regular bench," it said in a statement. Hours after the apex court order, the Delhi government introduced a new system for transfer and postings of bureaucrats, naming the minister for the approving authority.



Arvind Kejriwal

AT A GLANCE

AK-56 seized from Dawood gang member's house
MUMBAI: An AK-56 rifle has been seized from the house of a member of Dawood Ibrahim gang in suburban Goregaon here, police said today. "Yasmin Naim Khan (35), wife of Dawood Ibrahim gang member Naim Khan, was arrested following the raid on the couple's house yesterday," a senior official of Thane Police said.