

# absolute india

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## PUTIN ORDERS TROOPS TO EASTERN UKRAINE AFTER RECOGNISING REBEL REGIONS

# ON THE VERGE OF WAR

**RUSSIAN PARLIAMENT'S UPPER HOUSE ON TUESDAY VOTED TO ALLOW PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN TO USE THE RUSSIAN ARMY OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY TO SUPPORT SEPARATISTS IN UKRAINE. A TOTAL OF 153 RUSSIAN SENATORS BACKED THE DECISION, WITH NO ONE VOTING AGAINST OR ABSTAINING.**

**WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JEN PSAKI HAS SAID THAT US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN WILL SOON SIGN AN EXECUTIVE ORDER BANNING AMERICANS FROM DOING BUSINESS IN THE TWO UKRAINIAN REGIONS THAT RUSSIA HAS RECOGNISED AS INDEPENDENT STATES.**



### GLOBAL MARKETS TUMBLE

The FTSE 100 index fell by more than 1.5 per cent on Tuesday and European shares hit a seven-month low as a long-feared Russian invasion of Ukraine now appeared to be underway, Daily Mail reported. The benchmark index of Britain's leading companies dropped by 1.53 per cent or 115 points to 7,370 in early trading in London this morning. Elsewhere in Europe, Germany's DAX fell 2.07 per cent or 311 points to 14,731 this morning, and the CAC 40 in Paris dropped 1.91 per cent or 129 points to 6,659. Investors were reacting to the apparent end of slim remaining hopes of averting a major conflict in Europe that could cause massive casualties, energy shortages on the continent, and economic chaos around the globe, the report said.

### UK announces sanctions

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday announced sanctions against five Russian banks -- Rosiya, IS Bank, General Bank, Promsvyazbank and the Black Sea Bank. He called it "the first barrage of what we are prepared to do". Sanctions have also been announced against three individuals, BBC reported. The UK government has published details of the sanctions it plans to impose on Russia. It will freeze the assets of three individuals -- Gennadiy Timchenko, Boris Rotenberg and Igor Rotenberg. Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey welcomed the UK PM's statement, but urged him to go further on sanctions.

ence and sovereignty of the DPR and the LPR," Putin said in an hour-long televised address to the nation. "Russia has done everything to preserve the territorial integrity of Ukraine" by fighting for the imple-

mentation of 2015 Minsk agreements, but all the efforts ended up in vain, he told said. According to Putin, nearly everyday there is Ukrainian shelling of settlements in the Donbas region, that comprises Luhansk and Donetsk, and "there is no end in sight". The crisis of European security occurred due to the eastward expansion of the NATO, which has led to

## Supreme Court to hear Pegasus snooping case on Friday

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear the case relating to the Pegasus surveillance scandal on February 25, after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested for a new date before the Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, pointing out that he is supposed to be arguing a different part-heard case on Wednesday. The Pegasus panel, appointed by the Supreme Court, have submitted an interim report appraising the apex court about the progress on the probe. The matter was listed for hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli on February 23. The panel had earlier said that only two people submitted their mobile phones with it for forensic examination. On October 27 last year, the top court said it was compelled to take up the



cause to determine the truth, as it appointed an independent expert technical committee supervised by a retired top court judge, Justice R.V. Raveendran, to probe the Pegasus snooping allegations. The top court had authorised the technical committee to devise its own procedure to effectively implement and answer the terms of reference. The committee can hold an investigation it deems fit and take state-

ments of any person in connection with the inquiry and call for records of any authority or individual. Justice Raveendran is overseeing the functioning of the technical committee and he is assisted by Alok Joshi, former IPS officer and Dr Sundeep Oberoi, Chairman, Sub Committee in International Organisation of Standardisation/International Electro-Technical Commission/Joint Technical Committee.

### INDIA CALLS FOR RESTRAINT

As the UN Security Council met for a late-night emergency session, India warned that the latest actions of Russia in regard to Ukraine could "undermine peace and security" and called for restraint and de-escalation. Addressing the Council late Monday night, India's Permanent Representative T.S. Tirumurti said: "The escalation of tension along the border of Ukraine with the Russian Federation is a matter of deep concern. These developments have the potential to undermine peace and security of the region." He reiterated his earlier calls "for restraint on all sides" and added: "The immediate priority is de-escalation of tensions taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long term peace and stability in the region and beyond."

### CRUDE OIL, GOLD PRICES AT SPIRALING HIGH

Heightened tensions between Russia-Ukraine led to acceleration in gold and crude oil prices on Tuesday. The rising geo-political tensions sent Brent-indexed crude oil prices over \$95 per barrel, the highest in several years. Similarly, gold prices traded higher with spot gold prices at COMEX rising to over \$1,900 per ounce. Russia is one of the world's top producers of crude oil and gold, and any western sanctions against it will stiffen the global supply. Besides, the development also assumes significance for India as it is import-dependent to fulfil its crude oil and gold needs. The rise in crude oil prices can escalate domestic prices, thereby triggering inflation.

the loss of mutual trust with Russia, the President stressed.

## I&B MINISTRY BLOCKS APPS, WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS LINKED TO SFJ

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday ordered the blocking of apps, website and social media accounts linked to the banned organisation, Sikhs For Justice (SFJ). In a statement, the Ministry said it has ordered the blocking of apps, website, and social media accounts of foreign-based 'Punjab Politics TV' having close links with the SFJ, deemed unlawful under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. "Relying on intelligence inputs that the channel was attempting to use online media to disturb public order during the ongoing State Assembly Elections, the Ministry used emergency powers under the IT Rules on February 18 to block the digital media



resources of Punjab Politics TV," it said. The Ministry claimed that the contents of the blocked apps, website, and social media accounts had the potential to incite communal disharmony and separatism; and were found to be detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state, and public order.

## Dera chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim gets Z-plus security

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been provided Z-plus security cover during his 21-day release on furlough from a Haryana jail, officials said on Tuesday. He has been given the high security cover due to threat to his life from 'pro-Khalistan' extremists, officials added. Rahim is on 21-day furlough from Sunaria jail and is camping in Gurugram. He will be getting 10 NSG secu-



urity personnel for mobile security and eight security personnel for his residence security. The Haryana government's recommendation to grant the top layer security cover to the convicted sect

## Those who don't vote for him have Muslim blood: BJP MLA

Team Absolute | Lucknow

A video clip featuring BJP MLA Raghendra Pratap Singh, who is contesting the Dumariaganj Assembly seat in Uttar Pradesh, is going viral in which he is heard saying that "Hindus who will not vote for me have Muslim blood in their veins". Singh admitted that he made the remark five days ago, but added that it was said "in another context, as an example" and that he "had no intention to threaten anybody". "I have said those things, I am not denying. But I had spoken in another context, as an example, and was making a comparison with the past. I had no intention to threaten any-



body. Can anybody win an election by threatening in Dumariaganj where there are around 1.73 lakh Muslim voters, comprising around 39.8 per cent of the electorate?" he stated. In the video, the legislator is purportedly heard using expletives. He says: "Tell me, will any Muslim vote for me? So be aware that if Hindus of this village support another side, they have Muslim blood in their veins. They are traitors. Even after so many atrocities, if a Hindu goes over to the other side, he should not be allowed to show his face in public."

## WET SPELL OVER NW, NE INDIA DURING NEXT 5 DAYS

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday predicted a wet spell over northwest India during next five days and over east and northeast India during February 24-26. Under the influence of the Western Disturbance as a cyclonic circulation over northwest Afghanistan in middle troposphere levels and induced cyclonic circulation over south Pakistan and adjoining west Rajasthan at lower troposphere levels and another approaching Western Disturbance from February 25, there would be fairly widespread to widespread light/moderate rainfall/snowfall very likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand during next two days and scattered rainfall/snowfall for subsequent three days, the IMD bulletin said. Isolated thunderstorm & lightning activity is likely over the region during next two days, while isolated light rainfall is very likely over north Punjab, north Haryana, and Chandigarh during next five days and over Uttar Pradesh during February 24 to 26.

## FORMER DY DIRECTOR OF BHOPAL AIIMS TO FACE DA CASE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which in 2021 had arrested Dharendra Pratap Singh, the then deputy director of AIIMS, Bhopal, has now filed a fresh FIR against him to further probe the matter under the disproportionate assets acts. A senior CBI official said that on February 19, a complaint was received against Dharendra Pratap Singh for illegal assets of over Rs 1.52 crore during the checking period between 2015 and 2021. "After receiving the complaint we lodged the case for the offences, punishable under sections 13(2) read with 13(1)(e) of the PC Act, 13(2) r/w 13(1)(b) of the PC Act, (as amended in 2018)," said the CBI official. The Anti Corruption

Bureau received a complaint regarding demand of undue advantage by Dharendra Pratap. During the course of investigation, a trap was laid on 25 September 2021 in the presence of independent witnesses and Dharendra Pratap Singh was caught red handed while accepting illegal gratification of Rs one lakh from the complainant Ramchandra Marvya. After his arrest the CBI had conducted a search operation at his house and recovered over Rs 6 lakh. A few incriminating documents were also seized. The documents had information regarding huge assets. After compiling a report the CBI has now decided to further probe the matter. Dharendra Pratap Singh will now face prosecution for disproportionate assets.

## Earthday, ClimateScience join hands for ClimateScience Olympiad 2022

In its inaugural year, the 2021 Olympiad engaged more than 12,000 youth from 149 countries. The award ceremony was held at COP26 in Glasgow. Both EARTHDAY.ORG and ClimateScience emphasise helping youth develop from a young age into stewards for the environment. The partnership for the ClimateScience Olympiad makes for a meeting of minds toward a common aim that underlies the need to ensure climate education is an integral component of all school curriculums worldwide.

New Delhi/Washington

Earthday.org, the world's largest environmental movement, on Tuesday announced its partnership with ClimateScience for the ClimateScience Olympiad 2022. This Olympiad is one of ClimateScience's initiatives for youth aged 25 years and below. It provides an opportunity for youth to ask questions and stand in the shoes of world leaders. "Education is not just about providing information. It can start by asking questions," said Eric Steinberger, EARTHDAY.ORG's Youth Ambassador in Austria, who is also the brainchild of this initiative. Listening to Greta Thunberg speak about the planet's environmental problems got Steinberger thinking about what youth could do



to harness their power and work to combat climate change. Following some online research, the latter was disappointed about the little amount of accessible, accurate and understandable climate information. The inadequacy led him, along with one of his friends, to start pub-

lishing science-based information in digestible and attractive formats on Instagram and in a couple of months, the account gained more than 40,000 followers. It also received requests from teachers for permission to utilise the material while teaching and therefore,

ClimateScience was born. The organisation provides free science-based and expert-reviewed resources on climate change and its solutions in engaging and easy-to-understand formats such as short courses, children books, videos and edu-Instagram posts. It also offers a mentorship program for youth who aspire to pursue climate careers. Today, communities and volunteers in more than 40 countries are part of ClimateScience. Meanwhile, Earthday.org's mission is to diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide. Growing out of the first Earth Day (1970), it is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement, working with more than 1,50,000 partners in nearly 192 countries to build environmental democracy.



# DMK SWEEPS TN URBAN BODY POLLS, WINS AIADMK BASTIONS LIKE EDAPPADI

CHENNAI | Agencies

The DMK-led alliance on Tuesday swept the urban local body elections in Tamil Nadu with 75 per cent of the results declared.

The urban polls were held in the state after a gap of 11 years and the win of the DMK is considered as a stamp of approval for the nine-month-old M.K. Stalin government in the state.

The dismal performance of the AIADMK was reflected with the party losing its bastions and the DMK winning several seats in western Tamil Nadu including Coimbatore, Erode and Salem. In Edappadi, the home constituency of former Chief Minister K. Palaniswami too, the AIADMK candidate lost the polls to the DMK.

Palaniswami's own ward no 23 in Salem Municipal Corporation was also wrested by the DMK leading to a major loss of face for the former Chief Minister who is also the Leader of Opposition in Tamil Nadu.

According to the State Election Commission till the late afternoon,



the DMK alliance won 494 seats in corporations, 2,021 in municipalities, and 4,619 seats in town panchayats.

The AIADMK, on the other hand won only 81 wards in corporations, 511 in municipalities, and 1,188 seats in town panchayats.

The BJP, which contested alone, won 255 wards - 7 in corporations,

113 seats in municipalities, and 135 seats in town panchayats.

Five candidates supported by Vijay Makkal Iyyakam, the fans association of superstar Vijay, won in corporation wards, including 3 in Chennai.

Transgender candidate, R. Ganga of the DMK, won from the Vellore Municipal corporation by a margin

of 15 votes. This is the first time a transgender candidate has won from the DMK in urban local body polls.

Three candidates, including an AIADMK candidate, got only zero votes in Karambukudi panchayat in Pudukottai district even though all three had votes in the same constituency.

## Bajrang Dal activist murder

# Curfew extended till Friday, arrests rise

SHIVAMOGGA | Agencies

As tension prevails in Shivamogga district in Karnataka following the murder of Bajrang Dal activist Harsha, the district administration has extended the curfew till Friday. District Commissioner Dr Selvamani stated on Tuesday that a further decision in this regard will be taken on Friday morning. A holiday has been declared in schools and colleges.

Superintendent of Police Lakshmi Prasad has stated that the police have arrested six persons so far in the case. Mohammad Khasif (30), Syed Nadeem, Aseefulla Khan, Rehan Sharif, Nihan and Abdul Afnan, all below 25 years in age have been arrested.

After interrogation, the involvement of more people has been revealed and they will be arrested soon. Their roles have been identified. Nine FIRs have been lodged



and 13 cases have been taken up. As many as 18 vehicles have been torched with eight cases of injuries. About 1,200 policemen have been deployed in Shivamogga city to prevent any violence, the officer said. There were charges of rioting and hurting religious sentiments against Harsha, he added.

Opposition leader Siddaramaiah urged the government to ban the SDPI, PFI and CFI if their hand is found in the murder of Harsha. He condemned

the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K.S. Eshwarappa for taking part in the procession of the body of Harsha, even as prohibitory orders were in place. BJP state president Nalin Kumar Kateel stated that the accused in the murder case should be 'encouraged'. The Karnataka police should follow the example of the Mumbai police on encounters. After some encounters the situation came under control in Mumbai, he said.

# Bird flu unlikely to spread in India: Experts

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Bird flu has resurfaced in India with cases being reported from Maharashtra's Thane and Palghar regions. Thousands of birds have been culled in Palghar alone.

However, an expert said that the disease is unlikely to spread majorly in the country.

Talking to reporter, Adil Amin from the Department of Medicine, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, said that this infection rarely follows human-to-human transmission.

People can contract the bird flu virus from bird droppings or close contact with infected birds only, he said.

Bird flu or avian influenza is a highly-contagious viral disease that affects both domesticated and wild birds. The infection is caused by the



Type A virus in the intestines and respiratory tracts of birds, Amin said.

He said that people can contract the infection from close contact with birds, especially those working in poultry farms.

"In large-scale poultry farms, many people are involved in daily work. Birds

are dispatched from there to the small-scale poultry farms, which becomes the main reason of transmission. The infection can be transmitted in close clusters, but rarely," Amin said. It is also possible to contract the virus while bathing or swimming in water contaminated with infected birds, he added.

## 14 WEDDING GUESTS KILLED AS BUS FALLS INTO GORGE IN U'KHAND

Champawat: At least 14 wedding guests were killed when a bus fell into a gorge in the Danda area of Uttarakhand's Champawat district on Tuesday.

After getting the information of the accident that occurred at around 3.20 a.m., police and rescue team rushed to the spot and pulled out 14 bodies from the gorge.

Two seriously injured persons, including the bus driver, were rushed to a district hospital.

The guests were returning after attending the marriage of Kankai resident Laxman Singh's son Manoj Singh in Panchmukhi dharamshala in Tanakpur.

Most of the deceased hail from Danda and Katauthi village of Kankai and are relatives of Laxman Singh.

The cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained.

# 7 women workers killed in blast at illegal firecracker factory

SHIMLA | Agencies

At least seven migrant women workers were charred to death on Tuesday after an explosion occurred in an illegal firecracker factory at the Bathu industrial area in Himachal Pradesh's Una district.

Twelve other workers suffered burn injuries and have been hospitalised.

Una Deputy Commissioner Raghav Sharma confirmed with the media that the blast occurred in a firecracker manufacturing unit.

Officials told reporter that the factory was not registered with the industries department and was being run illegally. The owner used illegal electricity connection to steal power for the unit. A search is on for the absconding owner.

Sudesh Mokhta, Director,



State Disaster Management Authority, said the incident took place at around 10.15 am in a firecracker unit at Guralah near Bathri in Tahliwal industrial area. The injured were rushed to the Stan Hospital in Bathri where the condition of 10

persons is said to be serious, while two suffered minor injuries, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced Rs 200,000 each as relief to the next of kin of those who died in the explosion.

"Rs 2 lakh each from

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) would be given to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the tragic factory mishap in Himachal Pradesh. Rs. 50,000 would be given to the injured," the Prime Minister tweeted.

# 'Do not to speak against party', BJP warns party cadre in U'khand

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The BJP central leadership has issued a "stern" warning to the party leaders in Uttarakhand, especially those who have contested the Assembly polls, telling them "not to speak against the party".

The warning was issued after some of the party candidates accused the state leaders of helping their rival candidates in the state assembly polls held on February 14.

A senior office bearer of the BJP said that now onwards "no one" will speak against the Uttarakhand state leadership for "sabotaging" the election or anything contrary to the party line.

"Some of our candidates have spoken against the state leadership and blamed them for sabotaging



their campaign and electoral prospects. We have taken note of outbursts against Uttarakhand BJP leadership and advised them (the candidates) to control their emotions while speaking. We also

warned them that speaking against the state leadership or the party line will n Warning from central leadership is also applicable to Uttarakhand BJP leaders who have not contested the polls. "The advisory or warning, whatever you say, it is applicable to everyone in the state unit and the message is very loud and clear that indiscipline will not be tolerated," he said. About four BJP candidates including sitting MLAs accused the party's state leaders of helping their rival candidates. Some of them alleged that either the state leaders have not campaigned for the party or have helped rival candidates. While others blamed the local district and block units of not supporting them during the recently held polls. Pollings for the 70-member Uttarakhand Assembly was held on February 14 and counting of votes will be held on March 10.

# U'khand HC seeks govt stand on Dharma Sansad case

DEHRADUN | Agencies

The Uttarakhand high court on Monday sought the state government's stand on the Haridwar Dharma Sansad case involving alleged inflammatory speeches made against Muslims.

Hearing the bail plea of Jitendra Narayan Tyagi alias Wasim Rizvi, Justice RC Khulbe asked the state government to clarify its stand on the issue before February 23, the next date of hearing of the bail plea.

The case against Rizvi and others had been lodged on the complaint of Nadeem Ali, a resident of Jwalapur Haridwar at Haridwar Kotwali on January 2, 2022.

He had alleged in his complaint that Dharma Sansad or religious parliament was organised in Haridwar by Hindu sages from December 17 to 19 and in the garb of this



event, the participants were instigated to wage a war against Muslims.

Objectionable words were used against the holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad, Ali had said in his complain

## 18 CISF PERSONNEL ON POLL DUTY INJURED IN ACCIDENT IN UP

New Delhi: The officials in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Tuesday said that 18 of its troopers got injured when the bus in which they were travelling turned turtle after an accident in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri.

The accident happened on Monday night. There were 38 security personnel travelling in the bus provided by the district administration and they were heading to Lakhimpur Kheri from Shikohabad for the next round of poll on Wednesday, the CISF officials further said.

Out of 36 troopers, 18 got minor injuries. They have been admitted to the local hospital in Lakhimpur Kheri while the two of them have been sent to Lucknow this morning for further treatment, the CISF added.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay MishrTeni also confirmed about this incident and prayed for their speedy recovery.

# Delhi doctors save 2-yr-old with cardiac arrest post-Covid

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Doctors here have given a new lease of life to a two-year-old boy who suffered cardiac arrest and multiple organ failure post a Covid infection.

Rahul (name changed) had recovered from Covid in December last year, but later began suffering persistent cough and breathing problems.

He was brought to doctors at Aakash Healthcare, with high fever and breathing problems in mid January.

The infant went into cardiac arrest minutes after arriving at the hospital and was saved after 30 minutes of CPR.

The child was also diagnosed with a severe case of bronchiolitis (viral pneumonia), which has led to pneumopericardium - a rare condition where the sac around the heart is affected due to the damaged lungs.

In such a case, the lungs burst, as a result of infection, leading to a drop in blood pressure due to air around the heart and causing the heart to function poorly.

"Within minutes of arriving at the hospital,



the child had a heart arrest. Further examinations revealed that he had developed Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), a rare disorder in which his own body was killing multiple organs," Dr Sayed Mustafa Hasan, Senior Consultant and Head, Paediatrics and Neonatology, at Aakash. As a result, the lungs, heart, brain and kidneys had suffered considerable damage.

The baby was even unable to pass urine, putting him in a severe condition. He was also experiencing speech difficulty and loss of eye contact with others as a result of the post-Covid effects.

The doctors immediately began Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT) after recovering him with CPR, removing all waste material from his body.

"The therapy continued non-stop for 60 hours. To eliminate infections, we employed the cytosorb dialysis filter. We also worked to normalise his blood pressure," Hasan said.

Rahul spent 15-16 days in the ICU ward on a ventilator.

During this time, a team of specialists attempted to restore his kidneys, heart and lungs to normal function. Along with CRRT, he was also given haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis to remove the infection.

His condition improved over a month, and he was eventually discharged, the doctors said.

"Rahul's heart, lungs and kidneys were not functioning when he was brought to us. It's a very rare case and less than 1 per cent of the kids suffer from such severe infection leading to multiple organ dysfunction," said Dr. Neha Bhandari, Consultant, Paediatrics Nephrology, Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka.

Sudden cardiac arrest is rare in children, but it can happen. Hence, all children need regular check-up visits with their doctor, the doctors advised.



# OPPN MAY CONSIDER NITISH FOR PREZ IF HE SNAPS TIES WITH NDA: NCP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Nationalist Congress Party on Tuesday said that opposition parties may think about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the post of President, provided his Janata Dal-U severs ties with the ruling NDA.

Referring to some media reports that Nitish Kumar could be the Opposition's candidate for the Presidential elections due mid-2022, NCP national spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik made it clear that there can be no discussion on this until he breaks all ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

There have been certain speculative reports claiming Nitish Kumar may part ways with the BJP after the results of the ongoing elections to five states are declared next month and he could be in the race for the post of President.

"We can consider it (his candidature) only if the JD-U first breaks out of the NDA. Then the leaders of all Opposition parties will sit and collectively give a thought to it," Malik told media persons. On the polls in the five states, he predicted that the BJP will be subjected to "a severe defeat" in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur, and Goa. "History will be repeated after 30 years in UP. It will win less than 150 seats. The people of the state had rejected BJP after it fomented communal vio-



lence there in 1993. People are now sick of its policies," asserted Malik. He added that the process to launch a united 'anti-BJP' front has been initiated in the country and it will take a proper shape well before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"However, no such front can be formed without the Congress. The question of leadership will be taken up later at an appropriate time," Malik said, reiterating the clear stance of NCP and its ally, Shiv Sena, though some Opposition parties have expressed reservations. In this context, he referred to the visit of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in December followed by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao this week to Mumbai to meet the Maha Vikas Aghadi leadership and forge a united national Opposition front to counter the BJP.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Maharashtra government to "completely stay its hand" against former Mumbai top cop Param Bir Singh, while it decides whether criminal cases registered against him could be handed over to the CBI.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M.M. Sundresh expressed concern over the ongoing legal battle between Singh and the Maharashtra government, terming it a "messy state of affairs" and also a "very unfortunate situation". "We have had occasion to say earlier that it is a messy state of affairs. Very unfortunate situation... having the propensity of shaking the confidence of people in the police system and the elected system. Process of law must carry on..."

Former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was accused by Singh of corruption, is already under arrest for offences, including money laundering.

The top court also stayed all proceedings against Singh, probe and filing of charge sheet, and listed the case



for final disposal on March 9 on the question of transfer of investigation of cases against Singh to the CBI.

The bench also asked the Maharashtra government to completely keep its hands off with regards to the ongoing investigation till the top court decides Singh's plea to transfer all cases against him to the CBI. Justice Kaul told senior advocate Darius Khambata, representing the Maharashtra government:

"Meanwhile, you please completely stay your hand. We do not know if the

investigation has to be transferred to the CBI...". Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, said all the FIRs must come to the central investigating agency. He added that there would be a possibility that statements may point to a particular direction or colour the case, making things difficult for the investigating agency.

The bench remarked that if it were to be inclined to pass an order of transferring the cases to the CBI, investigation being completed would cause problems. Khambata assured the

bench that, in all senses, the matter will be on hold, and the court took it on record.

The bench noted: "We have now put down matter for final hearing and if we were to be inclined to pass an order as per what the CBI and petitioner says, investigation being completed would cause problems."

Senior advocate Puneet Bali, representing Singh, complained against the Maharashtra government, saying that it has filed challans in one of the FIRs.

"They have presented challan in one of the FIRs. This is absolutely going out of hand," he said. After hearing arguments, the bench said it will take a call as to whether the investigation is to be transferred to the CBI or not. Singh has claimed to be a whistle-blower in exposing the alleged wrongdoings of the former Home Minister. In November last year, the top court had granted him protection from arrest in the cases and directed him to cooperate in the investigations. The bench was hearing a plea by Singh against the Bombay High Court judgment passed in September last year, dismissing his plea challenging the two inquiries ordered by the Home Ministry.

# India Post's Special Cover on artist SH Raza's birth centenary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India Post has released a Special Cover to mark the 100th birth anniversary of renowned painter Sayed Haider Raza, whose five day-long exhibition starts at the Piramal Museum of Art in Byculla on Wednesday.

The first physical expo in Mumbai after two years of the coronavirus pandemic, it showcases Raza's artworks from his time in Bombay from 1943-1950, showing the city through his lens in a then newly Independent India full of hopes and aspirations.

Chief Postmaster General (Maharashtra & Goa) Veena Srinivas, Post Master General (Mumbai Region) Swati Pandey, Piramal Museum of Art Director Ashvin Rajagopalan, Piramal Group Chairman Ajay Piramal, Raza Foundation Managing Trustee Ashok Vajpeyi and others



unveiled the Special Cover on Raza.

The exhibition will display some unseen Raza works and select masterpieces from the Piramal art collection, reflecting his love for Mumbai and a glimpse of the upcoming city as a melting pot of various cultures.

Born in Kakkaiya in modern day Madhya Pradesh, Raza lived and worked mostly in France but returned to India around 2010.

He studied at the Nagpur School of Art, followed by Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai, and went to Paris in 1950 to the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts.

Over the long decades of his trailblazing artistic career, with exhibitions around the world, he was honoured and decorated with many awards including Padma Vibhushan (2013).

Raza passed away in New Delhi on July 23, 2016, aged 94.

# Liquor licence case: Wankhede gets interim protection from arrest till Feb 28

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday granted interim protection from arrest to former NCB Mumbai Zone Director Sameer Wankhede till February 28 in connection with the liquor licence case.

The case pertains to Wankhede furnishing wrong details about his birth for getting a liquor licence.

The Maharashtra government didn't tell the court whether they were going to take coercive action against Wankhede or not.

On February 20, at around 8 p.m., the Thane Police had filed an FIR against Wankhede at Kopri Police Station, post which he moved the High Court.

"Wankhede is the owner of Sadguru Family Restaurant and Bar, which is situated in Vasi. On October 29, 1997, the licence to serve liquor at the bar was obtained. Wankhede allegedly furnished fake information regarding his date of birth. At the time when the liquor licence was obtained, Wankhede was 17 years and 11 months old, whereas to get the liquor licence one should be a major," a Thane police source said.

In November, NCP leader and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik had levelled allegations



against Sameer Wankhede.

He had said that in Vasi area of Navi Mumbai, Sameer ran a restaurant and a bar, but he got the licence to serve liquor by furnishing false information.

Earlier, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes had said that an FIR should be lodged against Nawab Malik. The Commission had said that it was Wankhede who was being harassed.

Now, the row has escalated as Wankhede has been booked by Thane Police.

# ED collects data of Indiabulls clients, company writes to NSE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which on Monday conducted raids at the offices of Indiabulls Housing Finance in Mumbai and Delhi in connection with a PMLA case lodged against the company and its promoter Sameer Gehlaut in April 2021, has reportedly recovered a few incriminating documents. The ED also questioned the Indiabulls officials about a few clients. Their data was provided to the ED by the Indiabulls officials.

Now the company has once again written to the National Stock Exchange to brief them on the ongoing matter. Speaking to IANS, the officials of Indiabulls con-

firmed the raid and the ED asking about a few clients.

The ED's investigation is based on an FIR lodged in Palghar, Maharashtra, in April 2021. The FIR was filed by a person named Ashutosh Kamble. "The company and its officials have provided the data of clients to Enforcement Directorate," said an Indiabulls official. The officials alleged that Kamble was part of an extortion and blackmailing racket. "The FIR is a copy-paste of earlier several patently false, vexatious and malicious complaints that the blackmailers have been circulating for the last three years now; similar allegations in a petition under the name of Abhay Yadav was dismissed by the apex court in 2019. The company had immediately approached the

Bombay High Court seeking quashing of the false and malicious FIR filed against the company in Palghar last year. The division bench of Bombay High Court on April 27, 2021 passed a detailed order staying all investigations in the matter," read a statement from the company.

Earlier, Indiabulls had approached the National Stock Exchange on April 28, 2021, when it wrote a letter to NSE regarding clarification about the ongoing matter.

The ED had earlier recorded the statement of a Pune-based businessman who deals in real estate in connection with the matter. The ED officials held a meeting on Sunday regarding Monday's raid. Separate teams were formed to recover a few incriminating documents.

# 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' to be spread in Maharashtra: Minister

Mumbai | Agencies

Hundreds of Congress women and girl activists on Monday joined a 'pink rally' to mark the 125th day of AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadera's clarion call of 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon', party officials said here.

Women & Child Welfare Minister and Congress leader Yashomati Thakur, who addressed the rally, said that Priyanka's campaign -- initiated in Uttar Pradesh -- has electrified the minds of lakhs of women and girls all over the country in the past four months. "Priyankaji is like a second Indra Gandhi. The drive started in UP; but now we will make women all over Maharashtra and the rest of the country aware of their rights, give them justice and empower them," said Thakur.

Other speakers like state women's



Congress President Sandhya Savvalakhe, office-bearers Pooja Anand, Deepthi Chaudhari, Sangeeta Dhone, Sangita Tiwari, Nita Trivedil, Rupali Kapse, Anjali Thackeray, Ujjwala Salve, Poonam Patil, Jayshree Wankhede, Sushila More addressed the 'pink rally', among others. Savvalakhe noted how several top BJP leaders 'demean' or 'use foul language' against the womenfolk, but the 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' campaign has shown how girls and women can be empowered, respected and how they can fight for their rights in every forum.

As per the directions of All India Mahila Congress President Netta D'Souza, women and girls turned out wearing pink t-shirts, scarves, dupattas, sarees, salwar-kurtas, with big and small pink balloons in their hands symbolising freedom and women-power.

# 'SPARE US, OR WE MAY DO SOMETHING DRASTIC': DISHA SALIAN'S PARENTS HIT OUT AT POLITICIANS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The parents of Disha Salian -- who ended her life on June 8, 2020 -- made an emotional public plea on Tuesday to be "left alone" by the politicians failing which they hinted at taking the extreme step themselves and 'only the political leaders would be responsible' for it.

"Please spare us... We are trying to emerge from the tragedy of our daughter. Don't keep raking it up repeatedly and politicising it... If this doesn't stop, we may be forced to do something drastic. Only the politicians will be responsible for this," Satish Salian and his wife Vasanti said.

Without taking any names, they flayed "certain politicians" (the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party) attempting to exploit her suicide on June 8, 2020, a week before the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Their tearful plea came hours after the BJP State President Chandrakant Patil and MLA Nitesh N. Rane threatened to make a fresh 'mega-expose' claiming it would solve the alleged mystery behind Disha's death.

"The whole matter has been examined by the Mumbai Police, they know everything, we have no problems (with the probe). She had some problems in a business deal and was very disturbed," said her parents.

"We are attempting to put it behind and move ahead in life... But the politicians constantly keep raising her death matter... We are tired of this... Please stop all this and leave us alone," they begged.

They made it clear that Disha was not the manager of the late actor whom she met only once for some costume trials, yet the politicians are trying to "reopen the case".

"She was a sensitive girl and could not handle the setback in her business mat-



ters. Yet the media and some politicians have been conveying misleading information which is defaming the Salian family. Let us leave in peace," the aged couple urged.

Their strong reactions came when Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar along with a couple of members of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) met them at their home on Tuesday.

The Salians also submitted a complaint to Pednekar and the MSCW demanding an end to the "constant harassment" and tortures they have been subject to nearly 20 months after Disha's demise.

The couple made it clear that their daughter had gone to the party with some 'childhood friends' and said "all this must stop, we request with folded hands". Pednekar slammed the BJP for again hounding the Salian family to make political capital from Disha's unfortunate death.

Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane, who alleged last week that Disha was eliminated as she knew certain 'secrets', again raised questions on purported gaps in the probe while spokesperson Ram Kadam attacked the Mayor accusing her of "pressurising the Salian family" when the probe is still underway.

"Everything is still in a cloud... Why did the Shiv Sena leaders visit the Salian family. All evidence is available and it will be exposed.

Did she (Pednekar) prod them to speak so-and-so. Why did nobody go to meet them before," Kadam alleged.

The Salians made it clear that Disha was under pressure owing to an awry business deal and fervently appealed to "stop the politics after her death".

Nationalist Congress Party National Spokesperson and Minister Nawab Malik came out in support of the Salian family while MSCW Chairperson Rupali Chakankar said she would probe their complaint.



EDITOR'S SPECS

ELECTION IN PILIBHIT - VARUN GANDHI...?

The absence of BJP MP Varun Gandhi from the campaign in his constituency, Pilibhit, has created a piquant situation for the BJP. Pilibhit, which goes to polls on Wednesday, has five assembly segments and a sizeable Sikh population. Varun, and his mother Maneka, have a significant support base in the constituency. Both have won the seat with huge margins. Maneka in 2014 and Varun in 2019 Lok Sabha elections, got over 5 lakh votes each. However, the BJP dropped them from the list of star campaigners after Varun raised questions related to the farmers' agitation. Varun explains his absence by saying, "I was afflicted with the Delta variant of Covid. I have still not recovered. I will reach my constituency once my health permits." A close aide of his, however, said on the condition of anonymity that "everyone has the freedom to cast his/her vote, but a large number of supporters in Pilibhit do heed to Varun Gandhi's call at the time of Assembly elections. No message has come from him this time." Asked if the absence of Varun or his mother will impact the polls, all four BJP candidates in Pilibhit district declined to comment, but claimed that their party is in a strong position in all four seats. Dr Shailendra Gangwar, the SP candidate from Pilibhit city, meanwhile, said, "The silence of a powerful opponent is nothing less than an indirect support to his/her rivals. Of course, it will help us." The BJP is locked in a direct fight with the Samajwadi Party for the Pilibhit city, Barkhera and Puranpur seats. In Bisalpur, though, there is a triangular contest between the BJP, BSP and the SP. In 2017, the BJP bagged all five seats here. The SP in 2012, had snapped up four of the five seats while BJP could win only one.

PUTIN'S DECEPTIVE WAR PLANS

The Russian strategy in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis is aimed at not allowing NATO to accept Ukraine as its member. In reality the war clouds have thickened due to the American and British stance and verbosity.

Asad Mirza

The ongoing war of nerves and escalating tensions between the US and Russia over Ukraine has entered its fourth month after the Russian forces started their build-up in areas near the Ukrainian border in November 2021, but the genesis of the conflict goes back to 2013 or even to 2008, when Ukraine applied for NATO membership. Historically, Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union until 1991 and is currently a country lodged between Russia and Europe. After 1991 even its polity seemed to be under Moscow's influence and its foreign policy over the years has wavered being either pro-Russia or pro-European Union. But the current crisis owes its genesis to a rather vital source of energy, i.e. natural gas, which both the Russians and the Americans have not clearly mentioned in their talks or given out as a reason for the conflict.

**Genesis of the crisis**  
If we try to decode the crisis we found that it is basically about energy and how it will shape-up the regional and global geopolitics. It is a fact that in spite of various global initiatives and campaigns to replace the fossil fuels, we still do not have any viable source of sustainable technology, which could provide low-cost and dependable power on a massive global scale. In this scenario, natural gas, the least polluting fossil fuel has become more and more critical as a viable energy source. Russia, which is the world's largest exporter of natural gas, currently supplies about 35 per cent of Europe's demand. In reality at the heart of the current conflict lies the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline which will link Russian gas fields directly with Germany - the largest European economy, resulting in Western Europe becoming more dependent on Russian gas. In 2021 Germany whose 13.3 per cent energy needs were met by nuclear energy needs Nord Stream 2 gas supply really quick, as it is committed to shut down its nuclear plants by the end of this year. Though Germany has invested massively in wind and solar power generation, yet it can't be sure



about their final gestation. One of Germany's largest trade partners Russia hopes to meet Germany's energy demands through Nord stream 2. **Nord Stream**  
Nord Stream is a labyrinth of offshore natural gas pipelines in Europe, running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany and then further on to Western Europe. The Nord Stream projects have been fiercely opposed by the United States and Ukraine, as well as by other Central and Eastern European countries, because of concerns that the pipelines would increase Russia's influence and bargaining power in Europe. In the past older Russian pipelines carrying gas to Europe passed through Ukraine. These gas pipelines generated revenue for Ukraine, as they passed through its land. But Russia in 2010 launched the Nord Stream 1 bypassing Ukraine through under sea pipelines in the Baltic Sea, Nord Stream 2, targeted to go on-stream by the middle of this year, following the same route and will double the gas supply through the network

cautioned NATO that it would face consequences if Ukraine were accepted as a member. The danger upper most in Russian generals view is that in case of Ukraine becoming a NATO member, NATO boots would be much more nearer to Russia. In the latest episode, the American and British reactions, after Russia started to build up its military presence at the Ukrainian border in November 2021, were very hysterical and during the last two months the American leadership has predicted a Russian attack the very next week, but so far nothing has happened on that front. Biden's first statement on the conflict avowed that the US would not allow Nord Stream 2 to go on-stream if Russia invaded Ukraine. He also warned Russia of strict international sanctions. Meanwhile, to complicate matters further, Russian-backed rebel leaders in eastern Ukraine have announced plans for military mobilisation amidst increasing tensions. Denis Pushilin, leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, said he had issued a decree for "general mobilisation" on Saturday, while another separatist leader, Leonid Pasechnik, signed a similar decree for the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic. But Putin knows quite well that a full-scale invasion of Ukraine will be enormously costly for the US and West European countries. No one could predict Putin's next action but the real intention behind all this brinkmanship is that he is insistent on keeping Ukraine as a buffer zone and could go to any extent to thwart the US plus UK and western European countries' effort to allow Ukraine in their and NATO's camp and influence. So far, he has been able to achieve this through intimidating tactics and not war, as he also knows that how costly that scenario would be for Russia. And if Germany were forced to cancel its Nord Stream 2 contract than the economic cost of a war would be a financial catastrophe for Russia, which it is ready to avoid.

international

Russia has moved thousands of troops into contested areas in 12 hours

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Thousands of Russian troops may already be in Ukraine, military sources warned on Tuesday, just hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin gave orders to his forces to enter the country amid fears that he is about to launch a land-grab in the country's east. Daily Mail reported. Ten thousand soldiers entered separatist-occupied areas overnight, a source with links to Ukrainian military intelligence told MailOnline, with 6,000 sent to Donetsk, 5,000 sent to Luhansk, and 1,500 to the city of Horlivka. "It is difficult to believe [Putin] could have moved that quickly - but he had a long time to prepare," the source said. It came on the back of videos which showed a column of Russian vehicles rolling through Donetsk in the early hours, including tanks, armoured troop carriers and support trucks. Insignia were not visible, but there was little doubt they



were Russian forces deployed on Putin's orders, the report said. Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin's order to recognise Donetsk and Luhansk as

independent stretches to the entire provinces - not just the bits currently occupied by rebels - raising the prospect that he is about to launch a land-grab and spark direct confronta-

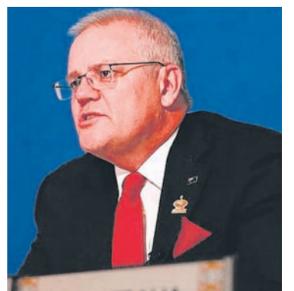
tion with Ukrainian troops dug into trenches there, Daily Mail reported. As Russian troops rolled in, fighting in the region escalated - with shells striking a power plant on the Ukrainian side of the line on Tuesday morning after explosions killed two of Kyiv's men and wounded 12 overnight, the report said. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz led world leaders in responding, announcing that the multi-billion dollar Nord Stream 2 gas pipe from Russia - a pet project of his predecessor Angela Merkel - will not be approved and that his country will begin looking elsewhere for gas to power its fossil-fuel dependent economy. US President Joe Biden also slapped limited sanctions on rebel areas of Ukraine overnight, banning Americans from doing business there, but promised that harsher measures will follow. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is also expected to announce sanctions on Tuesday, with the EU set to follow suit after that.

One-third unlikely to vote for Australian government in upcoming polls

Canberra | Agencies

One-third of Australians are less likely to vote for the incumbent Australian government over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic and health funding, a poll revealed on Tuesday. According to the new Essential poll, which was commissioned by peak body the Australian Medical Association (AMA), 34 per cent of voters said they were less likely to vote for the governing Coalition at the upcoming general election because of its record on health issues, reports Xinhua news agency. Omar Khorshid, the president of the AMA, said the poll "put the political parties on notice that public hospital funding is resonating as a vote-changer with the Australian electorate". "The distressing picture

we are getting of our hospital funding crisis should be a warning shot to all politicians that they need to pledge they'll fix public hospital funding if elected," he told the Guardian Australia.



The government in October last year rejected a unified call from the health ministers of all eight states and territories to boost hospital funding to help the system cope with the "unrelenting strain" of the pandemic. The Essential poll found the opposition Labor party leads the Coalition 49-45 on a two-party preferred basis, with 6 per cent of respondents undecided. Labor leader Anthony Albanese has not committed to the AMA's proposed

50-50 funding hospital model between federal and state governments but has promised the party will "always be better" on health than the Coalition. Australia on Tuesday reported more than 20,000 new Covid cases and 37 deaths - 14 each in New South Wales and Victoria, five in Queensland, three in South Australia and one in the Northern Territory.

Pak Information Ministry financially crippling media, bodies allege

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the Pakistan media bodies has taken a tough stance against the government after the amendments in the Pakistan Electronic Crime Act (PECA) 2016, calling the government's engagement with the media bodies over laws a "farce", Express Tribune reported. A statement by the JAC, comprising All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) and Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND), said the dialogue with the government over the legislation regarding media was being suspended "until the draconian amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) are reversed." "The Information Minister (Fawad Chaudhry) is toying with the media fraternity in the guise of engagement and keeps passing ordinances against freedom of speech while giving the impression



that media fraternity is being engaged," the statement said. "There is a grave trail of examples after an example where the ministry of information is tampering with freedom of speech, muzzling the journalists right to report, financially crippling media to influence journalism. "The fraternity had warned of this before and appealed to the PM previously as well that a dangerous trend had been emerging which is creating a distance between the government and the public as well as the media workers," it added. All media bodies stand united to defend freedom of expression and people's right to information.

Ahead of UN probes on rights violation, Sri Lankan FM briefs Delhi-based diplomats

Colombo | Agencies

Ahead of the 49th session of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Sri Lanka updated New Delhi-based diplomats on action taken to counter allegations of human rights violations. Foreign Minister, Prof. G.L. Peiris addressed the diplomatic corps based in New Delhi virtually and shared information on progress related to human rights and reconciliation. He briefed 83 Heads of Mission accredited to Sri Lanka who based in New Delhi ahead of the UNHRC session scheduled from February 28 to April 1 in Geneva. During the session, a written update on Sri Lanka is to be presented to the Council and an Interactive Dialogue on Sri Lanka is scheduled for March 3. The Sri Lankan government and Tamil rebels, who fought a 26-year long civil war, are accused of human rights violations at the final stages of the war which ended in May 2009. Addressing the envoys, Peiris said that Sri Lanka's government has undertaken substantial steps with a view to accountability, restorative justice and meaningful reconciliation which were efforts due to the work of domestic institutions, namely the Office for Reparations (OR), Office for



National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR), Office of Missing Persons (OMP), the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), and the Sustainable Development Council (SDC). Last September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet had raised concern over Sri Lanka's role on addressing alleged human rights violations in the past and had

decided to initiate maximum information gathering over the said violations. The UN had initiated action "to collect, consolidate, analyse, and preserve information and evidence, and to develop possible strategies for future accountability processes for gross violations of human rights or serious violations of international humanitarian law in Sri Lanka, to advocate for victims and survivors, and to support relevant judicial and other proceedings". It also had expressed its concern over the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) which had been to detain suspects violating their basic rights. The Sri Lankan government initially refused to cooperate with the UNHRC but later softened its stance after the European parliament threatened to withdraw trade concessions amidst financial crisis the country was facing. Peiris also told the envoys that at the September 2021 Session of the Human Rights Council, he had reiterated Sri Lanka's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and to remain engaged with the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council. He also briefed them on actions taken in line with the UNHRC's demands and particularly, the amendment of the 43-year-old PTA act.



## CM ASKS HOME SECY TO COORDINATE WITH CENTRE TO BRING BACK MP STUDENTS FROM UKRAINE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday directed the principal secretary of the state home department to get in touch with officials in the Central government supervising the evacuation of Indian citizens stuck in Ukraine. During a meeting at his office, Chouhan asked officials to ensure that all those students who hail from Madhya Pradesh are brought back safely.

The Chief Minister said the Central government is monitoring the crisis in Ukraine and the children stuck there will be brought back soon. He asked the officials to remain alert to bring back all the people of Madhya Pradesh stuck in Ukraine.

"The Central government has issued an advisory on this. Arrangement of aircraft etc has been made to get the students back. Everyone is concerned about the situation, including the Prime Minister, Chief Minister and state government," Chouhan said. There is no specific number of students from Madhya Pradesh, however, reports suggested that there are around 100 students. State Home Minister Narottam Mishra on Monday said that around 60 students are from Indore alone.

Earlier in the day, the Minister of State for External Affairs said in Delhi that, "there is no



need to panic, the Government of India has issued an advisory. All Indians, stay in touch with the Indian embassy."

As per the reports, Air India has announced that three flights would be operated between India and Ukraine next week, on February 22, 24 and 26.

India has called for restraint on all sides as tensions between Russia and NATO escalated further after Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday recognised the independence of two states of Ukraine.

Earlier, Russia had amassed troops near the Ukraine border and has been demanding that NATO not admit Ukraine and other ex-Soviet states as members.

## NATIONAL LEVEL SILVER MEDAL FOR 'VAIDYA AAPKE DWAR' TELEMEDICINE APP OF DEPARTMENT OF AYUSH

Bhopal: AyushQure, a telemedicine app of the Department of AYUSH, has been awarded the Silver Award at All India level by the prestigious Koch Award. The AyushQure App developed under Vaidya Aapke Dwar Yojana has been appreciated by subject experts and management experts at various stages of the competition. It has also been suggested to publicize it more and more in the public. This app of Department of AYUSH can be downloaded from Google Play Store. Through this, citizens can get consultation from AYUSH doctors from the comfort of their home. In this, the facility of sending reports and getting treatment related guidelines has also been made available through the app itself. AyushQure App has been downloaded by more than 37 thousand users in Madhya Pradesh so far. 88 percent of those who booked on the app have received medical advice.

## 85% courts in MP lack security arrangements

THE MADHYA PRADESH JUDGES ASSOCIATION HAS SAID THAT THERE SHOULD BE PERMANENT POLICE OUTPOSTS AND ADEQUATE FORCE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF JUDGES AND OTHER COURT STAFF AT EVERY DISTRICT COURT IN THE STATE.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Judges Association has said that there should be permanent police outposts and adequate force to ensure the safety of judges and other court staff at every district court in the state.

The assertion came after the association learned that around 85 percent of the district and session

courts in Madhya Pradesh do not have police outposts, either permanent or temporary for security purposes.

Out of the 52 district courts in the state, Dewas district court has a permanent police outpost and seven have temporary outposts namely -- in Jabalpur, Bhopal, Damoh, Panna, Sagar, Shivpuri and Singrauli.

In an affidavit, the Madhya Pradesh Police have informed the High Court that only Dewas district court has a permanent police outpost and as many as eight police personnel of the district force and five home guards are deployed.

The state police further informed that a maximum of 29 people have been deployed at the temporary outpost in Jabalpur district court premises, consisting of 24 personnel of district force and five from special security force. Only three personnel of district force are deployed at Bhopal district court's temporary outpost. In its affidavit, the state police told the court that at the outpost at Damoh

district court premises, one personnel of district police and five from homeguard are deployed. Similarly, five personnel of the special force are deployed at Panna district court.

At the outpost of Sagar district court, four personnel of district force have been deployed. In Shivpuri, five personnel of district police are deployed and the temporary police outpost in Singrauli district court, one personnel of the special district force and one of homeguards is deployed.

This submission of the state police came in response to a petition filed in the High Court regarding the security and safety of the judges and other court staff.

Suyash Thakur, who is a counsel for one of the interveners in the case -- the Madhya Pradesh Judges Association, said, "Judges proclaim judgement after hearing the cases at courts and from the security point of view every district court in the state should have a permanent police outpost and adequate force should be deployed there."

## Chief Minister Chouhan Will Conduct Grih Pravesh in 50 Thousand

PM HOUSES BUILT AT COST OF 1925 CRORES. BHOOMI POOJAN OF 30 THOUSAND NEW HOUSES BUILT AT COST OF 1155 CRORES WILL BE PERFORMED. ON FEBRUARY 23 THERE WILL BE A STATE LEVEL PROGRAMME IN BHOPAL AND IN ALL THE BODIES

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will conduct the Grih Pravesh of beneficiaries in the newly constructed 50 thousand houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) on February 23. These houses have been built at a cost of Rs 1925 crores. Along with this,

Chief Minister Shri Chouhan will also do bhoomi-poojan of 30 thousand new houses to be constructed at a cost of 1155 crores. In the programme itself, the Chief Minister will transfer Rs 250 crore to the accounts of 26 thousand 500 beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

This virtual programme will be held at Kushabhau Thakre International Convention Centre (Minto Hall) from 3 pm onwards. Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh and Minister of State OPS Bhadauria will also address the programme. Chief Minister Chouhan will also interact with the beneficiaries. The programme will also take



place in all the urban bodies. The live tele-cast of the main programme will be done through Doordarshan, regional electronic channels, Facebook, YouTube channel of Public Relations and webcast through

themselves. A grant of Rs. 2 lakh 50 thousand per house is being provided to the selected beneficiaries. The central share of 1 lakh 50 thousand rupees per house and state share of one lakh rupees per house is included in this. The remaining amount of housing construction is being borne by the beneficiary himself. Registered construction workers of weaker income group category, who are not able to meet the beneficiary's share, are also provided additional grant of up to one lakh rupees by the state to meet their contribution through the Chief Minister's Building and Construction Workers Housing Scheme. The first name of the woman of the beneficiary family is being entered in the registry of the house. With special efforts in the state, interest subsidy (amount up to Rs. 2 lakh 67 thousand) has been provided to 1 lakh 20 thousand homeless families of EWS, LIG and MIG category.

## CM Planted Almond and Cassia Saplings in Smart Garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday planted almond and cassia saplings in Smart Garden located in Shyamala Hills. Chouhan also performed Shramdaan. Today, along with Chief Minister Chouhan, members of Ayanash Welfare Society, Bharti Bais, Upma Sharma and Seema Thakur also planted saplings.

Chouhan received information about the works of the society. The functionaries said that the society has started operating a rehabilitation centre while working in the field of mental health. At present, 23 citizens have been associated with various creative activities in this centre. In the field of environment, the society is fulfilling the



responsibility of planting and caring for saplings in different areas. A waste compost plant has also been set up.

Cooperation of school children is being taken in public awareness campaign by making them visit various settlements. In the Baghsevaniya area, women have been associated with the work of sewing cloth bags. Almond grows more in mountainous areas. Technically, it is the

seed of the fruit of the almond tree. The almond tree has pink and white fragrant flowers. Almonds are rich in fiber which aids in digestion. Almonds are useful in the treatment of high blood pressure, constipation and heart diseases. It is rich in potassium, magnesium, calcium and vitamin E. The bark and leaves of cassia are used in making Ayurvedic medicines.

## CM CONGRATULATED THE SPEAKER ON COMPLETION OF ONE YEAR TENURE

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly Girish Gautam on the completion of one year tenure.

Chouhan said that under the leadership of Speaker Girish Gautam, the Vidhan Sabha would continue to be progressive in the direction of discharge of dignified arrangements and traditions along with the development of the state and happiness and prosperity of the citizens.

## Today is a day of celebration for many PM Awas beneficiaries including

Jagatrai Raut | Bhopal

Today is a day of celebration for Jagatrai Raut of Malajkhand, today bhoomi-pujan is going to be held with the help of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) for the construction of his pucca house.

Jagatrai is facing a lot of problem in the kuccha house at present. As monkeys keep breaking the roof tiles, he has to suffer financial losses off and on. Also, during the rainy season the house gets filled with water. Jagatrai and his family are confident that today after bhoomi-pujan, their dream of a pucca house will be fulfilled soon.

Bhomi-pujan is also being performed of the house of Bhupendra Meena residing in Pipariya of Hoshangabad district today. Meena says that he has received the first installment of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, from which he is going to build his pucca house.



Similarly, Komal Prasad of Lakhnadaun is also celebrating Griha Pravesh at his PM Awas. Komal Prasad lived in a kuccha house. On getting information about the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) from the employ-

ees of the Municipality Lakhnadaun, he fulfilled his dream of a pucca house by applying for a grant. Komal along with his wife and two children will occupy their pucca house on February 23.

Dhanibai Mahdev of Manpur Municipal Council in Indore division tells that she is happy when she thinks of occupying their pucca house. She says that this would not have been possible without the help of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Saveer Ahirwar of Bhopal who is a labourer by profession is going to occupy his pucca house with his wife and two

children. Saveer says that a pucca roof above his head and concrete walls will bring relief and his social status will also be enhanced.

Lakhs of beneficiaries like these are today expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, due to the efforts of whom their dream of a pucca house is being fulfilled.

## Gwalior Gets Three New Gifts

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday dedicated the new District Panchayat Bhawan, Samyukta Rajasva Bhawan and Veer Savarkar Sarovar Katora Tal in Gwalior through video conference from the Chief Minister's residence. The combined cost of all these works is about Rs 75 crore. Congratulating the citizens of Gwalior, Chouhan said that the state government is active for the development of Gwalior. This city will not be second to anyone in the race for development. Gwalior has its own history. From classical music there are other rich cultural traditions. The heritage of Gwalior will be continuously enhanced.

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia, State

Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar, Minister of State for Horticulture and Food Processing Bharat Singh Kushwaha and Water Resources and Fishermen-Welfare and Fisheries Development Minister Tulsilal Silawat were present in the inaugural programme in Gwalior.

Revenue and Transport Minister Govind Singh Rajput also participated virtually in the programme.

Chouhan said that Gwalior has got three new gifts today. The development work of Gwalior is being done with the help of the central leadership. Together we will make a wonderful Gwalior. Gwalior Gaurav Diwas will also happen soon. Chief Minister



said that the celebration of Gaurav Diwas of villages and cities in the state has already started from village Jait of Sehore district. This sequence will also take place soon. The purpose of celebrating the birthday or Gaurav Diwas of a village or city is that all citizens should be active and sensitive for the development of their village and city. Efforts should be made that the distinguished personalities of the region should also be present in the glory day. Chouhan said that a prosperous, magnificent and glorious India is being built under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Amrit Kaal of Independence. This Amrit Kaal is for the whole country. This is also the golden period of Gwalior's development. Special initia-

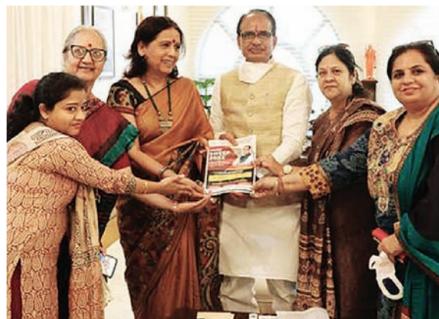
tion has been taken for the development of Gwalior due to the efforts of the Central and State Governments. Chouhan said that with the cooperation of Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, we are witnessing a golden period of development of Gwalior. While Scindia formulated the Drone Policy, Union Agriculture Minister Tomar has stepped up efforts for the use of Drones in agriculture. Agriculture is creating new records in Madhya Pradesh. The country is getting the benefit of air connectivity. All this is the result of the dedication of both the Union Ministers. Chief Minister said that the Gwalior region is getting benefits of Chambal water, elevated corridor, construction of buildings, quality roads, clean drinking water, implementation of poor welfare schemes.

## Women Entrepreneurs Met Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The women delegation of Madhya Pradesh Association of Women Entrepreneurs met Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at his residence on Tuesday. Women entrepreneurs invited Chief Minister Chouhan to launch Sweep-2022 (sustainable growth for women entrepreneurship & export promotion) International Women Entrepreneurs Conference to be held at Kushabhau Thakre Auditorium (Minto Hall) Bhopal from March 24 to 26.

In the conference, 500 participants from around 20 countries will participate. The delegation also presented a souvenir of the organisa-



tion to Chouhan. An international level exhibition will also be organised by the institution. Besides, International Achievers Awards will also be given. Various organisations are col-

laborating for the conference. The delegation included the President of the organisation, Archana Bhatnagar, members Bhavna Madan, Satrupa, Vini Dhir and Manjari Srivastava.



# LACEY CHABERT BAGS MULTI-PICTURE DEAL WITH TELEVISION NETWORK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lacey Chabert, who voiced Meg Griffin in the first season of 'Family Guy', has landed an exclusive multi-picture deal with Crown Media Family Networks.

The agreement grants the authority to the actress to headline and executive produce films and other content for the Hallmark Channel and other Hallmark platforms throughout the next two years, reports variety.com.

Commenting on the occasion, Lisa Hamilton Daly, EVP of programming at Crown Media Family Networks, said in a statement accessed by 'Variety', "Lacey's warmth, talent, relatability and creative sensibilities have endeared her to millions of Hallmark viewers for more than ten years, making her one of our most in-

demand stars."

"In addition to shining on screen, Lacey is a prolific behind-the-scenes creative partner, developing and executive producing many of our highest-quality, most-beloved projects. She inherently understands and embodies what our networks are all about - the transformational power of love and making people feel good - and we look forward to continuing our work with her to create heartfelt, compelling stories that will entertain, inspire and touch our audience," the statement further read.

Over the years, Lacey has become a Crown Media mainstay as she has starred in several Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries original productions. Most recently, Chabert handled three profiles on the 'Wedding Veil' film trilogy, where she served as a developer, executive producer and also starred in the project.



London | Agencies

Veteran Hollywood star Helen Mirren is set to be honoured at the SAG Awards in Los Angeles next week, but she has shared that she doesn't believe she deserves such an accolade, despite a storied career.

Mirren already has an Academy Award and British

# HELEN MIRREN: I DON'T FEEL DESERVING OF A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Academy Film Award for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in 'The Queen', a Tony Award and a Laurence Olivier Award for the same role in 'The Audience', three BAFTAs for her performance as DCI Jane Tennison in 'Prime Suspect', and four Primetime Emmys, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Of her latest honour, she told the Mail on Sunday's You Magazine: "It's extraordinary. I genuinely do

not feel I remotely deserve it, except that I'm still alive and working." She added: "I've done some wonderful films and I've done some pretty awful films. It took me by surprise, completely. A great honour." The 'Duke' star said she is very "self-critical" and expects to be "found out" any time now. She confessed: "I think of myself as still being the way I was in my mind, in my body, through my twenties, thirties and forties: struggling, ambitious, frustrated and self-critical."

# UMA THURMAN TO PLAY ARIANNA HUFFINGTON IN TV DRAMA

Los Angeles | Agencies

She has been feted with a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress and also received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination, Hollywood star Uma Thurman, who is often hailed as maverick filmmaker Quentin Tarantino's muse, has spoken about how she takes her own game a step ahead each time she comes on screen.

Speaking to correspondent during a roundtable for her upcoming series 'Super Pumped: The Battle For Uber', Thurman talked about competing with herself on-screen.

"I must say that I am surprised by how much I love acting and my curiosity about people and different cultures and what makes them chic and what happens and my love of the huge variety of choices you can do within a performance and it never stops..."

She added: "I guess when you see someone perform who stays curious and enjoys pushing their own boundaries and also does not necessarily focus on the result as much as the process. The result is kind of scary (laughs) but the process is full of life."

During the interview she was also asked about a genre she would like to dabble in.

The 51-year-old actress, who has worked in remarkable movies such as 'Kill Bill', 'Pulp Fiction' and 'My Super Ex-Girlfriend' to name a few, revealed that she has touched all.

"I think I have touched most what you call genres but through out it all drama and comedy quite simply... The hardest most thing is it funny or is it moving... That's what I like."

She is now gearing up for the release of her upcoming series 'Super Pumped: The Battle For Uber', which will air in India on February 28 on Voot Select.



# WOULD BE 'THRILLED' TO MAKE 'UNCHARTED' SEQUEL: RUBEN FLEISCHER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Ruben Fleischer was at the helm of the action-adventure film 'Uncharted' based on the video game series of the same name and admitted that while he would relish in the opportunity to work on an 'Uncharted 2', the notion of a sequel relies on the audience's initial response.

He said: "I'd be thrilled at the opportunity to make a sequel and you can't help (that after) working on this film for two years." "I can't help but imagine different adventures these guys might find themselves on and I'd be thrilled to figure out a way to bring those to life. But ultimately the audience will decide if that's something they're excited to see." 'Uncharted' stars 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' actor Tom Holland, as fortune hunter Nathan Drake who is recruited by treasure hunter Victor 'Sully' Sullivan, played by Mark Wahlberg, to help recover a 500-year-old lost fortune, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The movie also stars Sophia Ali, Tati Gabrielle, and Antonio Banderas in supporting roles.

The director - who is known for his 2009 comedy horror 'Zombieland' and its 2019 sequel, was then explained that he was "blown away" by the script of the movie and felt that it echoed treasure hunting movies of the past.



# BRITNEY SPEARS SIGNS PUBLISHING DEAL FOR HER TELL-ALL MEMOIR

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop icon Britney Spears has secured a publishing deal for her memoir, which will narrate her accounts of and commentary on her rise to fame, her music career and her relationship with her family and landmark events from her life with the publishing house Simon & Schuster.

Although the terms of the deal are still under wraps, an individual familiar with Spears told Variety that the deal is "record-breaking" in nature with the agreement estimated to worth as much as \$15 million, as reported by Page Six.

As per 'Variety', Simon & Schuster reportedly emerged victorious after a bidding war involving multiple other publishers.

According to Variety, the information with regards to the pop icon's book deal comes several months after the termination of her conservatorship by a Los Angeles Superior Court judge. The singer had been living under a court-ordered conservatorship placed by her father, Jamie Spears, since 2007. Though the singer continued to work, touring and holding a Las Vegas residency, the conservatorship remained in place.



# JEMELE HILL, WILL SMITH, CICELY TYSON FETED AT 1ST ROUND OF NAACP IMAGE AWARDS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood superstar Will Smith, journalist Jemele Hill, activist Stacey Abrams, and late actress Cicely Tyson have been recognised at the 53rd NAACP Image Awards on Monday.

As per Variety, starting from February 21, non-televised Image Awards are being handed out during five virtual ceremonies through the week, leading up to the live telecast on February 26 on BET where Awards in the top



categories will be doled out.

Former ESPN personality Jemele Hill has emerged as the first double winner at this year's coveted awards, she took home two trophies for her podcast 'Jemele Hill is Unbothered', in the categories of arts and entertainment and society and culture.

While Abrams, the Georgia-based voting rights advocate, got the nod for children's literature for the book, 'Stacey's Extraordinary Words', which she co-wrote with Kitt Thomas, Will Smith, who is in the Oscars run for his work in the biopic 'King Richard', was feted with the literary biography laurel for telling his own story in 'Will', which was published late last year.

Tyson won the literary award for debut author for her autobiography 'Just As I Am' which was published two days before her death at the age of 96 in January 2021. Sherri Shepherd and Kym Whitley laid their hands on the podcast honours for their work on 'Two Funny Mamas'.

# ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Naomie Harris



## DEEPTI, RICHA ONLY BRIGHT SPOTS FOR INDIA IN LATEST ICC ODI RANKINGS

Dubai | Agencies

In spite of India having a disappointing showing so far in the five-match WODI series in New Zealand, there were a few positives for the tourists in the latest ICC ODI Rankings as Deepti Sharma gained two places to No.18 in the batters' rankings and also climbed six spots to No.13 in the bowlers' rankings.

Deepti's unbeaten 69 in the third ODI saw her gain two places in the batters' rankings, while her four-for in the second ODI helped her climb in the bowlers' rankings.

The Mithali Raj-led India have lost all four ODI played so far, with the last match to be played on February 24.

Batter Richa Ghosh has gained 15 spots to No.54, courtesy of her innings of 65 that helped India post a strong total in the second ODI. In the absence of Smriti Mandhana, Sabbhineni Meghana grabbed the opportunity with both hands with knocks of 49 and 61 which saw her rise a massive 113 spots to No.67 in the batters' list.

Meanwhile, Mithali continues to be at No. 2 among batters with 741 points, while Australia's Alyssa Healy is the leader with 749 points. Among



bowlers, India pacer Jhulan Goswami is fourth with 723 points, while in the all-rounders' list, Deepti Sharma has also maintained her fourth position. New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr has broken into the top-10 for ODI all-rounders in the latest ICC Player Rankings. Amelia scored a hun-

dred and a fifty in the second and third ODIs, helping her climb the batters' and all-rounders' charts in the weekly ICC Rankings update.

In the second ODI, Kerr walked in inside the Powerplay while the White Ferns were chasing 271 and bailed the team out of trouble from 55/3. She put up a 128-run stand with Maddy Green for the fourth wicket. She batted through till the end, finishing on 119 not out off 135 balls as New Zealand chased down the total with an over to spare.

Kerr once again walked in when New Zealand were in early trouble at 14/2 in their chase of 280 in the third ODI. She added 103 runs for the third wicket with Amy Satterthwaite and helped stabilise the innings. She eventually got out for 67 but laid the platform for the lower order to complete the second-highest successful ODI chase in women's ODI history. The latest rankings also saw Kerr attain career-high ratings for batters (512) and all-rounders (269). She jumped 21 spots to No.22 in rankings for batters and seven spots to No.6 for all-rounders. Fellow Kiwi Lauren Down too climbed, making a massive jump after her match-winning 64\* off 52 balls in the third ODI. She rose 14 spots and broke into the top 50 to occupy the 49th spot for batters.

## Nitu, Anamika enter quarters at 73rd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian boxers Nitu and Anamika progressed to the quarter-finals after registering comprehensive victories on the second day of the 73rd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Nitu began the day's proceedings brilliantly against the Russian boxer Iuliia Chumgalakova and exhibited a skillful display to secure a dominating win by a unanimous margin in the 48kg opener on Monday night.

Next in action, Anamika, too, looked in good touch during her 50kg preliminary bout as she defeated the local favourite Zlatislava Chukanova 4-1.

Nitu and Anamika will now take on Italy's Roberta Bonatti and Algeria's Roumaysa Boualem respectively in their last-eight contests.



Meanwhile, two other Indian boxers, Akash Sangwan and Shiksha, exited the event following identical 0-5 defeats in their respective matches. While Sangwan lost to German pugilist Daniel

Krotter in the men's 67kg second round, Shiksha came up short against the reigning Asian champion Dina Zholaman of Kazakhstan in the women's 54kg opening round bout.

## 'If it happens again, I will not hold back': Saha issues warning to journalist

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India batter Wriddhiman Saha on Tuesday said though he is "hurt and offended" the wicket-keeper will not reveal the name of the journalist who had threatened him last week.

The senior Indian glovesman had shared a WhatsApp chat in which a "respected" journalist threatened Saha for not having an interview with him.

Saha, who was recently dropped from the Indian Test squad, said on "grounds of humanity" he will not reveal the journalist's name for the time being.

"I was hurt and offended. I thought not to tolerate such kind of behaviour and didn't want anyone to go through this kind of bullying. I decided I will go out and expose the chat in the public eye, but not his/her name," Saha wrote on KOO.

"My nature isn't such that I will harm anyone to the extent of ending someone's career. So on grounds of humanity looking at his/her family, I am not exposing the name for the time being. But if any such repetition happens, I will not hold back.

"I thank each and everyone who has



shown support and extended their willingness to help. My gratitude," he further said on KOO.

The Cricket fraternity including Virender Sehwag and Harbhajan Singh had come out in support of Saha following the incident.

Earlier in the day, the Indian Cricketers' Association released a statement, and the body condemned the "threatening message" sent by the journalist to Saha.

Meanwhile, Team India has decided to groom a younger wicket-keeper batter and for that reason, Saha was overlooked for the Test squad against Sri Lanka.

For now, KS Bharat has been included in the Test squad as a backup for the Sri Lanka

## Djokovic begins Dubai campaign in style, beats Italy's Musetti

Dubai | Agencies

World No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic overcame world No. 58 Lorenzo Musetti of Italy 6-3, 6-3 at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in his first match of the season following the deportation fiasco during the Australian Open in January.

The match proved easier than the Serbian's previous meeting with the 19-year-old Musetti, which came in the fourth round of the French Open last year. In that encounter, the Italian was forced to retire in the fifth set after holding a two-sets-to-love lead. Djokovic, eventually, went on to clinch the title in Paris. "All in all, it's a



straight-sets win, so of course I have to be satisfied with my tennis, especially after not playing for two-and-a-half, three months," Djokovic was quoted as saying by aptour.com. "Of course, there were moments when I played great; there were moments when I made a couple of unforced errors in a row uncharacteristically. But it's normal to expect that (in my) first match after a while.

"I'm glad that I managed to finish out the job tonight in straight sets against a very talented player from Italy who possesses a lot of quality. Of course, he didn't have much to lose and in windy conditions (it was) a bit tricky to play. But all in all, a very, very pleasant experience for me," added Djokovic.

## Qualifier A: UAE, Ireland qualify for 2022 Men's T20 World Cup

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Amerat (Oman): UAE and Ireland qualified for the 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia after winning their respective Qualifier A semi-finals of the global tournament against Nepal and Oman, here on Tuesday.

After opting to bat first, UAE suffered an early blow as Chirag Suri was bowled by Jitendra Mukhiya in the second over for just four runs. However, the wicket did little to deter UAE as Vriitya Aravind continued his superb form.

Aravind picked up 18 runs from Mukhiya's subsequent over, and continued to plunder runs off the other bowlers as Muhammad Waseem expertly negotiated the strike. The half-century stand was finally broken in the eighth over when Sandeep Lamichhane cleaned up Aravind for 48. Waseem was then joined by Muhammad Usman and the pair added another half-century partnership.



In reply, Nepal struggled from the get-go. Nepal limped to 76/4 but capitulated soon after. UAE skipper Ahmed Raza removed both Airee and Gyanendra Malla in the 13th over and picked up two more wickets in his next. With wickets falling regularly and the asking rate climbing, Nepal finally folded for 107, Zahoor Khan picking up the last

wicket in the 19th over. Raza finished with an impressive 5/19, an ICC report said.

The win meant UAE booked one of the four remaining spots up for grabs in the Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in Australia, later this year. In another semi-final match of the day, Oman's decision to bowl was vindicated as they



struck early with Bilal Khan removing the Irish openers in the third over. The wickets should have slowed Ireland down but Gareth Delany and Harry Tector had other plans.

Ireland's brilliant 56-run victory meant they've booked one of the two spots up for grabs for the Men's T20 World Cup, alongside UAE.

## New Zealand Women thrash India by 63 runs in rain-interrupted ODI

Queenstown | Agencies

New Zealand Women moved one step closer to maintaining their recent dominance. After scoring a 33-ball 68, Kerr returned with the ball to pick up the final three wickets as India suffered the biggest defeat in the ongoing ODI series so far.

Richa Ghosh (52 from 29 balls) was the only shining light for the visitors as she scored the fastest-ever half century by an Indian woman in an ODI to save some embarrassment for the tourists.

India lost Shafali Verma (0) to a soft dismissal to Frances Mackay (2/22) in the opening over of the chase and when Yastika Bhatia (0) fell to Jess Kerr (2/11) in the next over it was not looking good for Mithali

Raj's side. Ghosh and Mithali combined to put on 77 from just 49 balls for the fifth wicket to breathe some life into the contest, but it was all in vain as Amelia Kerr (3/30) returned to the attack to put the final stamp on a dominant New Zealand victory.

The fifth and final game of the series will be played at the same ground on February 24.

The fifth and final game of the series will be played at the same ground on February 24.

### Brief scores:

New Zealand Women 191/5 in 20 overs (Sophie Devine 32, Suzie Bates 41, Amelia Kerr 68 not out, Amy Satterthwaite 32; Renuka Singh 2/33) beat India Women 128 in 17.5 overs (Mithali Raj 30, Richa Ghosh 52; Hayley Jensen 3/32, Amelia Kerr 3/30) by 63 runs.

## Indian pacers are doing a commendable job under pressure, says Sunil Gavaskar

Bengaluru | Agencies

Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has praised the Indian pace bowlers, saying they have done a fine job of holding onto their nerves under tremendous pressure in the T20I series against the West Indies.

The former India captain showered praises on young Deepak Chahar for his ability to swing the ball both ways.

"He is a terrific swing bowler. He has that extra pace as well. He isn't express but he gets the ball to move at a decent pace which makes it difficult for a batsman. And he has got both the in-swing and the out-swing without a noticeable change in action which makes it difficult. So, when you have someone like him and have Bhuvneshwar Kumar on the bench after



two fine performances in the series, India are blessed as far as riches in bowling are concerned," Gavaskar said. Gavaskar said that India have bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah who can walk into any team. Bumrah was not in action for the West Indies series, but he will return for the Sri Lanka series. The Indian vice-captain will be

joined by Siraj, Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, and Avesh Khan to lead India's bowling attack.

"There is Bumrah. Don't forget him. He will walk into any team in the world, not just the India team, any team. Then you have Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami...spoiled for choices," he added.

## MUMBAI CITY FC DEFEAT SC EAST BENGAL, RETURN TO TOP FOUR

Fatorda (Goa) | Agencies

Defending champions Mumbai City FC went back into contention for a semi-final spot with a narrow 1-0 win over SC East Bengal in the 2021-22 Indian Super League (ISL) at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, here on Tuesday.

A solitary goal by Bipin Singh (51') was the difference, whose individual brilliance helped Des Buckingham's men climb up to fourth place with 28 points.

SC East Bengal made a spirited start after Mohammad Nawaz had to make an early save from Mahesh Naorem's powerful drive.

A few minutes before the half-hour mark, Thongkhosiem Haokip found himself one-on-one with the goalkeeper but a poor first touch denied him a scoring opportunity. His calls for a penalty fell on deaf ears following a faint touch from Mountada Fall tripping him inside the box.

Despite dominating more of the ball possession, the Islanders could only muster up two shots on target in



the first half. The lack of clear scoring chances kept their attackers frustrated as SCEB defended resiliently and played on the counter. It was an

intriguing first half but a lack of quality in the final third meant both sides went into the halftime break on equal terms.

Mahesh began the second half in a similar fashion to the first, by forcing Nawaz into a save in the goal. Then, Igor Angulo miscued a tap-in from 10-yards away on the other end which shocked everyone on the pitch. The deadlock, however, was finally broken by a precise and powerful finish by Bipin Singh from outside the box. His left-footed strike beat the goalkeeper at his near post.

A moment of magic was witnessed on the stroke of the 80th minute when Nawaz made a point-blank save from Raju Gaikwad's overhead attempt.

Connecting with the rebound, Fran Sota volleyed his shot above the crossbar to his frustration. The fourth official added four minutes for stoppages and Mumbai saw them out with a collective defensive effort to collect the three points.

Mumbai City FC take the field against FC Goa in their next outing at the Athletic Stadium on Saturday while SC East Bengal face NorthEast United in a battle of the bottom-dwellers at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Monday.



## WORKING WITH SOORAJ BARJATYA IS LIKE GOING BACK TO SCHOOL: PARINEETI

Team Absolute | Chennai

Parineeti Chopra is thrilled to be directed by a stalwart filmmaker like Sooraj Barjatya for her next 'Uunchai'. On the 58th birthday of the director, the actress thanks him for enriching her as a performer on screen. Parineeti says, "Sooraj sir is the gentlest and the most amazing human being that I have ever met. He is so simple, so wise and so intelligent as a creative force, that someone like me, who is a complete director's actor, can gain tremendously and sharpen one's skill-set. "Working with Sooraj ji on the sets of 'Uunchai' is like me going back to school because there is so much learning and unlearning at the same time that you feel creatively satiated after a shoot day." She adds that he is enriching her as an artiste and she can only be grateful to him for choosing her to be a part of his vision. "He deserves all the happiness and love on his birthday because through his films, he has spread so much love and joy to people. He has taught everyone so many values that are rooted in our Indian culture for generations." "We are blessed to have had someone like Sooraj sir shaping Hindi cinema. His contribution is simply timeless."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Action star Tiger Shroff is on cloud nine after getting to collaborate with the 'Khiladi' of Bollywood, Akshay Kumar on the sequel of 'Bade Miya and Chote Miya'.

The 'War' actor has been a big fan of Akshay Kumar and the project gave him the opportunity to work with the one whom he has admired for a long time.

Sharing his excitement, Tiger said, "I am so excited to work on this project which gives me a chance to work with the original action hero/the khiladi - Akshay Sir! My father always tells me to follow his example and I know I have been his fan for as long as I can remember."

He also praised his friend and producer Jacky Bhagnani, "This project is also extra special because I get to work again with my brother, one of my most favourite people in the industry, Jacky Bhagnani. I am excited to partner with him yet again to push the boundaries of what he has envi-

sioned."

Recollecting how the film found its inception, he said, "I remember it all started in London when I was shooting for a film and Jacky happened to be there as well shooting for one of his films and he had invited me over. While discussing event films, he brought up the idea of a two-hero film - the kind of films we have all loved while growing up." "He said, 'why don't we make the biggest action entertainer ever!' How could I have not jumped at this. He just thought of it and things manifested from there and it happened," the actor concluded.

## Tiger Shroff elated to work with Akki

## SHARVARI: HOPE I GET TO DANCE NEXT TO MADHURI DIXIT SOME DAY

Mumbai: Actress Sharvari has just started taking Kathak lessons and she credits her on-screen icon and 'twinkle toes' Madhuri Dixit for inspiring her to learn the dance form. Sharvari, who made her big screen debut with 'Bunty Aur Babli 2', says, "I've always been in awe of Madhuri Dixit ji, she's been a huge inspiration for me always wanting to learn kathak.

Unfortunately, I started just recently after so many years of wanting to learn kathak."

She added: "But every time I would see Ma'am's songs or even snippets on

Instagram or dance shows, I would google kathak teachers to start learning. She's been my idol and I hope I get to dance next to her someday! It would be an honour."

Madhuri and Sharvari hail from Maharashtra, and Sharvari has always been a fan of the superstar who ruled the silver screen in the late 1980s and all of 1990s.

Sharvari says, "I think as an actor you keep playing so many different roles that at the end of the day you don't know what's going to come to help. But, of course, learning a different dance form will never go out of hand. It will bring grace; it brings rhythm in your body."

## Experimenting with different ensembles is exciting: Pooja

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pooja Hedge, whose song 'Arabic Kuthu' from the film 'Beast' took the Internet by storm, has talked about sporting a look she has never carried before for the number. The actress says experimenting with different ensembles is exciting for her. The song is composed by Anirudh, written by Sivakarthikeyan and sung by Jonita Gandhi and Anirudh in Tamil. Striking us as an Egyptian goddess, Pooja sports kohled eyes, wavy hair, metallic elements on her attire, graceful moves and her signature golden smile in the song. The Arabic theme of her ensemble not only reflected in her exotic white and wine coloured outfit but also in the delicate way her jewellery was accessorised. Elated at the response to the song, Pooja says, "I was so thrilled to shoot a song that styled me in exotic Arabic looks. Experimenting with different ensembles is exciting for me. The choreography of the song is super groovy and I'm happy that viewers have loved it. It's great to have so many viewers react to the song."

'Beast' is an upcoming black comedy action-thriller film written and directed by Nelson Dilipkumar and produced by Sun Pictures. Pooja Hedge is gearing for her upcoming movies like 'Radhe Shyam' opposite Prabhas, Salman Khan's 'Bhaijaan', 'Cirkus' opposite Ranveer Singh, 'Acharya' with Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan, and 'SSMB28' opposite Mahesh Babu.

## Big B turns narrator for Prabhas-starrer upcoming film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan is joining the team of 'Radhe Shyam' as he turns narrator for the upcoming pan-India film starring Prabhas and Pooja Hegde. Amitabh with his iconic baritone brings weight and dimension to the film.

Directed by Radha Krishna Kumar the multi-lingual love story is set in Europe in the 1970s with Prabhas essaying the role of a palmist. The film is shot extensively in Italy, Georgia and Hyderabad.

Talking about this development, says director Radha Krishna Kumar, "The film is set in the 1970s and is mounted on a massive scale, we needed a voice that can command the nation and who better than Mr Amitabh Bachchan, a voice that everyone recognizes, respects and more importantly loves."

"We are so happy to have him as Radhe Shyam's narrator."

## I'VE SEEN PEOPLE OSTRACISED BY SOCIETY FOR FOLLOWING DREAMS: VIKRANT

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Vikrant Massey, who is playing the male protagonist in the upcoming film 'Love Hostel', says he has observed how people get

ostracised by society and their own families simply for following their dreams.

'Love Hostel' addresses the issue of honour killing and inter-faith marriage.

Talking about understanding the mental makeup of the character Ashu that he plays in the film, Vikrant told reporter: "It is true that I come from a blessed family where even though there are people who had inter-caste and inter-faith marriages, I have never seen any negativity. So the reality of my life is very different from my character Ashu in the film. But I cannot discount the fact that there are people I have noticed in our society who are being ostracised by not only the society but also by their own family members. That is all the more hurtful when you are thrown away by your own family and loved ones only because you have followed your heart and lived life on your own terms."

As the story is set post the 9/11 terrorist attacks and how the lead couple in the film faced honour killing due to their inter-faith marriage, Vikrant further added, "We all know what happens to a specific religious community post-September 11, 2001. The story is also capturing that time and situation."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Deepika Padukone