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ONE KILLED, 34 INJURED IN SRINAGAR GRENADE ATTACK

One person was killed and 34 others, including a policeman, injured in a grenade attack in J&K's Srinagar city on Sunday, police said

Team Absolute | Srinagar

One person was killed and 34 others, including a policeman, injured in a grenade attack in J&K's Srinagar city on Sunday, police said. Police said militants hurled a grenade in Hari Singh High Street market area adjacent to city centre Lal Chowk, and the explosion led to many being injured.

"The injured were immediately rushed to the S.M.H.S Hospital where one man succumbed to his injuries. "The slain man was identified as 55-year-old Muhammad Aslam Makdoom of Naid Kadal in old city. "One of the injured identified as Rafiq has suffered multiple injuries and her condition is stated to be critical," a police official said.

Police also said that they checked CCTV footage and obtained some vital leads with regard to the attack.

"CCTV footage has given some vital clues and the investigation is going on in the right direction."

Senior police and CRPF officers immediately rushed to the spot which was cordoned off for searches.

There has so far been no official word about any arrest made in this case.



TERROR MODULE BUSTED IN KASHMIR, 4 ARRESTED

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir police have busted a terror module of proscribed terror outfit JeM at Awantipora in South Kashmir and arrested four terrorist associates, officials said on Sunday. Jammu and Kashmir police have busted a terror module of proscribed terror outfit JeM at Awantipora in South Kashmir and arrested four terrorist associates, officials said on Sunday. Police in Awantipora have busted a terror module of proscribed terror outfit JeM by arresting four terrorist associates identified as Umar Farooq Dar, resident of Shahbad, Soraj Manzoor Malik, resident of Midora, Irshad Ahmad Lone, resident of Midora and Afnan Javeed Khan, resident of Shahbad. "During preliminary investigation, it was revealed that these arrested terrorist associates were involved in providing shelter, logistic support and transportation of arms/ammunition to the terrorists Umair alias Usman and Abdul Rahman alias Jaat a foreign terrorist," police said. Police have registered a case and investigation has been initiated.

2,135 Indian nationals evacuated on Sunday, taking total to 16K

Under 'Operation Ganga', 2,135 Indian citizens returned back home on Sunday through 11 special civilian flights from Ukraine's neighbouring countries.

New Delhi | Agencies



Rzeszow and one from Kosice.

With Sunday's evacuation, nearly 16,000 Indians have been evacuated since the special flights began on February 22.

"The number of Indians airlifted by 66 special civilian flights goes up to 13,852. Till date, the IAF has flown 10 sorties to bring back 2,056 passengers.

There were six flights from Budapest, two from Bucharest, two from

ggers while taking 26 tonnes of relief load to these countries as part of Operation Ganga." Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia said in a statement on Sunday.

On Monday, eight special flights are expected to operate from Budapest (5), Suceava (2) and Bucharest (1), evacuating more than 1,500 Indians back home.

The Election Commission (EC) is going to organise an International Election Visitors Programme (IEVP), 2022, for foreign election management bodies and organisations in virtual mode on Monday (March 7) during the last phase of ongoing Assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh.

The IEVP 2022 provides an opportunity for the EC to share best practices and experience of the conduct of the polling process along with the steps taken to ensure compliance of Covid-19 protocols, the EC said in a statement on Sunday. "More than 135 delegates from more than 26 countries across the world, including Australia, Bahamas, Bhutan, Croatia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Suriname, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Zambia and four international organisations, including International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, International Foundation of Electoral Systems,

Association of World Election Bodies and Community of Democracies are going to participate in the event."



place as well as live streaming from polling stations in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, on March 7 to familiarise the participants with the electoral process, polling station arrangements, use of technology, interaction with various stakeholders followed by a Question and Answer session.

After the virtual tour, the participants will be addressed by Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra.

In the past, EC hosted similar such programmes also.

The participants will be showcased a recorded broadcast from select polling stations in each of the five states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh where polls have been taken

Team Absolute | Pune

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged students to combine their career and country's goals and find lasting solutions for local problems to spur the country's progress. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged students to combine their career and country's goals and find lasting solutions for local problems to spur the country's progress.

Modi said whatever field a student is pursuing, he/she must have some goals for the country on the same lines as they set for their personal career. "When our goals go from personal to national growth, then the feeling of being a participant in the nation building process takes over," he added, addressing the golden jubilee of Symbiosis International University. The Prime Minister asked the student community to select an annual theme based on national or global needs like climate change on which they could work round the year, along with their other assignments.

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ORGANISE ANNUAL 'RIVER FESTIVALS' IN CITIES, SAYS NARENDRA MODI

Underscoring the importance of rivers in the life of urban areas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged various cities to organise annual 'River Festivals' and create awareness among the masses.

New Delhi | Agencies

Underscoring the importance of rivers in the life of urban areas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged various cities to organise annual 'River Festivals' and create awareness among the masses.

Such river festivals - common in some European, African and South American nations - could create a new awareness about the importance and preservation of these important lifelines and inculcate the value of each drop of water on human beings, he said at the foundation stone ceremony for the ambitious Rejuvenation



and Pollution Abatement of Mula-Mutha River projects in Pune, taken up under the Centre's National River Conservation Plan and the development of a River Front on the lines of Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad. The project is being implemented on the concept of 'One City, One Operator' at a cost of Rs 1,470 crore including construction, operation and maintenance for 15 years. The rejuvenation of the Mula-Mutha River shall be carried out along a 9-km stretch with major works like river edge protection, interception sewage network, public

amenities, boating activity, etc.

A total of 11 sewage treatment plants will be constructed with a capacity of around 396 MLD with a 55 km long sewage carrier pipeline, while the Pune Municipal Corporation will implement a River Front Development Project.

The project is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with a completion target deadline of 3 years by a JV comprising Enviro Control Pvt Ltd of India and Japan's Toshiba Water Solutions Pvt Ltd.

Japanese Ambassador to India

Suzuki Satosi, and JICA Chief Representative in India Saito Mitsunori attended the event.

Pune Mayor Murlidhar Mohol said that the project would improve the water quality in three Pune rivers - the Mula, Mutha, and Mula-Mutha - by augmenting sewage collection systems and sewage treatment facilities in the civic jurisdiction, before the rivers flow into the Bhima River.

It would also include other pollution control measures like improved sanitation and living conditions of the people in Pune and in the watershed of the downstream area, he said.

In 2014, Pune generated 728 MLD of sewage while the total treated sewage was barely 476 MLD, with over 250 MLD discharged directly in the Mula, Mutha and Mula-Mutha Rivers, resulting in severe pollution.

The three Pune rivers earned the dubious distinction of being among the 35 most polluted in the country by the Central Pollution Control Board, but with the new rejuvenation project launched today, the situation would improve, said officials.

Media should not mix news with views: VP

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said that media should not mix news with views and maintain objectivity in bringing facts to the people.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Sampadakeeyalu' in Hyderabad, Naidu highlighted the critical role of media as the 'fourth pillar of democracy' in protecting and preserving democracy.

"Media is the vital channel of communication that can take the issues of the people to the government and the schemes and policies of the government to the people," he said.

Naidu observed that people take the content of the news and broadcast media to be credible and media organisations should live up to their expectations.

"Journalism should be treated as a mission," the Vice President said.

Releasing a collection of editorials titled 'Mutnuri Krishna Rao'

tremendous impact the media has on people, the Vice President said that journalists should weigh the consequences on society of each word they print and broadcast. "They must remember that they are a part of society too", he added.

Naidu paid rich tributes to Shri Mutnuri Krishna Rao, the pioneering Telugu journalist and editor of the nationalist newspaper 'Krishna Patrika' from 1907 to 1945. He noted the lasting impact of both Shri Krishna Rao's work and Krishna Patrika in inculcating patriotism in the Telugu youth and in setting high standards in journalism during that time. The Vice President appreciated Sri Marumamula Dattatreya Sharma for bringing out the book and hoped that it would make the present generation aware of the high standards of journalistic values set by Shri Krishna Rao.

Indian student injured in Kiev to return home on Monday

An Indian student, who was left injured after being allegedly shot with a bullet in Ukraine's capital Kiev, is set to return to India on Monday, Union Minister VK Singh said on Sunday.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

An Indian student, who was left injured after being allegedly shot with a bullet in Ukraine's capital Kiev, is set to return to India on Monday, Union Minister VK Singh said on Sunday.

The Minister shared information about injured Indian student, Harjot Singh. VK Singh is currently

dent, was trying to return to India along with his friends during the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia. Due to lack of space in the train, he booked a cab to reach the Poland border, but on his way he was suddenly stopped and asked to return back to Ukraine.

As soon as the cab driver took a u-turn, shelling started. Amid this firing, Harjot Singh was shot and was left injured. He lost his passport during the incident.

The Indian government acted swiftly as soon as they received information about the incident. Following this, immediate arrangements were made for his treatment by the Indian embassy.

The Indian government has started 'Operation Ganga' programme to rescue the Indians nationals stranded in Ukraine.

India sends relief materials to Ukraine as humanitarian assistance

India kept sending relief materials to war torn Ukraine as part of humanitarian assistance by the Indian Air Force aircraft deployed for evacuation of stranded nationals through the neighbouring countries.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



India kept sending relief materials to war torn Ukraine as part of humanitarian assistance by the Indian Air Force aircraft deployed for evacuation of stranded nationals through the neighbouring countries.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting shared a video of the relief materials being loaded in IAF's aircraft by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel and these supplies are being sent to Poland from where it would be sent to Ukraine.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on March 3 said that two tranches of humanitarian assistance that included medicines, medical

equipment, relief materials were dispatched by the Indian Air Force (IAF) to Ukraine.

"One of the flights carried six tonnes of material to Romania while the other flight carried nine tonnes of material to Slovakia. Besides, the four tranches

of humanitarian aid were sent earlier," the MEA further said.

The Ministry also said that the humanitarian aid were sent via Poland and Romania. Earlier on

March 2, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) had sent

relief material to Ukraine via neighbouring countries. The supplies include blankets, sleeping mats, and solar study lamps etc, which were sent from IAF's transport aircraft that left for Poland and another consignment by a commercial airlines on March 2. Meanwhile, the MEA said that a total of 2,135 Indians have been brought back on Sunday by 11 special flights from Ukraine's neighbouring countries. With this, more than 15,900 Indians have been brought back since the special flights began on February 22. Till date, the IAF has flown 10 sorties to bring back 2,056 passengers, while taking 26 tonnes of relief load to these countries under Operation Ganga.

Delhi govt prepares draft policy for making PUC certificate mandatory at fuel pumps

The Delhi government has prepared the draft policy for making Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC) mandatory to refuel at fuel pump stations in the city to tackle the rising air pollution levels.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



The Delhi government has prepared the draft policy for making Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC) mandatory to refuel at fuel pump stations in the city to tackle the rising air pollution levels.

"To control vehicular tailpipe emissions, all the dealers of the petrol, diesel, CNG pumps are directed to dispense and sell the petrol, diesel and CNG to motor vehicles only on production

of valid Pollution under Control Certificate (PUCC) with immediate effect", reads Delhi Gazette notifications published on March 4.

Petrol pumps, CNG stations and Commissioner, Transport Department, Delhi will implement the directions in letter and spirit. The violation of the directions issued may include imprisonment up to five years and, or with fine which may extend to Rs. One Lakh or with both, said the notification.

The Delhi government had announced in January that the government will soon make pollution-under-control certificates (PUCC) mandatory to refuel at vends in the city, in a bid to tackle the city's crippling air pollution levels, much of which is caused by vehicles. The Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate is an important instrument for vehicles issued through registered PUC centres to control vehicular tailpipe emissions and is crucial in monitoring vehicular pollution and certifying fitness of vehicles as per emission norms, the notification reads.

According to the draft notification, the draft policy will be taken into consideration by Delhi Lieutenant Governor on or after the expiry of 60 days from the date of publication of this notification in the official Gazette.

3 women consume poison after being termed 'immoral'

Three women employees of a spa, allegedly consumed poison outside a police station in Shamli after they were accused of being involved in a sex racket.

Shamli | Agencies

Three women employees of a spa, allegedly consumed poison outside a police station in Shamli after they were accused of being involved in a sex racket.

The women, all in their

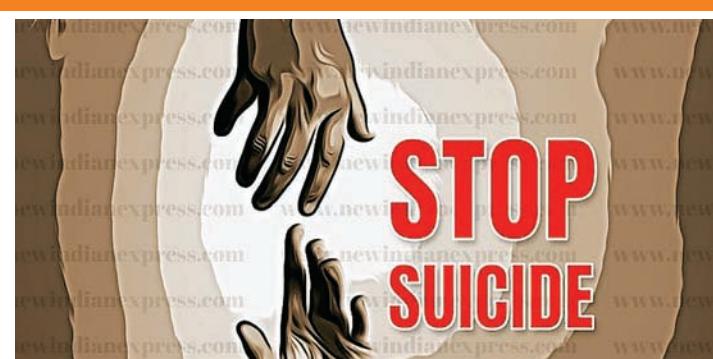
twenties, were unable to bear the humiliation and consumed poison after which they were taken to a hospital. Their condition is said to be stable. The police said the incident is linked to a case registered against seven people, including six women, on January 4. They were all accused of indulging in 'immoral activities under the garb of running a spa'. The three women are among the accused. The women, in a suicide note addressed to SP Shamli Sukirti Madhav, said, "All the charges against us were false. We were humiliated at the police station. One of our weddings also got can-

celled." One of the relatives alleged, "The cops demanded bribes from those working at the spa centre. They illegally kept them in custody for over 24 hours for not paying the money." Dismissing the allegations, SP Shamli Sukirti Madhav said, "Police had inputs of immoral activities and so we raided the spa. Seven people, including six women, were arrested. The probe has been handed over to Shamli ASP. Appropriate action will be taken once we collect all the details." meanwhile, Dr Upkar Malik from Shamli CHC said, "The three women probably consumed mosquito repellent."

TN GIRL'S SUICIDE: NCPNR PROBE FINDS SCHOOL, COPS GUILTY

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPNR) has found shocking facts in its probe conducted in connection with the suicide of a 17-year-old class 12 student of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu. The school authorities allegedly tried to conceal the real reason that she was being forced to convert to Christianity.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



pose of the investigation by the local police," read the report of the NCPNR accessed by IANS.

The report read that the police had failed to identify the person who sold the girl the chemical substance.

The NCPNR report has suggested that the local police didn't do a fair probe and did not follow due procedure. "The NCPNR was made aware how the minor girl was made to do official work of the CCI (school committee) by the warden like book keeping, accounting, store management etc and other work like cleaning the premises, washing toilets, opening the door etc. It was observed that the investigating

authorities were somewhere trying to conceal material facts pertaining to the care given to the child while she was staying in the CCI and also ignored all the pleas made by the family to investigate regarding the minor being forced to convert to Christianity," read the report.

The NCPNR had on January 20, written a letter to the DGP, Tamil Nadu to initiate a probe into the matter and take action against the guilty persons. But the Tamil Nadu police didn't respond to the NCPNR.

The NCPNR had received around 3545 complaints regarding the matter to initiate a probe and bring out the truth.

The NCPNR formed a committee of three officials headed by Priyank Kanoongo, the Chairperson NCPNR, Madhulika Sharma, Advisor (Education), and Katayani Anand, Consultant (Legal) which visited Thanjavur, in the last week of January. The team gathered relevant documents from the authorities and parents of the girl. The CBI had on February 15 lodged an FIR in the case. The victim in an unverified video had alleged that she was being forced to convert to Christianity by her school authorities.

Varanasi | Agencies

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day stay in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi, the BJP is now hoping to sweep all the assembly seats of the district once again. A Varanasi BJP functionary claims that Prime Minister Modi's campaign has turned the tide in favour of the party and the saffron

party will repeat 2017 performance by winning all the seats of the district like it did in 2017. Eight assembly constituencies - Varanasi South, Varanasi North, Varanasi Cantt, Shivpuri, Sevapuri, Rohanji, Ajagar and Pindra -- come under Varanasi district. In 2017, the BJP and its alliance won all the eight assembly seats. BJP is facing challenges on a few seats this time from opposition candidates and in some areas people are also expressing their anger against sitting MLAs.

After the Prime Minister camped in the city and held a road show covering three

assembly seats, the local cadre openly started pointing out that the situation has changed before polling on Monday. The Prime Minister stayed in his parliamentary constituency for two days before the end of campaign on Saturday evening.

Varanasi BJP leader mentioned that there is a tough challenge from Opposition candidates or strong anti-incumbency against MLAs in two to three constituencies but with the end of campaigning, the situation is favourable in all the seats of the district. "Minister in the Yogi government, Neelkanth Tiwari is facing personal anti-incumbency but after the Prime Minister's roadshow, anger has come down. Internal feedback shows positive signal for Tiwari," he said. Prime Minister Modi's dream project Kashi Vishwanath corridor and Kashi Vishwanath Temple fall under the South Varanasi assembly seat. The Samajwadi Party has fielded Kameshwar Dixit, head of

Maha Mrityunjay temple. Vijay, a resident of Varanasi South, told IANS that local MP (Prime Minister Modi) is more visible in the constituency than local MLA Tiwari. "Tiwari, who failed to win a corporation election, became MLA for the first time in 2017 due to the Modi wave. Large section of voters in the area believes that the Prime Minister's roadshow will swing votes in Tiwari's favour once again," Vijay, a shopkeeper said. A senior BJP district functionary said that the roadshow has also given boost to Saurabh Srivastava in Varanasi Cantt against former Lok Sabha member and Congress candidate Rajesh Mishra.

"There is no doubt that the Prime Minister connecting with the people of his constituency will help the party candidates who are facing personal anti-incumbency. We were in doubt on a couple of seats but now we are confident of winning all the eight seats like 2017," Varanasi BJP leader added.

ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION FROM MONDAY, EXPECTED TO BE STORMY

The budget session of the State Assembly will commence from Monday, March 7, with a customary address by Governor Mangubhai C Patel. The state's budget for fiscal 2022-23 will be presented during the session.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The budget session of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly will commence from Monday, March 7, with a customary address by Governor Mangubhai C Patel. The House will have 13 sittings during the budget session, that will conclude on March 25. The state's budget for fiscal 2022-23 will be presented during the session.

The budget session of the MP Vidhan Sabha is starting from March 7. The preparations for this have been completed. The session will begin with the Governor's address. The budget session will continue till March 25. A total of 13 sittings are proposed during the 19-day budget session. During this, the annual budget for the financial year 2022-23 will also be presented by the state government. The budget will be presented by the government on March 9. The government has made full preparations for this.

For the first time after the Corona period, the long session will run. In such a situation, the opposition has also made full preparations to corner the government. This budget session is expected to be very stormy. The opposition can question the government on the death of cows in the state's gaushalas. Along with this, there may also be a ruckus regarding the new provision in the purchase

of wheat. At the same time, the government is fully prepared to answer the opposition.

Before the start of the assembly session, an all-party meeting has been organized under the leadership of Speaker Girish Gautam. Leader of Opposition Kamal Nath and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narottam Mishra were present in the meeting. All the leaders have been consulted to ensure that the session goes smoothly. At the same time, the Speaker has also observed the preparations before the session. Security has also been beefed up in the vicinity of the House for the session.

Meanwhile, former Chief Minister and leader of opposition in the state assembly Kamal Nath has sought an answer from the Shivraj government in the matter of death of cows in MP. He said that ever since the Shivraj government came to power in the state, the deaths of cows due to hunger and thirst and lack of proper care are not taking the name of stopping.

Later in the meeting of Congress Legislature Party that was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Leader of Opposition Kamal Nath, resolutions were passed demanding protection of Gaumata. Shivraj government has proved unsuccessful in providing security to Gaumata. Congress will vigorously raise this issue in the budget session.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the meeting of Congress Legislature Party held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Leader of Opposition Kamal Nath in Madhya Pradesh, resolutions were passed demanding protection and promotion of Gaumata. Shivraj government has proved unsuccessful in providing security to Gaumata. Congress will vigorously raise this issue in the budget session. Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath has sought an answer from the Shivraj government in the matter of death of cows in MP. They say that ever since the Shivraj government came to power in Madhya Pradesh, the deaths of cow mothers due to hunger and thirst and lack of proper care are not taking the name of stopping.

Kamal Nath said that pictures of hundreds of cow mothers' deaths from different gaushalas in different districts are continuously coming to the fore. It



is a matter of great surprise that the same government, which claims to be a true religion lover, is not taking any concrete steps to stop such incidents. Cases of forgery of grants being given in gaushalas in the state are also continuously coming to the fore. Grants of lakhs of rupees were given to many

gaushalas, but even after that pictures of death of cow mothers in those gaushalas due to hunger, thirst and lack of fodder have come to the fore.

The former CM said that in our government, we had taken many steps for the protection and promotion of Gaumata. We had started the construction work of one thousand gaushalas in the state. On the one hand, in the Shivraj government, on the one hand, cows are getting victims of accidents on the road, while on the other hand there are many such gaushalas which are ready but cow mothers are not being sent to them.

Kamal Nath alleged that 16 months ago, the Shivraj government had made a loud announcement of forming a cow cabinet in the state. Many claims were made, but till date none of them have been implemented. The government should answer these questions of mine on the continuous deaths of cow mothers in the state.

CM PLANTED CASSIA SAPLING

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted a sapling of Cassia at the state hangar on Sunday. Chouhan is continuously planting saplings every day since February 19, 2021, as part of his resolve. The bark and leaves of cassia planted today are used in making Ayurvedic medicines.



SAGHAN MISSION INDRADHANUSH ABHIYAN, 10 MULTI MEDIA VEHICLES SENT TO DISTRICTS

In the Saghan Mission Inradhanush Abhiyan, publicity will be done through multi media vehicles to aware the common citizens. Multi-media vehicles have been sent in 10 districts in the campaign. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Choudhary said that multi-media vehicles will be run in the districts of Inradhanush Abhiyan for three months, whose travel route will be fixed. A GPS system has been installed in the vehicle for monitoring.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

cles for the districts. Choudhary said that multi media vehicles and vehicle teams will play an important role for parents of children and pregnant mothers for vaccination. The multi media vehicles provided by UNICEF are equipped with audio-visual media equipment. He said that Inradhanush campaign would be conducted in 10 districts of the state with relatively less vaccination namely Gwalior, Jabalpur, Sagar, Satna, Morena, Datia, Chhindwara, Damoh, Seoni and Mandla. The campaign will take place on 7 March, 4 April and 7 May. Health Minister Dr. Choudhary said that multi-media vehicles will be run in the districts of Inradhanush Abhiyan for three months, whose travel route will be fixed. A GPS system has been installed in the vehicle for monitoring.

MP BUDGET, ELECTION EFFECT WILL BE VISIBLE: NO NEW TAX, TARGET OF EMPLOYMENT TO 2 LAKHS, PLAN TO RENT DRONES TO FARMERS

The budget for the financial year 2022-23 of the Government of Madhya Pradesh has been prepared on the roadmap of self-reliant Madhya Pradesh. It mainly deals with infrastructure, good governance, education and health and economy and employment. The main focus has been on these four in the budget.

Zafar Alam Khan | Bhopal

The budget for the financial year 2022-23 of the Government of Madhya Pradesh has been prepared on the roadmap of self-reliant Madhya Pradesh. It mainly deals with infrastructure, good governance, education and health and economy and employment. The main focus has been on these four in the budget. The budget of the government is estimated to be more than 2.5 lakh crores. Let us tell you that there is a debt of more than 2 lakh 53 thousand crores on the government. A week before the presentation of the budget, the government has taken a loan of 2 thousand crores. Despite this, this budget will be election and there will be no new tax in it. The focus has been on farmers, women and youth in the budget. A provision of Rs 200 crore has been made in the budget for self-employment schemes for employment to the unemployed. In

this, the government will provide loans to provide employment at low interest. In the budget, the government can make a special announcement for the farmers. Along with this, there is also a plan to provide drones on rent to about 70 lakh small farmers of the state under the Customer Hiring Scheme.

For the first time in the budget, the government is bringing a children's budget. In this, the schemes of various departments related to children and the provisions of their needs will be mentioned. Be it supplementary nutritional food or scholarship, the government takes many steps for the children. By giving prominence to them, now she will present it in the form of child budget. Different schemes running in 19 departments will come under a single platform.

Apart from this, this time in the budget, the government is going to add 200 villages in the Adarsh Gram Yojana. For development here, a

separate provision will be made in the budget. Along with this, the government is taking 40 urban bodies in Amrit Yojana Phase-2. Here a separate budget provision can be made for development.

The Women and Child Development Department has prepared the draft of Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0. In this, there is a provision of giving 25 thousand rupees to the daughters of Ladli Yojana for taking admission in the college. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has already announced about this. Apart from this, it will bear the cost of college education fees. There is also a provision to select Ladli Gram Panchayats and reward them. The government can announce Ladli Laxmi Yojana 2.0 in the budget.

The government will provide the right to give NOC to the panchayats to promote industry and tourism in rural areas. For this, a proposal to amend the Act can be introduced in the budget session. Its objective is to

ing stock of the route where 'gair' will be taken out.

The tradition dates back to the Holkar dynasty. At that time, the who's who of the dynasty used to take to the streets to play Holi with the common people. Bullock carts were filled with herbal colours and flowers and whosoever used to meet each other on the way, they used to smear gulal.

With the passage of time, some changes have come in 'gair' too. Now, a big vehicle carries flower, gulal and water tankers are also there. Colours are spread in the air using motorpumps, post which all the streets become colourful. Moreover people who are standing in the balconies of the high-rise buildings also get coloured when gulal is spread with motorpumps. Colours are spread everywhere.

He appealed to the citizens to make the city clean and beautiful. The Chief Minister also inspected the newly constructed sewerage treatment plant and the park made by the Municipal Council during the cleanliness drive. The Chief Minister reached the house of Shri Rajesh Pal and Subhash Punjabi and paid condolences and tributes on the demise in their families.

Chouhan performed bhoomi-pujan of private sector Vihaan food industry at Jarrapur in Budhni. He said that this agro-based industry would give better prices to the farmers of the region and employment opportunities would increase. 900 people will get employment from the food industry.

WE WILL MAKE BUDHNI THE FIRST WATER PLUS CITY IN THE COUNTRY AMONG SMALL

TOWNS: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Budhni will be made the country's first water plus and wonderful city with everyone's cooperation. Along with making the city clean and beautiful, excellent works will also be done in the field of health, environment, education and employment. Chouhan was dedicating a sewerage system built at a cost of Rs 44 crore 56 lakh and dedicating and performing bhoomi-poojan of construction and development works worth Rs 59 crore on Budhni's Gaurav Diwas. Chouhan visited the city and invited citizens for the Gaurav Diwas program. Chief Minister also performed puja of 63 girls on his 63rd birthday.

Chouhan said that Indore has become the first water plus metropolis of the country. Now with the cooperation of all of us, Budhni will also be made the first water plus city in the category of small cities of the country. He said that in a month the waste water of all the houses would be connected to the sewerage plant. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan appealed to the citizens to take a pledge to give up open defecation, throwing garbage on the road and use of polythene etc.

Chouhan said that from next year there will be three-day programmes on Budhni's Gaurav Diwas. These programmes will also be organised in May this year. Excellent system of education will be made in Budhni, so that no poor gifted child should wander for higher education.

Chouhan also announced opening of CM Rise School at Budhni. He said that youths and groups would be connected by imparting training in various professions in ITIs along with coaching institutes to prepare



for the examination of government services. To connect the youths with self-employment, Rozgar Diwas (Employment Day) is being celebrated every month in the state, in which so far more than 10 lakh youth have been provided self-employment by giving loans from banks. The celebration of Rozgar Diwas will go on continuously.

Chouhan said that providing livelihood to the poor is the first priority of the government. For this, many schemes are being run by the state government. The state government is also doing the work of branding the products of women belonging to self-help groups. The Chief Minister said that Budhni's toy business would get recognition

at the national level.

Chief Minister said that public participation is necessary to implement all the schemes of the government in an ideal manner. This will speed up the development and also the monitoring of the construction works can be done. He also suggested the formation of ward wise committees. Chouhan also honoured the citizens, businessmen and representatives of social organisations who became partners in the development of the city. Along with this, benefits were also distributed in various schemes of the government.

During the city tour, Chouhan gave the message of cleanliness by putting garbage in the garbage cart.

Indore's colourful tradition of Rang Panchami transcends class barriers

Team Absolute | Indore

The Holi procession or 'Faag yatra' or 'Gair', different names with one meaning, throws light on the way the festival of colours is celebrated in the Madhya Pradesh capital Indore.

If we talk about the Holi festival in Madhya Pradesh's Malwa and Nimar, it is incomplete without 'gair' in Indore which fills everyone with excitement and fun.

'Gair' transcends all class barriers and gives the message of social harmony.

In the past two years, the Holi festival was celebrated under the shadow of Covid and that is the main reason people did not feel like they have celebrated the festival of colours as 'gair' was not taken out.

With Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announcing



taking out 'gair' on the occasion of Rang Panchami, people are brimming with excitement and enthusiasm.

Preparations have begun for the event which transcends class barriers.

Sangam Corner Rang Panchami Festival Committee director Kamlesh Khandelwal says: "Our organisation is taking out gair

for the past 68 years. But this time the joy will be different as it is being celebrated after a gap of two years."

The administration is also gearing up for the organisation of the event and the route is being decided. It is making all out efforts for the smooth conduct of the event.

Administrative officers and political parties are also tak-



EDITOR'S SPECS

Priyanka: The star campaigner of Cong

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has emerged as a star campaigner who has been touring all the states going to the polls. She has addressed 167 rallies, held 42 road shows and also did virtual rallies. Being in-charge of the party in Uttar Pradesh, she has lots of high stakes in the state and her campaign in the 2022 Assembly elections has always been in the news. Priyanka's hard work, her energy and positivity-filled campaigns have caught the attention of the people of the state. Congress insiders say that her slogans have made a place in the hearts of the public, and her campaigns in heavy rain, meeting people, including women working in the fields in Barabanki have gone well with the public. Priyanka also campaigned in Punjab, Goa, Uttarakhand and Manipur. Through 42 road shows and door-to-door campaigns, Priyanka interacted with the public during the election campaign and visited states including three to Punjab, two to Uttarakhand and Goa, and a virtual rally in Manipur. Attacking the BJP and other political parties, she said: "The people are suffering because of politics of caste and religion and this type of politics only benefits a few political parties and never serves the interests of the common people." Priyanka was speaking in the context of a viral video in which she was seen throwing flowers on the people returning from a BJP rally, and later distributed party manifestos to them. The viral video has been widely appreciated and complimented on social media for not showing any prejudice towards the opponent. First time in two decades, the Congress has put up candidates in all the 403 seats and Priyanka has been criss-crossing the state to garner support.

absolute edit

WHAT INDIA CAN LEARN FROM THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

Deepika Bhan

As the US-EU combine came out with a slew of sanctions against Russia and big tech companies followed suit enthusiastically, the stark reality hit home.

The West can use financial and social media platforms as weapons against any country that falls foul of it.

The steps taken by most big-tech platforms, such as Meta, Twitter, Google and Microsoft, and the financial institutions against Russia in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine exposes the vulnerability of non-western countries.

The question that looms over us is: What if the West feels that something is not going as per its calculations, and then, can it simply switch off the platforms and create mayhem? This can be as devastating as a physical war.

The fact is that financial and social media platforms can be used as weapons by the West, which has created them and made, all except for a few nations, completely dependent on them.

Third World countries such as India have seen an explosive growth in the reach and business of these big-tech blocs. The dependency on these of a majority of individuals living in these countries, whether for information, entertainment, financial transactions, or for other reasons, has reached a level where even a minor glitch in the services can lead to chaos.

The owners and managers of these companies, which are entirely private entities, know this fully. But when it comes to taking sides, they do not hesitate to follow the lead of the western nations, as has been evident in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Several global tech companies



have decided to stop the sales of their products and services in Russia. These include Intel, Apple, Microsoft, Google (though users in Russia can still use its search engine, the company has suspended its advertising business in that country). Snapchat and Samsung too have stopped services for Russia.

Visa and Mastercard have also announced to suspend all operations and so has other payment company PayPal.

Big entertainment companies such as Disney, Sony, Warner Bros, Paramount and Universal have decided to suspend releases in Russia. Netflix too has paused its services in Vladimir Putin's country.

Providers of gaming software such as Nintendo and Electronic Arts have also stopped their services for Russia.

Several automakers -- BMW, Ford, GM and Honda -- have scaled back their operations in Russia.

Even Airbnb has suspended its activities in Russia and Belarus. The Russian media has not been spared either. The EU last

week declared a ban on several Russian-funded media outlets, including Russia Today and Sputnik. "They will no longer be able to spread their lies to justify Putin's war and sow divisions in our Union," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said after announcing the ban.

Online discussion forum Reddit has also banned its users globally from posting links to Russian state-sponsored media outlets, including RT and Sputnik, as well as Russian advertisements on its platform.

Apple, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Twitter, YouTube and several other tech platforms have also banned RT and Sputnik.

In retaliation, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday (March 4) blocked access to Facebook and restricted that to Twitter. Russia passed a law that criminalises the dissemination of what Moscow deems to be "fake" news.

As the big tech and financial private companies take political sides in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, some lessons need to be learnt.

And central to the learning is the mantra of self-sufficiency and self-reliance or Atmanirbhar Bharat / Make in India. India has been entirely dependent on foreign nations for its arms supplies. The chief supplier has been Russia, followed by the US, France and Israel. Though in line with the philosophy of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Narendra Modi government has placed emphasis on improving the country's self-reliance and defence preparedness. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has made it clear that India cannot be dependent on any country for defence supplies. India has to augment its own arsenal, whether tanks, missiles, fighter jets and now drones, with its own resources and talent.

Along with military needs, India has to have very active and vibrant indigenous social media platforms with in-country headquarters.

In comparison to West-owned social media platforms, the Indian

ones are few and not as popular as their other counterparts.

omegrown micro-blogging platform Koo is in direct competition with Twitter. Founded in 2019, Koo's user base is growing steadily. Other local platforms include shareChat, Chingari and Josh.

After the Galwan Valley incident India banned several Chinese apps and thus created room for indigenous apps. There is a need, though, to make these local apps and platforms more popular, especially among young people, most of whom are not aware of home-grown apps and still prefer WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and so on.

In 2021, the Government shared the statistics about the usage of social media in the country. The number of WhatsApp users in India is around 53 crore and it is followed by YouTube (44.8 crore) and Facebook (41 crore).

Instagram has 21 crore users and Twitter, around 1.5 crore. In comparison to these numbers, the local platforms are lagging and need to be given a leg up. The 21st century wars are being fought as much with missiles and drones, as with mechanisms of information dissemination. We may perceive China as an enemy country but a lot needs to be learnt from them. China has been able to create its own pillars, whether in defence or general business or social media. Its indigenisation of these pillars has made it a world power today. It is time for us to learn lessons from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and redesign strategies, at the core of which should be the mantra of 'self-help'. Being 'aatmanirbhar' is the only way forward for India and our best weapon to fight off any potential Western adventure.

international

RUSSIAN FORCES AIMING TO CAPTURE ANOTHER NUKE PLANT IN UKRAINE: OFFICIAL



nuclear power plant in order to attempt to capture it, like the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant", UNIAN reported.

At the same time, Arrestovich noted that the Zaporizhzhya plant is operating normally, and "there are few enemies there."

He also opined that "it will not be easy for the enemy to pass north of Nikolaev... but the efforts of the invaders are directed there."

Since Russia's invasion began on February 24, Moscow has lost more than 11,000 personnel, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry said. In addition to the personnel, Russia has also lost

'Ukraine developing missile systems to deliver nuke weapons'

Simultaneously with the work on the creation of a nuclear explosive device, Ukraine has actively engaged in potential means of delivery of nuclear weapons, a Russian official told RIA Novosti.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Simultaneously with the work on the creation of a nuclear explosive device, Ukraine has actively engaged in potential means of delivery of nuclear weapons, a Russian official told RIA Novosti.

"In parallel, work was underway in the country to modernize existing and create new missile weapons that can be used as a means of delivering nuclear weapons," the representative said.

He stressed that at the same time, Kiev "covers" most of the developments with the implementation of joint projects with other countries, RT News reported.

For example, in December 2013, Ukraine and Turkey agreed to cooperate in the missile sphere.

"The main role in it should be played by the Ukrainian rocket and space enterprises Yuzhmashzavod and Yuzhnoye Design Bureau, which previously participated in the creation of the Soviet nuclear missile arsenal," the official said.

The main goal of such coopera-



tion is the creation of a mobile complex that would be equipped with a solid-propellant ballistic missile with a range of up to 1,500 km, he was quoted as saying to RIA Novosti. In addition, Yuzhmashzavod is developing a mobile ground-based missile system Grom-2 at the expense of Saudi Arabia, which, according to Kiev, will have a range of up to 280 km in the export version, claimed the official.

"However, according to experts, it is possible to upgrade it in order to increase the firing range over 500 km, according to some estimates - up to 1,000 km. Since 2017, the Alibey missile range has been operated in the Odessa region to conduct flight tests of rocket technology."

The official also said that clashes at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear

power plant, which caught fire last week and was subsequently seized by Russian forces, could have occurred due to the storage of documentation there. According to the hom, Ukraine partially destroyed, partially removed the main body of documents on this topic from Kiev and Kharkiv to Lviv.

The official hinted that the documentation may be in the National University "Lviv Polytechnic".

Guterres voices concern over political polarisation in Libya

United Nations | Agencies

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed deep concern at the current severe political polarization in Libya, which carries significant risks for the country's hard-won stability, his press office said in a statement.

The UN chief expressed this during a phone call with Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity of Libya, reports Xinhua news agency. The Secretary-General stressed the need for all actors to preserve calm and reiterated the UN's firm rejection of the use of violence, intimidation and hate speech, said the statement.

The Libyan House of Representatives, the country's parliament, on March 1 granted confidence to a new gov-



ernment to replace the government led by Dbeibah.

On February 10, it unanimously voted to appoint Fathi Bashagha as new Prime Minister. However, Dbeibah said his government would remain in office until an elected government is established. On February 21, he announced a plan to hold general elections in June.

Dbeibah's government on March 1 accused the House of Representatives of approving the new government "without achieving quorum" during the session, confirming that it would continue to work and prepare for elections in June.

"Important Announcement: Embassy of India begins its last leg of Operation Ganga flights today. All those students staying in their OWN

Indian embassy in Hungary asks nationals to reach Hungaria City Centre

IThe Indian Embassy in Hungary on Sunday asked the stranded nationals to reach Hungaria City Centre as they have begun the last leg of Operation Ganga flights.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

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"Important Announcement: Embassy of India begins its last leg of Operation Ganga flights today. All those students staying in their OWN



accommodation (other than arranged by Embassy) are requested to reach @Hungariacitycentre, Rakoczi Ut 90, Budapest between 10 am-12 pm," the Embassy tweeted.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine intensified in the early hours of February 24 after Russian forces launched a major assault on Ukraine, firing missiles on cities and mili-

tary installations and posing a serious threat to the Indian citizens residing there. Since then, India has been rigorously evacuating its citizens from the war-torn region.

The Indian government launched a multi-pronged evacuation plan named 'Operation Ganga' to bring home its citizens. Accordingly, Indian missions in several neighbouring countries of Ukraine made arrangements to receive the Indian nationals who are fleeing from the crisis-hit country. Till now, approximately 13,300 people have returned to India by 63 flights. On Sunday, 11 more special flights are expected to operate from Budapest, Kosice, Rzeszow and Bucharest, bringing in more than 2,200 Indians back home.

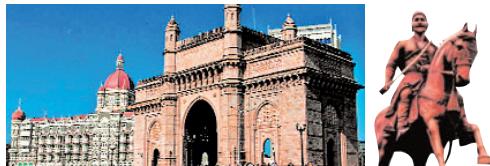
IRAQI PARLIAMENT REOPENS DOOR FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

Baghdad: The Iraqi Parliament or Council of Representatives has voted to reopen the nomination for the post of President of the country.

A statement by Parliament said that 203 lawmakers voted in favour of opening the candidacy, while 62 deputies abstained, reports Xinhua news agency.

The decision came after the Federal Supreme Court ruled that the reopening decision for nomination might be valid if it was made through the legislative body instead of the speaker.

Parliament had previously scheduled February 7 as the date for electing the President. However, only 58 lawmakers attended the session, well below the quorum of two-thirds of the 329-seat chamber. A day later, the parliamentary speaker announced the reopening of registration for presidential candidates. On October 10, 2021, Iraq held the parliamentary election, where Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Sadr Movement emerged as the biggest winner with 73 out of the 329 seats. Under Iraq's power-sharing system, the President should be an ethnic Kurd, the Prime Minister a Shia, and Parliament Speaker a Sunni. Once elected, the new President will ask the largest parliamentary bloc to name a Prime Minister-designate to form a government within 30 days.



PRIME MINISTER MODI INAUGURATES PUNE METRO, TAKES A RIDE WITH STUDENTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 12-km stretch of the upcoming 32.20-kms long Pune Metro Rail project, here on Sunday morning.

Pune | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 12-km stretch of the upcoming 32.20-kms long Pune Metro Rail project, here on Sunday morning.

The PM bought a ticket from the ticketing counter, walked into the Garware Station and along with a group of school students took a ride on the Metro train to the Anandnagar Station. The Pune Metro is coming up at a cost of over Rs 11,400-crore and is aimed at providing world-class urban mobility infrastructure for Pune.



Earlier, the PM was welcomed at Pune Airport by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Industry Minister Subhash Desai, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis and other dignitaries. Soon after his arrival, Modi unveiled a 9.5 feet tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) complex, made of 1,850 kg gun metal.

With this, he became the first PM to visit the PMC 60 years after the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had come here.

During the day, Modi will inaugurate an art gallery-museum at Balewadi, dedicated to the legendary cartoonist RK Laxman who passed

away in January 2015.

The museum highlight is a miniature model based on the fictional village of Malgudi, which will be made alive through the audio-visual effect, cartoons with the famed 'You Said It' logo, drawn by Laxman will be showcased here.

Later he will lay the foundation stone of rejuvenation and pollution abatement projects of the Mula-Mutha River on a 9 km stretch slated to cost Rs 1,080-crore.

The works involve river edge protection, interception sewage network, public amenities, boating, etc. on the Mula-Mutha River on the concept of 'One City, One Operator' costing Rs 1,470-crore.

Under this, a total of 11 sewage treatment plants shall be built with a capacity of around 400 MLD.

The PM will also launch the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Symbiosis University and 100 e-buses and an e-bus depot at Baner.

PM Modi Dedicates 150 Electric Buses For Public Transport

Pune | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated a fleet of 150 electric buses, manufactured by Olectra Green, for public transport. Besides, PM Modi also inaugurated a state-of-the-art electric bus depot and charging station in the Baner locality of Pune during an event, the Hyderabad-based manufacturer of e-buses said in a statement. Olectra currently operates 150 e-buses in the city for the Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML). In addition to Pune, the company, which is a part of the Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd, has its fleet operating in Surat, Mumbai, Pune, Silvassa, Goa, Nagpur, Hyderabad and Dehradun. As the response



from the commuters in multiple cities is exuberant, the respective transport organisations are willing to expand their electric bus fleet, it stated. "Olectra is proud to add another 150 fleet of electric buses in Pune city to the current fleet of 150 buses. Olectra is committed to reduce carbon emissions through an efficient electric public transport system," Olectra Greentech Ltd Chairman and Managing Director KV Pradeep said. The 12-meter air-condi-

2 Operation Ganga flights bring back 370 Indians from Ukraine

Two Air India Express flights carrying Indian evacuees, mostly students from the war-torn Ukraine, reached here from Budapest and Bucharest via Kuwait, at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), an official said here on Sunday.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two Air India Express flights carrying Indian evacuees, mostly students from the war-torn Ukraine, reached here from Budapest and Bucharest via Kuwait, at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), an official said here on Sunday.

The flights IX-1202 (Bucharest) and IX-1602 (Budapest), each flew down 185 Indian nationals (total 370) who had crossed the borders to reach neighbouring Hungary and Romania, from where they took the flights. The arriving passengers included a maximum 120 people from Kerala, Tamil Nadu (58), Andhra Pradesh (28), Uttar Pradesh (18), Rajasthan (17), Bihar (16), Maharashtra (15),



Telangana (14), Haryana (13) and Delhi (10). The rest are from Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Punjab, Jharkhand, Puducherry, Meghalaya, and Jammu & Kashmir.

The CSMIA authorities indicate that another flight is expected early on Monday morning, details of which are awaited.

Ukraine evacuees, and following the Covid-19 protocols. Representatives of various states later took charge of their people to help them with their lodging-boardings or onward journey plans by trains or flights.

The government officials indicate that another flight is expected early on Monday morning, details of which are awaited.

Proposed metro cess in Mumbai, Pune to impact recovery in residential realty: JLL

The proposed metro cess in Mumbai and Pune is likely to have a detrimental impact on the residential markets in the regions which are currently recovering, said property consultant firm JLL.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The proposed metro cess in Mumbai and Pune is likely to have a detrimental impact on the residential markets in the regions which are currently recovering, said property consultant firm JLL.

As per reports, an additional 1 per cent cess will be levied on all property purchased from April 1 in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur.

"While Mumbai recorded 96 per cent of pre-Covid sales in Q4 2021 (compared to Q4 2019), Pune's sales were 252 per cent of pre-Covid numbers. On an annual basis as well, Mumbai and Pune saw sales improve by 30 per cent and 130 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis in 2021," the firm said in a note.

Giving reference to the sales volumes, the firm said it was a clear sign of the demand momentum returning and at a time like this additional cost



burden will be felt by the affordable and mid-segment buyers.

"One has to recognise that the RBI has retained its accommodative stance by prioritising economic growth and supported residential sales recovery by keeping the repo

rate unchanged, despite inflationary pressures."

At such a moment, the state government could have looked at deferring the metro cess, given the fact that the stamp duty concession is also slated to end by 31st March 2022, it

MAHARASHTRA HSC 2022

Board To Award Full 1 Mark For A Question In English Paper

The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSB-SHSE) has decided to award full marks for one question asked in the English paper of HSC or Class 12 final exams.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) has decided to award full marks for one question asked in the English paper of HSC or Class 12 final exams. The question was printed without the necessary guidelines.

The decision was taken at a review meeting on Saturday, after some teachers raised issues about the English paper of Class 12.

Sharad Gosavi, Chairman, MSBSHSE said students will get full marks for the question (1 mark) as it was printed with-

out instructions. The committee did not find any other problems in the question paper, he added.

HSC or Class 12 board exams in Maharashtra started on March 4. The exams are being held in two shifts - from 10:30 AM to 2 PM and from 3 PM to 6:30 PM. The papers will continue till April 30. However, exams for second and third language subjects, earlier scheduled for March 5 and 7, will be conducted on April 5 and 7. The board had to postpone exams for these subjects as question papers were destroyed after the truck transporting them from Madhya Pradesh to Maharashtra caught fire on February 23.

NO PRE-ARREST BAIL FOR CONGRESS LEADER IN 'PLOT TO KILL' MAHARASHTRA EX-MINISTER HANDORE

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court has denied anticipatory bail to a Congress leader who was alleged to have conspired to kill Chandrakant Handore after suspecting that the former Maharashtra minister would spoil his chances for a party ticket to contest municipal corporation polls. On February 22 Justice Sarang V Kotwal rejected a bail petition filed by Nilesh Shyam Nanche, a member of the Congress's Mumbai committee and president of the party's Chembur slum cell, observing that his custodial interrogation was necessary not only to investigate the case but also to "prevent the commission of a serious offence." According to a case booked on January 7 at the Tilak Nagar police station, Handore was told by a man identified as Sandeep Gore in December 2021 that Nanche had offered him Rs 3 crore (Rs 25 lakh of it upfront) and two flats in return for killing him before the elections. Nanche is alleged to have assured Gore of his release from jail within one year of the hit job if he gets arrested. Gore allegedly agreed to accept the offer but realised his "big mistake" later and decided against going ahead. According to the first information report, Nanche kept calling Gore but he leaked the former's plan to Handore. On the same day another man, Dhata Mishra, allegedly came to Handore's office to warn him that Nanche had already spoken to a dumper driver about killing him. Advocate Prashant V Malik, appearing for Nanche, rejected the allegations saying his client was not in Mumbai in the last week of December 2021, when the conspiracy was alleged to have taken place.



the nodal agency executing this expressway project, said.

"The centralised system will be

able to monitor the traffic on the highways through CCTV and get a real-time update of the vehicular traf-

fic, its speed, accidents and weather in one place with the help of technology and will help prevent accidents. Drone cameras will also be used to keep an eye on the highway," an official said.

The system is funded by the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of South Korea and soon the agreement regarding the same will be signed between the two countries.

The eight-lane, 701-km long expressway crosses through 10 districts and is set to cut the travelling time from Mumbai to Nagpur to eight hours from 18 hours.

The new expressway in Maharashtra begins in a small village, Shivmalika in Hingna tehsil located at a distance of 23 km away from Nagpur. It currently serves as the outer bypass to the city.

The 701 km-long high-speed corridor designed for a top speed of 150 km per hour is being built at a total cost of around Rs 55,000 crore.

In the order, the judge said the prosecution has not produced any age proof of the victim, as per provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Rules.

Thane | Agencies

Acourt in Maharashtra has acquitted a 47-year-old superintendent of a school for hearing and speech-impaired children in the case of alleged sexual assault of a 15-year-old girl in 2017, while giving him the benefit of doubt.

The order was passed on

the victim in sign language had informed the teacher about the offence following which a case was registered against the accused under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and Sections 354-B (assault or use of criminal force to any woman or abetting such act with the intention of disrobing or compelling her to be naked) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Advocate Vishal Bhanushali, appearing for the accused, contested the case and said his client was not involved in the alleged crime. In the order, the judge said the prosecution has not produced any age proof of the victim, as per provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection)

of Children Rules.

"To prove the ingredients of Section 354B of the IPC and Sections 8, 9(f), 10 of the POCSO Act, it was necessary to prove that the accused had committed sexual assault on the victim with sexual intent," the court observed.

"In this case, the prosecution has not proved that the accused committed sexual assault on the victim, and the latter's statement is also not recorded as per provisions of law," it said.

"Therefore, in the absence of cogent evidence against the accused, I hold that the prosecution has failed to prove the guilt of the accused beyond all reasonable doubts," the judge said.

Hence, the accused is entitled for the order of acquittal, the court said.

FRUIT VENDOR ARRESTED FOR STABBING FATHER-SON DUO

Mumbai: In another horrific incident, a fruit seller was arrested by the Mumbai police on charges of allegedly stabbing a father-son duo. Reportedly, the accused took this extreme step over the monetary dispute and as per the police, the 55-year-old man and his 30-year-old son were attacked with a sickle and knife by the accused. Furthermore, the accused managed to flee from the spot after carrying out the attack. The 55-year-old man breathed his last in the hospital while his son is currently recuperating in JJ hospital as he sustained severe injuries. The cops managed to arrest the vendor Sohrab Muntaj Qureshi (25) from Malad after receiving a tip-off. Further probe revealed that the now-deceased man Babuji Qureshi (55) and his son Chhotu Qureshi (30), ran a wholesale business of apples. Sohrab also had a fruit stall in the same vicinity and reports suggested that Sohrab had taken a consignment of apples worth Rs 35,000 from the deceased man. Unfortunately, he failed to pay him following which they had arguments for 2-3 days. The cops were apprised about the incident after the locals recorded the video of the attack and gave it to them. The injured duo was rushed to the hospital where the 55-year-old man died while his son is said to be out of danger. A case of murder and attempt to murder has been lodged against Sohrab by the cops and he was arrested from Malwani and was produced before the court and remanded to police custody till Tuesday, as per the crime branch officials.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood stars Will Smith and Michael B. Jordan are set to star and produce the sequel to 'I Am Legend'. The film will be written by Akiva Goldsman for Warner Bros Studios, reports 'Variety'.

Will Smith took to his Instagram to share a teaser photo spelling out the partnership following the news, and tagged Jordan in the post. The 2007 film was adapted from Richard Matheson's 1954 novel of the same name. As per 'Variety', details about the new movie, including its plot and who will direct, are scarce as it is still

in development.

'I Am Legend', which was helmed by Francis Lawrence, saw Will Smith essaying the role of virologist Robert Neville, who happens to be the sole survivor in New York City of a man-made plague that transforms humans into bloodthirsty mutants, and follows him while he fights to find a cure.

Jordan and Elizabeth Raposo will produce the follow-up feature under their Outlier Society banner; Smith and Jon Mone, Westbrook Studios' co-president and head of motion pictures and Goldsman and Greg Lessans also producing via Weed Road Pictures will see Ryan Shimazaki overseeing the production.

WILL SMITH, MICHAEL B. JORDAN JOIN FORCES FOR 'I AM LEGEND' SEQUEL

Jamie Lee Curtis says Lindsay Lohan 'had a lot on her plate'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jamie Lee Curtis loves that Lindsay Lohan is "settling into a really happy domestic life".

Lohan shot to international stardom as a child, starring in the 1998 movie 'The Parent Trap'. The Hollywood star told 'People' (The TV Show!): "She is a great talent. And she's had a lot on her plate at a very young age. It seems like she is settling into a really happy domestic life - she's engaged." Lohan is set to marry financier Bader Shammas, and Jamie is "just happy that she's happy", after previously struggling with drink and drug issues, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 'Halloween' actress said: "We're in contact, and the fact that she can poke fun at herself a little (means) we can all poke fun at ourselves, believe me." Meanwhile, Lindsay is said to be planning a "small and intimate" wedding.

The actress recently gave her fans an insight into her upcoming wedding, revealing that it'll be a "family-focused" occasion.

She said: "I want to keep it small and intimate and just, you know, family-focused and just really beautiful." The 'Mean Girls' star has also promised she won't turn into a bridezilla in the coming weeks. Lohan noted that even on her birthday, she's more focused on other people and how they're doing, rather than herself.

'EDWARD SCISSORHANDS' HOUSE FOR SALE, COMPLETE WITH FILM MEMORABILIA



Los Angeles | Agencies

The house used as the location setting for Tim Burton's 1990 cult classic, 'Edward Scissorhands' starring Johnny Depp, is on the market for a whopping \$700,000. Located just outside of Tampa, Florida, the home was bought two years ago for \$230,000 by current owner Joey Klops, reports deadline.com. He went full force into the house's history, stocking it with memorabilia from the Johnny Depp star turn. If you buy the house, the artefacts are yours to keep. Klops has also renovated the space to more closely align it with the film. Among the highlights: mushroom wallpaper covering the kitchen and other rooms to match the film's flavour, and a full-sized Edward Scissorhands mannequin.



Red Hot Chili Peppers stood against 'hair-metal' bands



Los Angeles | Agencies

Rock band Red Hot Chili Peppers' bassist Flea says the group were "against the hair-metal scene" in Hollywood.

The 'Californication' hitmakers rose up through the Hollywood music scene in the mid-1980s where they focused on the art punk underground, and bassist Flea shared there was a lot of "petty bulls***" at that time", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He told Classic Rock magazine: "We were definitely against the hair-metal scene. We were like, 'F*** them. We're the underground, art-rock, get-weird east side guys; those guys are just rehashing Aerosmith and

KISS'. In retrospect it was all petty bulls***. A lot of those bands were **** great. Guns N' Roses was a great band."

There were also some similarities between Red Hot Chili Peppers - completed by drummer Chad Smith, and guitarist John Frusciante - and their rivals on the Sunset Strip. Frontman Anthony Kiedis said: "We were a party band, but you have to bring something to the party. Flea was instrumental in saying, 'We have to be good, we have to write some new s***, we have to have something to move these people'.

"We always came fully loaded."

Meanwhile, Flea admitted there was a level of "arrogance" in their early years as they saw themselves as genuine rock stars.



'The Batman' begins with \$57 mn on opening day at US box office

Los Angeles | Agencies

Los Angeles: Robert Pattinson-starrer 'The Batman' finally hit movie theatres this weekend and has grossed a whopping \$57 million from 4,417 locations in its opening day, though that's a sum that includes \$21.6 million from Thursday's preview screenings.

The DC adaptation is tracking to open somewhere between \$120 million and \$130 million for the weekend. With more than \$50 million already in the bank, 'The Batman' is already the biggest opening weekend of 2022, with 'Uncharted' standing at a distant second with a \$44 million three-day debut.

It's yet another demonstration that superhero appointment viewing is in a league of its own for moviegoers, reports variety.com.

Compared to the franchise's recent history, that figure would fall short of the opening weekend totals for Christopher Nolan's 'The Dark Knight' (\$158 million) and 'The Dark Knight Rises' (\$160 million), as well as that of Zack Snyder's crossover showdown 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' (\$165 million).

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Olivia Culpo


WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

INDIA THRASH PAKISTAN BY 107 RUNS IN OPENING MATCH

Indian women's cricket team skipper Mithali Raj on Sunday became the first woman, and only the third cricketer ever, to appear at six ICC Women's Cricket World Cups. In doing so, Mithali ensured the record enters a new decade -- former Pakistan cricketer Javed Miandad appeared in the first six Men's Cricket World Cups between 1975 and 1996 with Sachin Tendulkar beginning his World Cup career in 1992.

Mount Maunganui | Agencies

A fighting batting effort followed by a clinical bowling performance helped India thrash arch-rivals Pakistan by 107 runs in their opening match of the 2022 ICC Women's World Cup at the Bay Oval, here on Sunday.

With this win, the Indian women's team maintained its unbeaten record against Pakistan. They have played 11 matches and won all so far.

Riding on brilliant fifties from Pooja Vastrakar (67 off 59), Sneh Rana (53 not out off 47) and Smriti Mandhana (52 off 75), India posted a challenging 244/7 in 50 overs. Apart from Vastrakar, Rana and Mandhana, all-rounder Deepti Sharma (1/31) also played a valuable knock (40 off 57).



Meghna Singh (1/21) and Deepi Sharma (1/31) also chipped in with wickets.

Brief scores:
Brief scores: India Women 244/7 in 50 overs (Pooja Vastrakar 67, Sneh Rana 53 not out; Nashra Sandhu 2/36) beat Pakistan (Sidra Ameen 30, Diana Baig 24; Rajeshwari Gayakwad 4/31) by 107 runs.



Women must be treated well not only on Women's Day: Karishma Kotak

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As International Women's Day is set to be celebrated on March 8, actress-model Karishma Kotak has shared an empowering message. She says women should be treated kindly on a regular basis instead of just one day. Karishma said: "Women's Day should be celebrated every day and women should be treated kindly on a regular basis instead of just one day."

She added: "It should be the norm to love your mother, help your wife, smile at your daughter and appreciate your sister daily."

On the work front, Karishma recently hosted a Cricket league in Oman. She was also featured in a music video titled 'Ab Talak' along with Yasser Desai.



Madhuri Dixit bares it all to KJo in candid conversation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Twinkle toes Madhuri Dixit Nene and filmmaker Karan Johar got into some unfiltered fun during a conversation.

Karan and Madhuri spoke to each other candidly, as old friends. They chatted about all the love 'The Fame Game' is getting, the mess that Anamika Anand is and how Madhuri in real life is so far away from the character.

Speaking about her equation with her husband Sriram Nene, Madhuri says, "We met very casually at my brother's house. He had a party and he was a party guest."

"We met and started talking, we spoke about everything else. It was so refreshing to meet someone who had nothing in his mind about me. We hit it off. I felt that he knows me as a person first and then he got introduced to me as an actress." 'The Fame Game' streams on Netflix.



Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Ashna Zaveri, who announced her presence in the Tamil film industry with a strong performance in the Santhanam-starrer 'Vallavanukku Pullum Aayudham', has urged her followers on Instagram to get their priorities in order.

The actress, who often gives wellness tips and shares her thoughts with her followers on Instagram, on Sunday put out a video that stressed on the significance of paying attention to important things first.

"We have the ability to accomplish anything if we use our time wisely. Let's look at it this way," she said and showed

a jar which she said represented life and the time we have to fill.

"Say you fill it first with sand, which represents the least important things. That will leave you less time for other things," she said.

She then attempted to fill the jar with pebbles, which she said were matters that needed one's attention but were not their priority.

"This will leave you with very little or no time for the things that matter the most." Using balls to represent the things that money can't buy -- like fami-

ly, friends, and passion, the actress showed that if importance was given to the meaningless things, one would not have time to spare for important things.

She went on to then say, "However, if you plan and prioritise it well, giving time to the important things first, you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish. Starting with the important things followed by the least important things, you'll be able to fit in just about everything."

Udit Narayan: Blessed to have done more than 200 duets with Lata

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singing reality show 'Sa Re Ga Ma' is all set for its grand finale on Sunday and singer Udit Narayan in the upcoming episode will be seen talking about late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. In the episode, Narayan was immensely impressed and had words of appreciation for every contestant. However, it was conestant Rajashri Bag's beautiful rendition to Lata Mangeshkar's 'Tere Bina Jeeva Jaaye Na', 'Bhor Bhaye Panghat', 'Hothon Mein Aisi' and 'Meri Aawaz Hi' that reminded him of the legendary nightingale of India.

As a special request he asked the young singer to sing his favourite song 'Aawaz Do Humko' post her performance.

Recollecting a few memories with Lata Mangeshkar, Narayan mentioned: "I feel blessed to have done more than 200 duets with her, along with a few stage shows. I remember in one of our concerts she requested the host to introduce me as the king of playback singing, and I can never forget that. I am sure I must have done something good to deserve that."

Commenting on Rajashri's performance, he said, "I watch this show at home, and I've seen people compare you (Rajashri) to Lata didi."

Ajay Devgn on how he keeps himself away from negativity

New Delhi: Bollywood star Ajay Devgn has talked about how he deals with negativity coming his way.

"You can't change the way people think. It is their prerogative. One can stay away from negativity by focusing on the goal," Ajay said during a conversation with reporter.

The 52-year-old star, who is married to actress Kajol, has ventured into the digital world with the web-series 'Rudra-The Edge Of Darkness'. A remake of the successful British series 'Luther', 'Rudra - The Edge of Darkness' is an engaging and dark take on a policeman's journey of uncovering truths and bringing victims justice. It sees Ajay Devgn's titular character of an intuitive and instinctive police officer fighting for the truth in darkness as he wades through a grim and complex web of crimes and criminals and corruption with a wrathful, steely grit. It was released on March 4 in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Bengali.

The crime drama features a stellar cast including Raashi Khanna, Esha Deol, Atul Kulkarni, Ashwini Kalsekar, Tarun Gahlot, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Satyadeep Misra in pivotal roles.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Mukti Mohan

I DON'T SEE ANY CHALLENGE IN BALANCING INDIE, FILM MUSIC: BENNY DAYAL



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Making his Bollywood singing debut with 'Pappu Can't Dance Sala' in 2008 for the film 'Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Naa', singer Benny Dayal has sung songs in various film industries in more than eight languages as well as expanded his horizon as an indie-pop artiste. The singer says finding the balance between film music and indie is not challenging for him as every genre finds its own audience and as an artiste, his focus is on creation only.

While the mainstream market of music is mostly ruled by the film music be it on radio, television channels, asked about the challenge, Benny told IANS: "I think it has everything to do with finding the balance. I love both the space. Especially now the way audio streaming platforms like Spotify, Ganna and many others are existing where we are listening to music all the time, indie music is flourishing. There is so much visibility that we have as artistes, we get to know every week about the

reach of our songs and that is the instant validation for us."

He went on adding, "When it comes to film music, I always have two versions of them. One, that I sing in the studio, the other that I perform live."

In the weekend he performed at the 'Mahindra Open Drive 2022' in Pune and according to Benny, performing live before such a cheerful audience is the best high. Apart from him music groups like 'When Chai Met Toast', solo artistes like Kamakshi Khanna and Raghav Meattle also performed on stage.

"This is why I, along with my band, change the sound of a Bollywood song and create something new. I tend to change the instrumental arrangement of it in such a way that it sounds like a new song. You see, in a live gig, I want our audience to sing along with me. Since they know the lyrics of the song, they can sing along, the instrumental part of it is the surprise for them, that they dance on! This madness happens at a live gig," Benny signed off.