

# absolute india

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## FOOD SYSTEMS ACCOUNT FOR 21-37% OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, SAYS CSE REPORT

*It may come as a surprise to many who think of plants as carbon sinks. But the food practices of 7.8 billion people account for 21-37 per cent of the greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted every year in the world due to all human activities, which means that food systems emit more than transport, energy use and comparable to industry, the Centre for Science & Environment said.*

**"Our food systems, the complete process ranging from food production and consumption to its distribution and disposal, emit more than transportation (14 per cent of global GHG emissions) and energy use in buildings (16 per cent), and almost as much as industry (21 per cent) and electricity production (25 per cent). In fact, in a scenario where emissions from all other sources are halted, emissions from the global food system alone will contribute enough GHGs to heat up the planet above the 1.5 degrees Celsius target."**

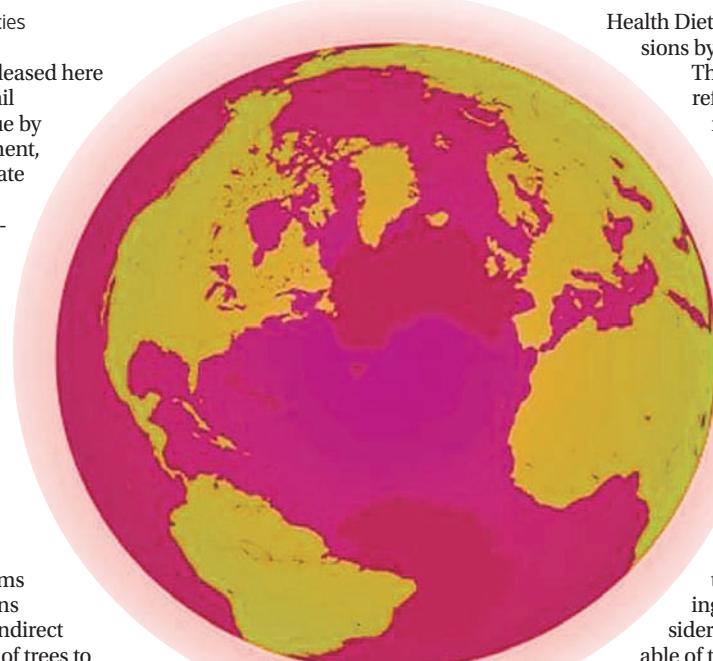
## IS THAT SO...?

NIMLI (RAJASTHAN) | Agencies

The report was released here at CSE's 2022 Anil Agarwal Dialogue by Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav. The statistics about food and GHGs has been put together recently by a group of researchers from the UK and the US.

Vibha Varshney of Down To Earth said, while it is true that plants remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, they also release large amounts of the gas when decomposing. "Food systems also contribute to emissions through other direct and indirect ways. For example, felling of trees to make way for farms and pasture removes a major carbon sink. Operation of farm machinery using fossil fuels, or manufacture of agrochemicals and fertilisers too emit GHGs."

She added: "The EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet and Health - a gathering of 37 scientists from 16 nations - has set global targets for food systems that are environmentally sustainable and benefit human health. The commission has proposed a Planetary



Health Diet that could reduce urban emissions by 60 per cent in 10 years."

The CSE-Down To Earth report refers to a September 2020 assessment by UNEP which says reducing land-use change and conversion of natural habitat alone could lower emissions by 4.6 gigatonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).

Varshney added: "A dramatic transformation of dietary practices is recommended to decarbonise the food sector. But it is easier said than done. The pathways to achieve that goal are not as clear as they are for, say, generation of electricity. Carbon emissions are integral to the biological system. Besides, one cannot stop eating." There are also financial considerations at play. The most affordable of the EAT-Lancet Commission's 'planetary health diet' exceeds the household per capita income of 1.58 billion people," said

Richard Mahapatra, managing editor of Down To Earth. Additionally, business interests that have played a role in shaping modern industrial food can make the transition difficult as well.

There are also fears that this focus on plant-based diets might prompt other emitters shirk responsibility and put the onus of reducing emissions on the individual.

## E-RICKSHAW DRIVER HELPS POLICE RESCUE 2 ABDUCTED MINOR GIRLS

## The Hero

As the complainant found the activities of the accused passenger a bit suspicious, he questioned him, but the accused could not provide satisfactory answers. Rajput then decided to inform the police and approached a traffic police personnel standing on the road and narrated the incident to them. The police then immediately swung into action and as the location of the accused was already zeroed in, he was arrested.

Team Absolute | New Delhi



Bharatdutt Rajput, an e-Rickshaw driver, informed that a person with two little girls boarded his Rickshaw a while back from Balaji temple Vivek Vihar for Chintamani Chowk. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he had kidnapped the girls with the purpose to push them into begging. The DCP informed that the victim girls have been safely rescued and handed over to their parents who work as labourers in building construction work. Sathyasundaram further said that the e-rickshaw driver Brahmdudd Rajput has shown exemplary courage and presence of mind by saving the lives of two little girls and setting an example how the public can be eyes and ears of Delhi Police and help in curbing crime. "He is being rewarded suitably," the official added.

## UP doctor sets record with 107 eye surgeries in 16 hrs

Prayagraj | Agencies

Dr S.P. Singh, Director of the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology and principal of the MLN Medical College (MLNMC) in Prayagraj, has set a new record by conducting 107 phacoemulsification surgeries with intraocular lens (IOL) implant free of cost within a span of 16-and-a-half-hours. "The surgeries were performed between 6 a.m. and 10.30 p.m. continuously for 16-and-a-half hours on February 25. All the patients are doing fine now after a week of observation," he told reporters.

"I am happy at having performed so many surgeries at one go and hope that this would inspire more younger surgeons to work for excellence and public welfare." The doctor has



written to the Limca Book of Records, intimating them about the achievement along with the requisite proofs as required.

Earlier, then Brigadier (Dr) J.K.S Parihar of the Army Hospital Research and Referral in New Delhi, had performed 34 phacoemulsi-

fication surgeries in October 2011 in eastern Ladakh and made a place for himself in the Limca Book of Records.

On March 5, 2001, Singh had set a record, which was registered in the Limca Book of Records, by performing 81 operations in 11 hours at one go.

## OVER 3 CRORE TEENAGERS FULLY VACCINATED AGAINST COVID

New Delhi: India has administered both doses of Covid-19 vaccines to over 3 crore youngsters of 15 to 18 age group so far. The vaccination drive for teenagers started on January 3. India has administered 5,52,63,296 first vaccine doses and 3,01,57,910 second vaccine doses to persons of 15 to 18 age bracket till Saturday morning. "What a great feat by our young warriors! Over 3 crore youngsters between 15-18 age group are now fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Young India is taking the world's largest vaccination drive to the next level", said Union Health Ministry in a tweet on Saturday. The country has also administered over 2 crore precaution doses among the eligible beneficiaries. Additionally, over 97 per cent of India's adult population has also received their first dose of vaccine against Covid-19.

## Country needs more women entrepreneurs: Sayani Gupta

N. Lothungbeni Humtsoe | New Delhi

A head of International Women's Day, Airbnb celebrated the role of women Hosts in its growing host community in India. The platform hosted a panel discussion featuring actress Sayani Gupta and Tisca Chopra, and Airbnb Host Ranjana Patil. The panelists spoke on #BreakTheBias, highlighting how they persevered in their unique journeys despite facing unprecedented challenges. This was exemplified by the stories of women Hosts on Airbnb that had begun their entrepreneurial journey on the platform, illustrating how tourism has played a key role in their journey to success as Hosts.

"I feel so proud and inspired to see how women across the world are breaking biases and dealing with various stereotypes. I have made some strong decisions in my life due to which, several challenges came my way, both personally and professionally. However, not backing down and



ensuring that I put my voice out there, helped me get through every phase. I believe women should break these glass ceilings, take up any role that they truly desire and always aim to be financially independent," says actress Sayani Gupta, who spoke to correspondent.

Women venturing into the entrepre-

neur space often raises eyebrows, what advice would you give from your experience to those striving despite all of the challenges?

Sayani answered, "There will always be people to tell you you're gonna do something. All you need is to tell yourself that you can do it. There shouldn't be any question because it's your life and you decide what you want to do or can do. I don't think if you really put your mind to something, you won't be able to do it.

We are all human beings we have a decent amount of talent and aptitude, and hopefully education. It is never up to anyone else or anyone's business, including your parents that it's okay to do something or not okay to do it. So just go for it. Especially women we are fit for any professional life. I watch a lot of Shark Tank, it's just so nice when all I see women entrepreneurs having struggled through and still able to make something incredible. It's never easy and it shouldn't be, but to still be to do it is an incredible feeling.

## Archaeologists find over 6,500-yr-old pearl bead in Qatar grave

Located a few kilometres south of Al Zubarah on Qatar's northwest coastline, Wadi Al Debaian has yielded several important archaeological finds over the years with pottery originating from the Ubaid period (ca. 6500 to 3800 BCE) of South Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), obsidian from Anatolia (modern Turkey) and further burial sites among the ancient remnants.

The recently discovered grave points to the earliest known evidence of Qatar's antique pearl diving industry, which over centuries formed the centre of trade and economic influx to the country.

It also offers new insights into the early civilisations occupying the peninsula, including prevalent social structures and wealth distribution.



Doha | Agencies

Cup to be played about eight months later.

A local excavation mission led by Ferhan Sakal, Head of Excavation and Site Management at Qatar Museums dug out the oldest known natural pearl bead in Qatar, corresponding to the earliest human settlements on the peninsula.

Dated to 4600 BCE, the bead was found within a grave at Wadi Al Debaian, one of country's oldest Neolithic sites. Until oil was discovered on the peninsula close to 1940, fishing for pearls was the mainstay of the local population. People went on

months-long voyages on wooden boats known as 'dhows' and would dive into the sea without oxygen tanks or diving suits to bring up oysters that would be later opened up to yield natural pearls. One might have to open scores or even hundreds of oysters to find one which has a pearl.

"Our team has unearthed a find of considerable historic and sociological importance, pointing us to the first traceable origins of Qatar's human settlements and their use of the locally-occurring pearl enclaves," Faisal Abdulla Al-Naimi, Director of Archaeology at Qatar Museums, said.

"With each new remnant of Qatar's past that comes to light, we gain a clearer understanding of and appreciation for our religious history and identity, which ultimately inform our aspirations for a sustainable future."

## Shane Warne changed the landscape of cricket, says ICC

DUBAI | Agencies

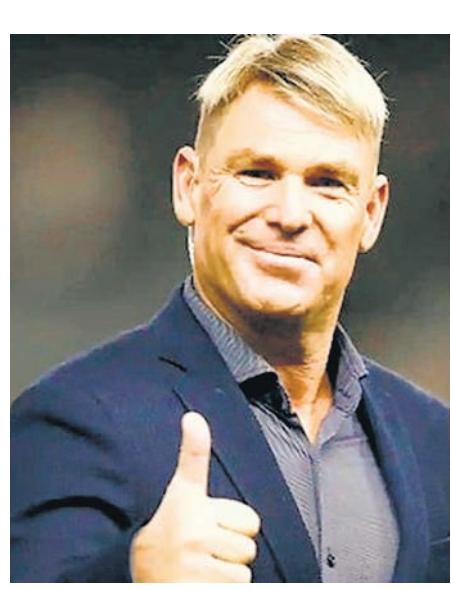
The International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Geoff Allardice has said that Shane Warne changed the landscape of cricket by reviving the art of leg-spin, adding that the legendary spinner's larger-than-life personality and immense cricketing intellect ensured "fans were glued to their seats whenever he was involved in a game".

Warne died of a suspected heart attack, at the age of 52 on Friday in Koh Samui, Thailand.

In a statement, Allardice expressed shock and sadness at Warne's passing and said his impact on and off the field would be remembered for generations.

Warne made his Test debut in 1992 against India at the Sydney Cricket Ground, going on to become the most successful leg-spinner of all time. He played 145 Tests, finishing with 708 wickets that included 37 five-wicket hauls and 10 10-wicket match hauls. In 194 ODIs appearances, Warne snared 293 scalps.

Warne was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame in 2013 and named as one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Century for his unparalleled achievements in an illustrious 15-year career that ended in 2007. He helped Australia win the ICC Men's



Cricket World Cup in 1999 and took more wickets than any other bowler in Ashes cricket, with a tally that stood at 195. After retiring from international cricket, Warne doubled up as captain and coach of the IPL Franchise team Rajasthan Royals, guiding them to the title in the league's inaugural edition.

A flamboyant personality both on and off the field, Warne also found success as a commentator and was considered one of the sharpest analysts of the game.

# MANIPUR POLLS: 77% TURNOUT IN FINAL PHASE; 2 KILLED IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS

Team Absolute | Imphal

At least two persons were killed and few others were injured in Manipur as over 77 per cent of the 8,38,730 voters exercised their franchise in 22 of the 60 constituencies that went to the polls in the second and final phase Assembly elections on Saturday, officials said.

The voter turnout in 2017 Assembly elections was 86.36 per cent, while it was 82.78 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The police said that one person was killed while another was injured in police firing at Karong in Senapati district, while a BJP activist succumbed to his injuries in Thoubal district. An officer said that the police had to open fire at Karong after some people tried to snatch an EVM from a polling station after thrashing the polling staff.

In another incident in Thoubal district, some BJP workers went to the residence of a rival party worker late on Friday night. After an altercation, the rival party worker reportedly fired at the BJP activists, injuring few of them who were shifted to the hospital, where one person succumbed to his injuries on Saturday.



Officials said that workers of different political parties clashed in Mao, Moreh and other places, halting the polling there briefly.

Manipur Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Rajesh Agrawal said that in the hill districts, 12 incidents of damage to EVMs by miscreants were reported, and FIRs have been registered in each case. Political parties have accused each other of disturbing free and fair

elections in many places.

Earlier on Saturday, men, women and first-time voters in large numbers queued up in front of the polling stations before the voting started at 7 a.m. in six electoral districts.

According to officials, more than 20,000 Central paramilitary force troopers were deployed for the second phase of polling in six districts -- Thoubal, Jiribam, Chandel, Ukhru.

Senapati and Tamenglong.

While Thoubal district falls in the valley area, the other five districts are in the mountainous regions bordering Assam and Nagaland, as well as Myanmar.

Agrawal said that in all, 8,38,730 voters, including 4,28,679 females and 31 transgenders, were eligible to exercise their franchise in the second phase to decide the fate of 92 candidates, including two females.

The electoral fortunes of three-time Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Okram Iboibi Singh (74), as well as several BJP ministers and sitting MLAs, have been sealed in the EVMs in Saturday's polling.

Singh is contesting from the Thoubal Assembly seat.

Meanwhile, re-polling was also held on Saturday at 12 booths in two districts -- Imphal East and Churachandpur.

The re-polling was conducted after miscreants damaged EVMs during and after the first phase of polling on February 28.

The first phase of polling was held in 38 seats on February 28, when 88.63 per cent of 12,09,439 voters exercised their franchise.

Counting of votes will be taken up on March 10.

## NMC allows foreign medical students to complete internship in India with conditions



Team Absolute | New Delhi

"It has been observed that there also some foreign medical graduates (FMG)

with incomplete internship due to such compelling situations like Covid-19 and the war. Considering the agony and stress faced by these foreign medical graduates, their application to complete the remaining part of their internship in India is considered eligible," the NMC said in a notice.

"Accordingly the same may be processed by the State Medical Councils provided that the candidates have cleared FMGE before applying for internships in India.

of their internship in India."

The Commission is expected to issue the guidelines for State Medical Councils soon in this regard.

"The commission decided to issue the detailed guidelines, process which is required to be followed by State Medical Councils for grant of registration of FMGs till further instructions from the commission or implementation of NEET exam whichever occurs earlier."

The Commission further directed the State Medical Councils to follow these conditions while processing for registration of FMGs.

## 'There is a limit to patience of Hindus', says K'taka Minister

Shivamogga (Karnataka) | Agencies



goonda mindset of certain community members has not yet gone," he stated.

Eshwarappa further said, "our worker Venkatesh had been attacked by goondas of a particular community. Two of them have already been arrested. Because of a few, the image of the whole community is tarnished.

Community leaders should initiate action on these persons."

All people of the community are not bad, only a few goondas are indulging in such activities. The community leaders must give attention to them, he said.

Shivamogga, after seven days of curfew has returned to normal, but the situation became tense after a gang attacked Venkatesh on Thursday. The police are on high alert and is investigating the case.

### CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT RAISES HOPES TO BRING NAVEEN'S MORTAL REMAINS: K'TAKA CM BASAVARAJ

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Chief minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday said that the ceasefire announcement by Russia has raised hopes to bring the mortal remains of Naveen Gyangoudar, who was killed in the city of Kharkiv.

Bommai visited the family of Naveen Gyangoudar, at his village in Haveri district. Naveen, a medical student, is the first casualty of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The Chief Minister paid his respects to the deceased, and spent time with the family and consoled them. He also handed over a cheque of Rs 25 lakh to Naveen's father. The Chief Minister reiterated that the state government is making all efforts to bring back Naveen's mortal remains from Ukraine.

Many of the invitees, including locals of Savala village, attending the marriage reception, were affected by the food poisoning at the dinner function, with the symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea. According to available information, around 1,225 people were admitted

## Over 1,200 fell ill after having meal at wedding of Guj Cong leader's son

Team Absolute | Gandhinagar

Over 1,200 people fell sick to food poisoning after having a meal at the wedding ceremony of Congress leader Vazir Khan Pathan's son Shahrukh Khan in Mehsana, Gujarat. State Health Minister Hrishikesh Patel rushed to the place after the news broke.

Many of the invitees, including locals of Savala village, attending the marriage reception, were affected by the food poisoning at the dinner function, with the symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea. According to available information, around 1,225 people were admitted



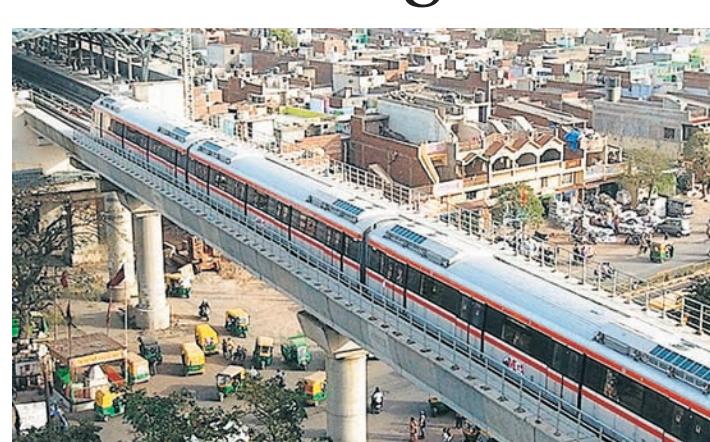
to the hospitals of 6 cities and villages namely Visnagar, Mehsana, Unjha, Kheralu, Vadnagar and Gandhinagar.

Health Minister Hrishikesh Patel, and health officials, reached Visnagar at 3.30 a.m. in the morning after learning about the incident.

Mehsana District Collector Udit Agarwal and SP also reached the hospital on Friday night. A total 1,225 patients were registered on

## Auditor finds 'questionable' land deals in Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar Metro Rail project

Team Absolute | Gandhinagar



The Gujarat government on Friday put on record the details of the Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar Metro Rail project, where it was found by the internal auditor that land admeasuring around 20 hectares for the project was "questionable" in nature.

During the ongoing Budget session of the Gujarat Assembly, the Urban Development Department tabled the Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation (GMRC) Limited's annual report for the year 2020-21.

According to the independent auditor's report, "It was observed that the GMRC did not have valid documents of the title deeds of a freehold land situated at Survey No. 525 at Kathwada, Vastral in Ahmedabad, admeasuring 18,000 sq mt that is around two hectares, whose market

value as on March 2021 was over Rs 16.82 crore."

Other than that, the auditor also noted that land situated at final plot No. 56 and 285 at Ahmedabad Apperal Park (SEZ), admeasuring

17.62 hectares, was allotted by the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) to the Metro company for the construction of a depot, "however the mode of transfer of this land from GIDC to the compa-

ny has not been decided by the Gujarat government and according to the auditor, the land transfer is questionable".

The Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar Metro was a dream project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the then Gujarat Chief Minister. The project was conceptualised initially in 2003 and it was put on a paper in 2005. After 16 years and umpteen number of route changes, the Corporation has been able to run it on only a 6 km stretch. The 39.26 km stretch of Ahmedabad Metro Phase-1 project comprises two lines and 32 stations. It is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 10,773 crore.

GMRC is reportedly planning to commence trial lines in all sections of Line-2 by August, coinciding with 75 years of India's Independence, and just ahead of the state elections scheduled to be held in December.

## IT DEPT SEIZES RS 4.5 CR IN CASH AFTER RAIDING UP BUSINESSMAN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The source said that since Friday, cash to the tune of



4.25 crore has been seized.

The IT officials questioned Singh regarding the cash recovered in the raids, but he failed to give any satisfactory answer.

"Singh was detained in Kanpur following a tip-off when he was going somewhere in his car. The IT officials with the help of Kanpur police chased him and intercepted his car. During a search, cash to the tune of Rs 1 crore was recovered from his car," said a source.

## SIX KILLED IN TELANGANA ROAD ACCIDENT

**Hyderabad:** Six people were killed and two others injured in a road accident in Telangana's Mulugu district on Saturday, police said.

A speeding van hit a stationary auto-rickshaw at Errigattamma village, killing six people and injuring two others seated in the three-wheeler.

Four people died on the spot while two others succumbed at government-run MGM Hospital in Warangal. The injured were undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

According to police, except for the auto-rickshaw driver, the deceased were members of the same family. They were returning home after visiting Annaram Shareef dargah in Warangal district. All hailed from Komatipally village in Mangalpet mandal of the same district.

Ajay (12), Kiran (16), Kausalya (60) and auto driver Jani (23) died on the spot. Vansanta and Vennela succumbed at the hospital.

A case has been registered and investigation initiated.

## 5 KILLED IN J&K ROAD ACCIDENT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**Jammu:** At least five persons were killed and one was injured after a vehicle they were travelling in went out of control and fell in to a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Saturday, police said.

According to the police, the vehicle was travelling from Samba to Srinagar and the accident took place in the district's Jamoda area.

The vehicle carrying six passengers fell into a deep gorge. Five occupants of the vehicle died on the spot while the driver was injured.

"The car bearing registration number JK01U-2233 was carrying passengers from Anantnag district of the valley," the police added.

## 86 DISTRICTS IN ANDHRA, 52 IN MP AFFECTED BY FLUORIDE

Team Absolute | New Delhi



There are as many as 86 fluoride-affected habitations in Andhra Pradesh and 52 in Madhya Pradesh, while the eastern districts of Karnataka face water contamination due to uranium, it was mentioned during a regional review meeting of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and Swachch Bharat Mission-Rural (SBM) on Saturday.

The regional meeting was held in Bengaluru for stock taking of the JJM and SBM schemes for Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and the UTs of Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, addressed the meeting that was attended by ministers and top bureaucrats of these states and UTs, a release from the Jal Shakti Ministry said.

"It has come to our notice that there are 86 fluoride-affected habitations in Andhra Pradesh and 52 in Madhya Pradesh which deserve

immediate remedial action. Similarly, there is information that in the eastern districts of Karnataka, water contamination is reported due to uranium.

"The Ministry is committed to

provide drinking water of a prescribed quality to every rural household. It will provide all funds and technical assistance to address these problems," Shekhawat said.

A total of 19 out of 117 aspira-

tional districts fall in the participating states. As on March 1, Telangana has provided tap water connection to all its three aspirational districts while in other states, the coverage ranges between 19 per cent and 52 per cent.

"There is a need to pick up speed so that people living in the region soon get access to clean drinking water," Shekhawat said.

So far under the programme, 92,366 village water and sanitation committees have been constituted and 82,646 village action plans have been developed in the participating states and the UT of Puducherry.

There are 588 water testing laboratories, of which 136 are NABL accredited. These laboratories are open for public where they can carry water samples and get them tested at nominal rates.

In these participating six states and two UTs, more than 2.40 lakh women have been trained on how to perform water quality test using field test kits. These women are part of the five-women surveillance committee, which is assigned the task to frequently check the sources and delivery points and report in case any contamination is found so that immediate remedial action can be initiated, the ministry release said.

**CHANGE OF NAME & DOB**

I Bikram Singh S/o Army No. 1566227A Rank CHM Prabhudyal Village Nargapur Post Datawali District Firozabad Pincode 283203 Affidavit No. 16 Dated 10.02.2022 In my father's service record, my name Vikram Singh Yadav and date of birth - 28.08.1995 is wrongly entered. And the correct name is Bikram Singh and date of birth is 28.08.2001 which is correct.

## Fueling Inflation: Petrol, diesel prices set to rise

The geo-political crisis-led global hike in crude oil prices is expected to push India's domestic prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 15-22 per litre. It is widely expected that the OMCs will revise the current prices on or after March 7, which is the last day of voting in the ongoing state assembly elections. However, an excise duty cut may dampen the impact on petrol and diesel prices to an extent, but not entirely.

Rohit Vaid | New Delhi

**H**ostilities between Russia and Ukraine, along with sustained demand, is expected to keep global crude oil prices in the range of \$95 to \$125 per barrel in the short term.

At present, India imports 85 per cent of its crude oil needs.

Besides, the cascading effect of higher fuel cost will trigger a general inflationary trend.

Already, India's main inflation gauge



-- Consumer Price Index (CPI) -- which denotes retail inflation, has crossed the target range of the Reserve Bank of India in January.

The rise was blamed on high commodity costs.

As per industry calculations, a 10 per cent rise in crude oil prices adds nearly about 10 basis points in CPI inflation.

Lately, the crisis as well as fears of lower supplies have pushed Brent crude oil price to 10-year-high level of nearly \$120 per barrel.

On Friday, the Brent-indexed crude

oil stood at \$113.76 per barrel from a 10-year high of \$119.84 per barrel a day before.

Currently, Russia is the third largest producer of crude oil in the world.

It is feared that sanctions against Russia will curtail global supplies and stifle growth.

Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC Securities says, "The higher oil prices have raised market expectations that govt of India may hike fuel prices post UP elections, expecting rise by Rs 10-15 per litre."

## RUSSIA DECLARES CEASEFIRE FOR CIVILIANS' EVACUATION, THEN ENDS BLAMING UKRAINE

Russia on Saturday declared a temporary ceasefire in the two southern Ukrainian cities of Mariupol and Volnovakha to facilitate the evacuation of civilians via humanitarian corridors, the Defence Ministry in Moscow announced. The ceasefire went into effect from 10 a.m. (about 1.30 p.m. IST), reports Xinhua news agency.

### RUSSIA WISHES TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE WITH UKRAINE: PUTIN

**Moscow/Kiev:** Russian President Vladimir Putin said that his country wishes to continue a dialogue with Ukraine and wants peace, provided that all of Moscow's security demands are met amid the war on Kiev. Putin made the remarks on Friday during a phone call with German Chancellor Olaf. The President also expressed hope that Kiev will take a "reasonable and constructive stance" during a third round of talks between Russia and Ukraine.

**Moscow| Agencies**

**R**



### PUTIN DENIES TO DECLARE MARTIAL LAW

**New Delhi:** President Vladimir Putin on Saturday denied rumours that Russia was going to declare a state of emergency or martial law due to the ongoing military operation in Ukraine and Western sanctions against Moscow. "Martial law is declared in a country... in case of a foreign aggression, including in particular places where hostilities take place. We don't have a case like this. There is no need for it today."

strengthen their positions. Russia had announced a silence regime so that civilians in Mariupol and Volnovakha could use the humanitarian corridors. As was agreed by the Ukrainian side, the humanitarian corridors were to allow the exit of

### RACISM AGAINST INDIANS; MOSCOW GIVES ITS VERSION OF WAR

**London:** Both the BBC and CNN reconfirmed on Saturday that Indians in Ukraine attempting to cross over into Poland have been facing racial abuse from Ukrainian security forces. There have been persistent reports of this nature for over a week now. Amit Lath, vice-president of the Indo-Polish Chamber of Commerce, claimed that even women have been beaten up, either held up for days or not permitted to leave Ukraine at the border posts. While US Secretary of State, Antony Blinkin, toured the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) countries in eastern Europe on Saturday, Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman disclosed that the two nations were talking through certain channels.

civilians from the two cities. During their second round of peace talks on Thursday, Russian and Ukrainian negotiators agreed on the establishment of humanitarian corridors for the exit of civilians and on a temporary cessation of hostilities along the evacuation routes.

## Delhi' most wanted vehicle thief lands in police net after 25 years



the New Friend's Colony area. A case was registered but he managed to get anticipatory bail from the court due to the Covid-19 pandemic," the DCP said.

His associate Aasif is an expert in hacking any car key programming system and can make a duplicate key of any car.

The DCP said that in view of the recent incidents of car theft in Delhi-NCR, a team was constituted which took eight months to identify their hideout and their car which was being used by them to commit theft.

On February 26, a tip-off was received about the presence of both the accused, after which the police laid a trap and nabbed them from the specified spot. "Two loaded country-made pistols along with four live cartridges were recovered from their possession," said the DCP.

During interrogation, Intezar confessed that he has been stealing cars for the past 25 years.

### TALIBAN'S SIRAJUDDIN HAQQANI SHOWS FACE FOR THE FIRST TIME

**New Delhi:** Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting minister of the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan and a longtime leader of the so-called Haqqani network with a US terrorist bounty on his head, has appeared in front of the media for the first time, RFE/RL reported.

Haqqani, nicknamed Khalifa, attended a graduation ceremony in Kabul for hundreds of newly-trained Afghan police on Saturday.

He also addressed the gathering, saying the fundamentalist militant group is committed to the Doha agreement signed with the United States in 2020 that paved the way to a pullout of US-led international troops that culminated in late August last year. Haqqani told the graduating cadets that the world faces no threat from Afghanistan, the report said.

**Gujarat model is of two sellers and two buyers: Baghel**



forward to find a solution to their problems," Baghel said while addressing a public meeting in Robertsganj.

He further added that the BJP government is selling one after another all the assets generated by the previous governments.

Describing the "Congress model", he said it is aimed at making the common people more powerful, giving employment to the unemployed and extending every scheme to the poor.

people who have come from Gujarat -- two buyers and two sellers.

"When the governments do not solve the problem, then the people have to come

**WET SPELL OVER WESTERN HIMALayas, NW INDIA**

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**

**T**he India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said there will be a wet spell over Western Himalayan Region and adjoining plains of Northwest India bringing light/moderate rainfall/snowfall till Monday. Isolated heavy rainfall/snowfall is also very likely to occur over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad on Sunday while isolated light rainfall is very likely over Punjab and



Haryana-Chandigarh during Sunday and Monday. Another Western Disturbance is very likely to affect Western Himalayan Region and adjoining plains from the night of March 8, under its influence, scattered to fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall/snowfall with isolated thunderstorm/lightning very likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad and Himachal Pradesh. Isolated light/moderate rainfall/snowfall with thunderstorm/lightning

occur over Uttarakhand between March 9-10. Isolated light rainfall with thunderstorm/lightning is very likely over Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh, and Rajasthan on March 9 and under the influence of a trough in eastlies, isolated/scattered light/moderate rainfall with isolated thunderstorm/lightning is very likely over Maharashtra, Gujarat Region, East Rajasthan, and West Madhya Pradesh during March 7-9, the IMD said.

**Successful evacuation from Ukraine to have positive impact on polls: Shah**

**Team Absolute | New Delhi**

**U**nion Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the successful evacuation of Indian nationals from war-torn Ukraine will have positive impact on assembly elections.

Home Minister was addressing a press briefing at the BJP headquarters here. Underlining that the government had issued an advisory as early as February 15 for



Indians in Ukraine. "Over 13,000 citizens have reached India and more flights are coming in. This process had a positive impact on

elections and on the people also," Shah said, adding that the government has launched 'Operation Ganga' for the evacuation of Indians from Ukraine.

The Union Minister said that the government sent Russian-speaking teams to four nearby countries of Ukraine and also set up a control room. "Till March 4, we were successful in bringing out 16,000 citizens from Ukraine", he said.

**Robertsganj | New Delhi**

**C**hattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday said that the people have to take a lead and find a solution to their problems as the state government has failed.

The Chief Minister, who is in Varanasi region as part of the last leg of campaigning for assembly elections in UP, took a dig at the "Gujarat model" of the BJP, saying the model is all about four peo-

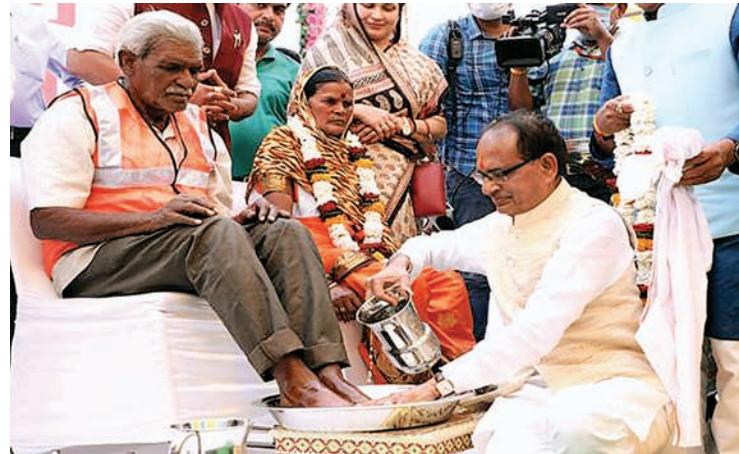


# SAFAI MITRAS WILL GET MONTHLY RISK ALLOWANCE OF RS. 150: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Safai Mitras (sanitation friends), who keep cities, towns and villages clean, are revered for me. Cleanliness is maintained only because of hard work of Safai Mitras. This is the biggest job. If the Safai Mitras do not do this work, the city will become sick. Their gesture of service is commendable.

Shri Chouhan on Saturday served food to the Safai Mitras at the local Motilal Nehru Vigyan Mahavidyalaya sports ground on his birthday, honoured them, washed the feet of two Safai Mitras Chhotelal and Nirmalabai, while sitting with them in a public programme and also had food with them. Chouhan inaugurated the programme with kanya poojan. Chief Minister said that in the cleanliness survey 2022, incentive will be given to Safai Mitras on the basis of star rating for garbage free city. Four awards will be given for this. In addition, a risk allowance of Rs. 150 per month will also be given to the Safai Mitras. There will be a provision of Rs. 25 crore for the awards. Chouhan said that I have heartfelt respect for all the Safai Mitras. Today's programme is not just a ritual. Safai Mitras have given full cooperation in making the villages, cities and towns of the state clean and beautiful with their hard



work. That is why today the Seva Samman is being given to the Safai Mitras. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that today I first planted a sapling on my birthday, then I am participating in this programme of cleaning and washing the feet of Safai Mitras and having food with them. Chouhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the inspiration of all of us in the matter of cleanliness. Cleanliness and beauty are important in cities as well as in all places. Bapu had also said that God resides where there is cleanliness. PM Modi has launched a cleanliness campaign across the country. Chouhan called upon the people of the state to complete their duty in the matter of cleanliness. Chief Minister said that efforts would be made to remove

other difficulties including education and studies of the children of Safai Mitras. For this, after studying the problems separately, we will find a way to solve it. Chouhan said that in the cleanliness survey 2022 in the state, the Safai Mitras of garbage free cities would be given prize money on the basis of star rating. In these awards, each Safai Mitra of the cities receiving one star will get Rs. one thousand, each of the Safai Mitra of cities getting three stars will get Rs. three thousand, each of the Safai Mitra of cities getting five stars will get Rs. five thousand and seven thousand rupees will be given to each Safai Mitra of the cities that get seven star ranking. An amount of Rs 12 crore will be spent on risk allowance every year for Safai Mitras. Chief

Minister Shri Chouhan said that every Safai Mitra should try to get 5 stars or 7 stars for his city. Citizens should also cooperate. Our safai karmis are now our Safai Mitras and they will be known only by the name of Safai Mitra. The concept of Garbage Free City for waste management in urban areas is being implemented in Swachh Bharat from the year 2020. For this the evaluation criteria of cities are prescribed. In this, according to the level of waste management, the ranks of 1, 3, 5 and 7 stars are given to the urban bodies. In this, collection, transportation, processing and scientific disposal of household waste has been made the main basis. Development and construction of gardens are examined. In the state, 61 thousand 142 Safai Mitras of different types are working in Indore, Ujjain, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Bhopal, Rewa and Sagar. Taking forward the campaign of cleanliness by becoming free from the problem of open defecation, the norms of water plus have also been fixed along with ODF plus and ODF double plus. In order to get Water Plus, the water supply provided to the bodies has to be 100 percent treated and 25 percent reused. It was told in the programme that the garbage disposal work is being done by the urban bodies on the zero waste principle. In this programme held at MVM ground today, after the meal, immediate wet and dry waste will be collected

## NGT concerned over dumping of biomedical waste in water bodies in MP

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) came down heavily on the negligence by state authorities over an issue of dumping of biomedical and other waste and discharge of untreated sewage into the water bodies and Bhoj Wetland - a Ramsar site in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) came down heavily on the negligence by state authorities over an issue of dumping of biomedical and other waste and discharge of untreated sewage into the water bodies and Bhoj Wetland - a Ramsar site in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh.

The NGT bench headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel was dealing pleas related to the issue of damage to the Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan Talab and adjoining water bodies - Moti Talab and Munshi Hasan Talab in MP.

The case of the applicant is that there is an indiscriminate flow of solid waste and bio-medical waste into the lakes in question. The Bio-Medical waste is discharged by the Hospitals and Medical Facilities in the vicinity.

"We find the situation to be extremely unsatisfactory. There appears to be utter neglect of constitutional obligation by the State Authorities, to the prejudice of environment and public health. Dumping of biomedical and other waste and discharge of untreated



sewage into the water bodies is a great hazard to public health and crime under the law of the land. Such water may be consumed by humans or other living beings and also used for irrigation, affecting food safety, apart from damaging the flora and fauna in the area, including the aquatic life. Discharge of sewage is also blatant contempt of Supreme Court directions," read a recent order passed by the green court. The order further said the lawlessness prevailing, as depicted from undisputed documents and findings in the reports of the statutory authorities need to be remedied on a war footing by stringent action with the involvement of higher authorities of the State so as to enforce rule of law and restore the environment and protect public health. Also, the bench asked a joint

Committee to ensure compliance with rule of law in the issue. Wherever found necessary, CCTV cameras to be installed. Water quality of water bodies be restored by preventing dumping of waste and discharge of effluents/sewage. Water quality monitoring has to be on regular basis, exploring possibility to keep water bodies aerobic for maintenance of oxygen and for at least Class 'C' Water Quality criteria, it has been directed.

"We are also disappointed with the attitude so far adopted by the State Pollution Control Board in not levying realistic compensation as per the law laid

Further, the NGT directed the Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh to file a consolidated action taken report mentioning the steps taken by various authorities within three months.

## CM Planted Saplings with Wife in Salkanpur on His Birthday



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan prayed for peace and prosperity of the country and the state by offering prayers to Goddess Vijayasan at Salkanpur on his birthday and did plantation today.

Chouhan said that planting trees is a campaign to save the earth. This is a very noble work. To make this holy social campaign a success, I plant a tree every day. You all cooperate fully in this work. Chief Minister said that on my birthday, I urge and appeal to all of you to plant more and more saplings, this will be a real gift and best wishes for me.

Chouhan said that it is necessary to plant saplings to provide a healthy environment to the coming

generation. If we all plant a tree every day, then it will definitely help in environmental protection. He appealed to everyone to plant saplings on their birthday.

Chouhan said that every village and town should be celebrated Gaurav Diwas. Along with the government, citizens also have to take responsibility for the development and beautification of villages and cities. Chief Minister has appealed to all the public representatives and citizens to fix a date to celebrate the Gaurav Diwas of their village and city and write a story of development together. MP Ramakant Bhargava, Minister in-charge Prabhuram Choudhary, Guru Prasad Sharma, Raghu Nath Singh Bhati, Scheduled Tribes

Development Corporation Chairperson Nirmala Barela, Ravi Malviya, public representatives, Collector Chandra Mohan Thakur and SP Mayank Awasthi along with many citizens planted saplings and wished Chief Minister uhan on his birthday. O Shivraj Singh Chouhan, public representatives and citizens planted 108 saplings including Karanj, Kadam, Kachnar, Neem, Sapta Parni, Rudraksh and Parijat. A blood donation camp was organised at Salkanpur on the birthday of Chief Minister. 225 persons donated blood in the camp. Chouhan said that blood donation is a great donation. Donating blood can save the life of a needy person. He appealed to donate blood and plant saplings on important dates.

The Madhya Pradesh Police have done a remarkable job and have improved the system to ensure better services to the people of the state in the last few years, but growing crimes against women is still a big concern, said retiring Madhya Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Vivek Johri at a farewell ceremony in Bhopal on Friday.

Recounting his two-year tenure as the head (DGP) of the Madhya Pradesh Police, Johri said several initiatives have been introduced, such as behavioural change of police personnel, modernization of policing system in the state and these steps will be fruitful in the future. He said making the police personnel familiar with new technology at the grassroots level was the need of the hour and a lot of work has been done in the last two years.

"Making an effective policing system is not possible without modern technology and its proper knowledge utilisation in this era. I am happy that in the last two years, a lot of work has been done in this sector and for that I would like to thank the state government for considering our request and providing all possible help during this period," Johri added.



In the speech at the farewell function organised at the Moti Lal Nehru stadium in Bhopal, which is also the training ground of the Madhya Pradesh Police - Lal Parade Ground, the 1984 batch IPS (MP cadre), Johri said, "I am proud to be a part of Madhya Pradesh Police and serving

still a concern for the state police." He also thanked Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Home Minister Narottam Mishra for considering the requirements of the police in various ways. "We received encouragement from the state government time and again, be it facilities for police personnel, their families, promotion and many more. The Chief Minister took several initiatives to encourage the police by bringing various welfare schemes and felicitating the personnel for their remarkable job," Johri said.

He pointed out that the Covid-19 pandemic was another big challenge for the state police, but they did a commendable job without fearing for their own lives and more importantly without having proper training prior to fighting against the pandemic. He said that 162 police personnel lost lives while serving the people during the pandemic.

Born in Bhopal, Johri was appointed the DGP during the then Kamal Nath government in March, 2020 for a two-year term. He assumed office on March 12, 2020.

Meanwhile, 1987 batch IPS officer Sudhir Kumar Saxena on Friday took over charge as the new Director General of Police. Before taking over charge as chief of the MP police, Saxena joined the farewell function for Vivek Johri.

## SLOTH BEAR RESCUED FROM BARBED WIRE FENCE



**Bhopal:** A one-and-a-half-year old sloth bear, that was found entwined in a barbed wire fence, has been rescued by a multi-agency team from the outskirts of village in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district.

Early on Friday morning, the sloth bear cub was found in a perilous condition as it was caught in the barbed wire fence surrounding a sugar cane farm in the Chiklod forest range located in Raisen district. Local farmers heard its painful cries and immediately contacted the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.

A joint team from Wildlife SOS and Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal drove nearly 45 km to reach the site, a release from Wildlife SOS said on Saturday.

Fortunately, the baby bear did not sustain any injuries and was fit to return to the wild. The mother bear was sighted in the vicinity so the team released the cub back in the same area, so she could reunite with her mother.

Animals such as wild boar, nilgai and sloth bear often venture out to the villages bordering the forest in search of fruits and berries. The villagers, to prevent the animals from consuming and damaging their crops, often install barbed wire fences around their plantations.

## CM Gave the Message of Cleanliness by Picking up the Garbage Himself on His Birthday

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the work of cleanliness is the most important. It is not fair to look down upon it as a petty work. Cleanliness is essential for a healthy life. I acknowledge the Safai Mitras (sanitation friends) who keep our streets and cities clean by removing all the dirt. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the mantra of cleanliness to the country. If we have to make a clean India, then the work of cleanliness has to be looked upon with respect and every person has to take part in the cleanliness activities. Chouhan said that today, on the occasion of my birthday, I have come to the Bijasen Basti and cleaned it with the aim of motivating the masses for cleaning activities. Have collected wet and dry waste from the houses and put it separately in the garbage vehicle. The



aim of this activity is to motivate the general public to follow it continuously. Chief Minister was addressing the people present on his birthday after doing cleanliness work with the Safai Mitras of Municipal Corporation in Bijasen Basti of Bhopal. Chouhan said that if there is cleanliness, then there will be less spread of diseases. Dirt increases germs, diseases increase and disease leads to loss of health as well as money. So keep the house clean, keep the household waste in the designated boxes and put the garbage separately in the vehicles. Chief Minister said that every person has to develop a sense of responsibility to keep his/her house, street, locality, village and city

## Budhni sewerage project work completed

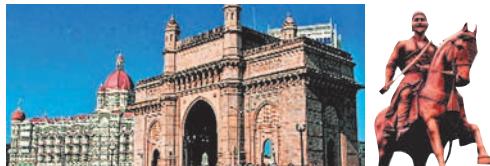
Team Absolute | Bhopal

The work of sewerage project has been completed by M/s P Das Infrastructure Ahmedabad with the help of special funds at Budhni in Sehore district by Bhopal unit of Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Company, an undertaking of Urban Development and Housing Department. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate this project on Sunday, March 6.

A population of more than 20 thousand will be benefited by this project constructed at a cost of about 44 crore 56 lakh rupees with ten years of operation and maintenance. For Budhni sewerage project, 30 km of sewerage line has been laid, while 2.2 MLD capacity SBR and 1.08 MLD sewerage treatment plant has been established. So far more than 2700 houses have been connected to the sewerage network. There is a lot of



enthusiasm among the local citizens on the completion of the sewerage project. In order to connect 100 percent houses of Budhni with sewerage network, the company in collaboration with All India Institute of Local Self Government is also motivating the citizens through women's meeting, street plays, discussion on Chouhan etc. Company's commissioner cum managing director Nikunj Srivastava has also appealed to the citizens to take sewerage connection.



## MAHARASHTRA MINISTER BEING LINKED TO DAWOOD IBRAHIM AS HE'S MUSLIM: SHARAD PAWAR

*Sharad Pawar dismissed the demands raised by Opposition seeking the resignation of Nawab Malik who was arrested last month in a money-laundering probe.*

Pune | Agencies

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday said that the arrest of party leader and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik is "politically motivated" and attempts were made to connect him to fugitive Underworld don Dawood Ibrahim because he is a Muslim.

He also dismissed the demands raised by the Opposition seeking the resignation of Malik. Malik was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on February 23 in a money-laundering probe linked to the activities of Dawood Ibrahim and his aides. "Malik's arrest is a political-



ly motivated one. He is being linked to Dawood Ibrahim because he is a Muslim. Malik and his family members are being deliberately harassed but we will fight back," the NCP chief said. When asked about the opposition BJP's demand for Mr Malik's resignation as a minister, Mr Pawar said different yardsticks are being applied to Union minister Narayan Rane, who belongs to BJP, and Malik. "I don't remember our (Congress') former party worker Narayan Rane had to resign after his arrest recently. omor-

row, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming to Pune. He may explain more about it. Applying one yardstick for Malik and another for Rane shows that all this was politically motivated," he claimed. Rane was arrested last August by the police at Sangameshwar in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra for his statement that he would have slapped state Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for forgetting the year India got freedom during his Independence Day speech. Speaking about the alleged

tapping of phones of select politicians when BJP was in power in Maharashtra, Mr Pawar said, "I have seen the record of phone tapping of various leaders. It was done during the tenure of the Devendra Fadnavis government. Officials merely followed the orders and are now facing the consequences. I have never seen such a situation in the country before." Pawar also took a swipe at BJP and Maharashtra governor BS Koshiyari, who has not approved the names of 12 MLCS sent to him by the Maharashtra cabinet for more than a year ago for their nomination to the Legislative Council. "Maharashtra has the legacy of governors like PC Alexander among others. I should not talk about what the present governor is doing. The Central government is doing whatever it can do and Maharashtra is the latest example," he said. "Getting nominated to the Vidhan Parishad is one's democratic right. But a year has passed and nothing is being done. If someone has decided not to maintain the prestige of the Constitutional post then what's the need to comment," Pawar said.

## OPERATION GANGA MERCY FLIGHT BRINGS BACK 183 FROM UKRAINE

**Mumbai:** Another 183 Indians, mostly students, arrived from war-torn Ukraine by an Air India Express flight from Budapest via Kuwait at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), an official said here on Saturday. The flight IX-1603 includes



a maximum of 40 persons from Kerala, besides 36 from Andhra Pradesh, 30 from Telangana, 28 from Tamil Nadu, and 11 from Maharashtra. There are 8 persons from Bihar, 7 from Punjab, 5 each from West Bengal and Haryana, 3 each from Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, 2 each from Rajasthan and Odisha, and one each from Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. The CSMIA authorities had deployed special measures for the speedy exit and luggage clearance of the Ukraine evacuees, and following the Covid-19 protocols. Representatives of various states later took charge of their people to help them with their lodging-boarding or onward journey plans by trains or flights.

## Sanjay Raut claims phones of non-BJP leaders in Goa being tapped

Panaji | Agencies

Two days after Goa Congress president Girish Chodankar accused the outgoing BJP-led coalition government of using a private agency to tap phones of its leaders, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday claimed that phones of other leading politicians in Goa, were also under the scanner.

"Maharashtra phone tapping pattern being followed in Goa. Sudin Dhavalikar, Vijay Sardesai, Digambar Kamat, Girish Chodankar's phones are being tapped. Who is the Rashmi Shukla of Goa," Raut tweeted on Saturday. Raut is the Shiv Sena's in-charge of Goa. Sudin Dhavalikar, a former



deputy Chief Minister, is a senior leader of the Maharashtra Wadi Gomantak Party, Vijay Sardesai, also a

former deputy CM heads the Goa Forward party, both of whom have contested against the ruling BJP. Rashmi Shukla, whom Raut refers to in his tweet, is an Indian Police Service officer in Maharashtra who was in-charge of the State Intelligence Department, who has now been accused of tapping phones of leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, an anti-BJP coalition in Maharashtra. On Thursday, Chodankar told a press conference in Panaji that the phones of top Congress leaders including Kamat and former Ports Minister Michael Lobo were being tapped ahead of March 10, when votes polled on February 14 are scheduled to be counted.

## COVID-19: Maharashtra cumulative vaccination tally crosses 15.63 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the ongoing vaccination drive, Maharashtra on March 4 has inoculated 15,63,26,393 people.

As per the state government data, 4,87,32,847 individuals aged between 18 and 44 years received their first vaccine dose and 3,63,90,260 received their second dose since the inoculation drive for this age group began on May 1.

Similarly, 1,32,91,866 individuals above 60 years have received the first vaccine dose while 1,06,87,739 received their second dose. 9,35,945 of them received their precaution dose. Meanwhile, 36,21,995 individuals aged between 15-18 years have received the first vaccine dose, while 19,44,501 have received their second.

So far, 12,95,102 health care workers have been administered the first dose of the vaccine, while 11,85,181 of them have got their second dose. 3,02,652 health care workers have received their precaution dose so far.

Similarly, 21,49,243 front line workers in the state have till now received their first vaccine dose and of them, 19,89,949 got their second dose. 3,16,653 front line workers have received their precaution dose so far.



Maharashtra on Friday recorded 525 new coronavirus cases and nine pandemic-related deaths, the health department said. The new cases included 206 Omicron variant infections, all reported from

Pune city.

On Thursday, Maharashtra had reported 467 new coronavirus cases and 12 deaths. The state's COVID-19 case tally rose to 78,67,916, and death toll reached 1,43,727. So far, a total of 5,211 Omicron cases have been reported in the state. Of these, 4,629 patients have fully recovered, the health department said. There are now 4,476 active coronavirus patients in Maharashtra. As many as 992 patients were discharged since Thursday evening, taking the total of recoveries to 77,15,711. The recovery rate is 98.07 per cent. Of eight administrative circles in the state (each comprising several districts), Pune circle reported 206 new COVID-19 cases, followed by Mumbai (131), Nashik (71), Nagpur (42), Kolhapur (30), Aurangabad (18), Akola (14) and Latur circle (13). Pune circle reported three deaths, Nashik and Akola recorded two deaths each and Latur and Mumbai circles one death each.

As many as 72,213 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the tally of samples tested so far to 7,81,38,182. Currently 28,878 people are in home quarantine and 595 are in institutional quarantine.

Maharashtra's coronavirus figures: New cases 525, deaths 9, New tests 72,213, Active cases 4,476.

## Micro enterprises in Pune still bear the brunt of Covid-19 pandemic

While large, medium and small scale industries have reported almost pre-Covid levels of production, the micro enterprises still have a long way to go.

Pune | Agencies

Two years since the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the world, recovery of micro enterprises in Pune remains far from satisfactory.

The trends revealed in surveys by the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA) point to deep distress in the sector. While large, medium and small scale industries have reported almost pre-Covid levels of production, the



micro enterprises still have a long way to go. A micro enterprise is an enterprise where investment in plant and machinery does not exceed Rs 25 lakh. Of the 14,90 lakh units in Pune region (Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur), 13,10 lakh units are classified as micro enterprises. The scheme aimed to provide 100 per cent guarantee coverage to banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to enable them to help MSMEs tide over Covid-19 emergencies. Till September 30, 2021 banks in Maharashtra had

received 5.22 lakh applications under ECLGS, of which only 3.22 lakh were sanctioned. Of the Rs 31,157.08 crore sanctioned, Rs 22,148.36 crore was disbursed. "ECLGS was for units which already are in the net of institutional credit. Many units in the manufacturing or services sector are part of the informal sector and their recovery is delayed. Vendor consolidation - a strategy where companies reduce supplier base and consolidate their operations - is another reason which has impacted micro enterprises.

He says: "I am not prepared for it at all. I was not thinking much and just went inside with an open mind. I have known pressure before, and I



want to see how much of a pressure test this show will be for me. As an artist, I am here to entertain. Being positive and upbeat in my outlook is what I feel will help me sail through. Also, humour is a great shield against adversities."

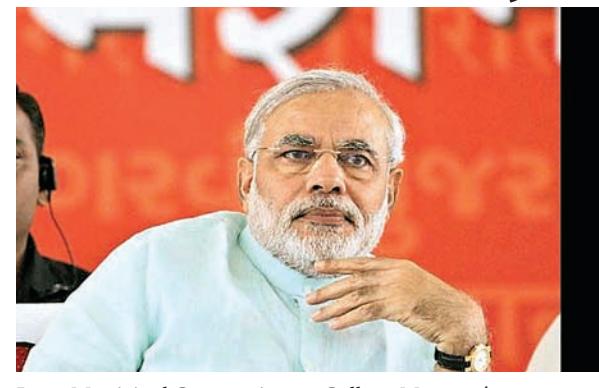
Munawar has no apprehensions while competing with any contestant.

As he shares: "I'm quite excited, to be honest. There is no nervousness at all. I am thrilled to be inside

## PM to unveil RK Laxman museum, launch Pune Metro on Sunday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Pune on Sunday to inaugurate an art gallery-museum dedicated to the legendary cartoonist R.K. Laxman and also inaugurate the new Pune Metro Rail Project as part of his packed schedule, officials said here on Saturday. He will throw open the completed 12-km stretch of the total 32.20 km long Metro Rail project providing world-class urban mobility infrastructure to Pune, and inaugurate an exhibition at Garware Metro Station. The Pune Metro Rail - for which Modi laid the foundation stone in December 2016 - is being built at a cost of over Rs 11,400 crore, and he will go on a ride from Garware to Anandnagar stations. The PM will also unveil a 9.5 feet tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, made of 1,850 kg gun metal, in the



Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) complex. In the afternoon, Modi 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. The Prime Minister will inaugurate the 'R.K. Laxman Art

## Thane businessman sent to 14-day judicial custody for issuing fake bills



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) department has arrested a Thane-based footwear businessman for issuing fake invoices to the tune of Rs 85 crore to evade tax. After being produced in court, the accused was sent to 14-day judicial custody. On the basis of an input, the CGST department initiated an inquiry against Corvette Tradelink

Pvt Ltd, a Mumbai-based firm. In the preliminary inquiry, the CGST officials found that the firm was allegedly involved in tax evasion by issuing fake bills.

A source said the firm issued bills in the name of a fake Delhi-based firm.

"We arrested the director of the firm on Thursday who was produced before a concerned court, which remained him to 14-day judicial custody," said a GST official.

## UNDP partners with Bhumi Pednekar for gender equality

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ahead of International Women's Day, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, intends to implement a year-long social campaign for which it has roped in Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar.

For the programme 'Women at Work - Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Future Tomorrow', Bhumi will raise awareness with regards to several issues like equipping young women to challenges and opportunities in non-traditional roles and career paths, the importance of creating an eco-system to promote non-traditional aspirations for young women, role of government,



businesses, NGOs, CSOs and individuals (influencers) and the importance of peer support to women working. Commenting on the occasion, Bhumi says, "This can be made possi-

ble when women occupy spaces in leading roles, breaking stereotypes, and barriers inspiring others especially, young girls to aspire and realize their full potential." Sharing her thoughts on the association with UNDP, the actress says, "I'm very pleased to be part of UNDP's International Women's Day campaign on Women at Work raising the important issue of leadership roles for women in the workspace and equal opportunities for all." Through my movies, I have portrayed different characters that provide an alternative to stereotyping of female actors, fully aware that cinema can have a lasting impression on people. I look forward to contributing my part to creating conversations on this theme during my association with UNDP", she concludes.

## MUNAWAR FARUQUI ON BEING CAGED IN 'LOCK UPP'

Stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui, who has been locked up inside the fearless reality show 'Lock Up' hosted by Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, is quite excited post joining the show and ready to face any challenges inside the jail.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

S stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui, who has been locked up inside the fearless reality show 'Lock Up' hosted by Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, is quite excited post joining the show and ready to face any challenges inside the jail.

He says: "I am not prepared for it at all. I was not thinking much and just went inside with an open mind. I have known pressure before, and I



want to see how much of a pressure test this show will be for me. As an artist, I am here to entertain. Being positive and upbeat in my outlook is what I feel will help me sail through. Also, humour is a great shield against adversities."

Munawar has no apprehensions while competing with any contestant.

As he shares: "I'm quite excited, to be honest. There is no nervousness at all. I am thrilled to be inside

'Lock Up' and meeting my other fellow contestants. The anticipation of spending time with them and competing alongside is building up and I can't wait to meet them all. It is not an easy thing for me and maybe more tough than other contestants."

He further reveals the reason behind taking up the show and says: "I know that people might wonder as to why I decided to do a show where my thinking is not at par with another co-artist who is a part of the project. But that's not the case at all.

"What I found most interesting was the concept of the show. It is something that we've not seen before in India and I couldn't have refused it. I thought it would be very interesting to be a part of their project and see where it takes me. Sometimes, you are in a zone when you want to try different things and for me, 'Lock Up' is something completely different from anything that I have ever attempted." Munawar had a controversial

past and in 2021 he was also accused of hurting the religious sentiments of people but he took it as a part and parcel of life.

On replying to how all these controversies affected him, he answers: "Of course, the things that put you in a spot in life affect you, and they did affect me too. They are a part of my life. But I didn't let that stop me. I kept on working. I kept making music, I did shows, I released more stand-up videos and continued doing what I wanted to do. In the past year itself, I got around 12 lakh followers, which goes to show that my efforts have paid off and I have been successful in entertaining my audience." There's also a metaverse-based game planned around the show. While sharing about the same, he says: "The metaverse-based game will allow people to connect with the Lock Up universe directly, which is very exciting. As a contestant, I would urge my fans to go to the 'Lock Up' game and support me, or any other contestant that they like."



## IT'S BELLA BACKSTAGE!

*Braless Hadid poses in a glitzy sheer mini backstage at the Coperni show with fellow model Mica Argan?araz in unseen shots during Paris Fashion Week*

Paris | Agencies

**S**he is in the French capital to model in runway shows as part of Paris Fashion Week, reports dailymail.co.uk.

And Bella Hadid posed up a storm in front of lockers backstage at the Coperni show holding hands with fellow model Mica Argan?araz.

The supermodel, 25, left little to the imagination as she went braless in a semi-sheer black halter-neck mini dress adorned with sparkling silver stones.

The eye-popping ensemble featured a teardrop cut-out and side slits, while Bella flaunted her toned legs in patent black over-the-knee heeled boots.

The bombshell wore her dark tresses in a straight fashion cascading down her shoulders, while she showcased her natural good looks with a feathered eyebrow look.

It comes after Bella and her sister Gigi put on another show-stopping display as they took to the runway on Thursday.



# Sports

absolute india

07

Mumbai, Sunday, March 06, 2022

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

## INDIA LOCK HORNS WITH ARCH-RIVALS PAKISTAN IN FIRST MATCH

Mount Maunganui | Agencies

In search of an elusive ICC trophy, the Indian women's team will begin its campaign in the 2022 Women's ODI World Cup against arch-rivals Pakistan in a marquee game, here on Sunday.

Like it is with the men, the women India and Pakistan teams also play each other only at ICC or continental events due to the political tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

Based on their current ICC rankings, India (4th) are favourites or expected to win against Pakistan (8). However, the sharpness of their performance in their tournament opener will give the idea of how the mega event could turn out for them.

In the last edition of the 2017 Women's World Cup, India lost to England narrowly in the final. And this time, India will be eager to go one



step ahead and claim the title that has eluded them, especially for skipper Mithali Raj and veteran pacer Jhulan

Goswami, who will be playing their last World Cup.

Even though the batting unit was able to put 250+ scores several times against New Zealand, the likes of Harmanpreet Kaur and Shafali Verma have not been consistent enough and far away from their best. The other concern is that India may or may not have zeroed in on their best XI.

Yastika Bhatia was seen as the No. 3 before Deepti Sharma moved up to take the spot in New Zealand.

On the other hand, Pakistan have built a settled bowling line-up and if the batters can follow the bowlers' example, the team can give tough competition to the Mithali Raj-led side. Notably, Pakistan have gone winless at the last two ODI World Cups, and go into this tournament far from being the favourites. Both teams haven't faced each other in the format since the 2017 World Cup when India won by 95 runs.

**Squads:** India: Mithali Raj (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Harmanpreet Kaur, Yastika Bhatia, Deepti Sharma, Pooja Vastrakar, Rich Ghosh (wk), Taniya Bhatia (wk), Sneh Rana, Meghna Singh, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Jhulan Goswami, Renuka Singh. Pakistan: Aliya Riaz, Javeria Khan, Muneeba Ali (wk), Nahida Khan, Bismah Maroof (c), Sidra Ameen, Nida Dar, Anam Amin, Omaima Sohail, Sidra Nawaz (wk), Aiman Anwer, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Ghulam Fatima, Nashra Sandhu.

## Lautaro completes hat-trick, Inter bounces back by destroying Salernitana

Rome | Agencies

Inter Milan finally shattered the curse as they ended their winless run by defeating Salernitana 5-0 at San Siro, with Lautaro Martinez breaking the goal drought with a sensational hat-trick.

Inter were in a poor form before Friday's game, as they only managed one win in the past seven games on three fronts, and hadn't tasted victory since mid February.

The Nerazzurri went ahead in the 21st minute, when Lautaro, who failed to find the net since the January, sprung the offside trap to finish with a low strike, Xinhua reports.



Lautaro doubled the lead in the 39th minute after collecting the ball from Nicolo Barella, resisting a shoulder-to-shoulder challenge and sending the ball into the net. The Argentinean completed his hat-trick straight after the break when Edin Dzeko rolled across from the left, and Lautaro went in front of his marker to drill home. Dzeko also found the net in the 63rd minute on January arrival Robin Goseins' assist, before he put the icing on Inter's cake to seal the game 5-0 five minutes later. With the win, Inter restored the lead on the table with 58 points, one ahead of Napoli and AC Milan.

## Asian Youth & Junior Boxing: Nivedita, Tamanna power into semis

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian youth women boxers Nivedita Karki and Tamanna progressed to the semi-finals with confident victories at the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan on Saturday.

According to information received here, Nivedita, who hails from Uttarakhand, outpunched Jordan's Batool Hussein and won via RSC (referee stopping the contest) in the first round of the 48kg quarter-finals while Tamanna too pulled off a stunning 5-0 win against Thailand's Paphada Wutthichai in the 50kg.

With places in the last four, both Nivedita and Haryana's Tamanna, have now confirmed their second successive medals at the prestigious tournament. They won silver medals in the last edition. On Saturday, seven more youth Indian boxers, including three women—Renu (52kg), Prachi (57kg) and Ravina (63kg), will play in the quarter-finals. Among



men, Ashish Hooda (71kg), Deepak (75kg), Rockey Chaudhary (80kg) and Jaskaran Singh (92kg) will be seen in action on the fourth day of the championships, where both the age groups of men and women-youth and junior-are being played together. Earlier on Friday night, Jackson Singh Laishram (70kg), Dev Pratap Singh

(75kg), Rishabh Singh Shikharwar (80kg) and Gaurav Mhaske (+81kg) progressed to the junior boys' semi-finals following comfortable wins in their respective last-eight round matches. Jackson and Dev outclassed Iran's Amir Khazaipour Jordan's Abdel Jaradat respectively by unanimous margins. On the other hand,

Rishabh and Gaurav secured themselves medals with victories by Referee Stops Contest verdict against their respective opponents, United Arab Emirates' Mohammed Albarout and Raimikulov Ermek. However, Harish Saini (63kg) exited after suffering a close 1-4 defeat against Kazakhstan's Akhmet Usen.

## INDIA'S JEHAN DARUVALA SETS SECOND-FASTEST TIME OF BAHRAIN F2 TEST

Mumbai: Indian F1 hopeful Jehan Daruvala set the second-fastest overall time at the Formula 2 pre-season test session in Bahrain.

Driving for reigning champions Prema this year, the 23-year-old's best time over the three days was one minute, 42.074



seconds, which put him at the top of the timesheets on the opening day of running. It also stood as the second quickest time of the whole test session, behind only Liam Lawson's Day 2 pace-setting time of one minute, 41.623 seconds. The third and final day of the test had to be abandoned after limited running due to a sandstorm. Times in testing are notoriously difficult to read as teams run their own individual programmes. But they do offer an indication of form. Jehan, who is also part of the Red Bull Junior Team, consistently ran among the front-runners throughout the test, further boosting his prospects of becoming the first Indian to win the Formula 2 championship. He also ran trouble-free during the three days, chalking up a total of 153 laps around the Sakhir International Circuit. The Bahrain test was held from March 2-4.

## SA unconvincing in win against B'desh

Dunedin | Agencies

Veteran South African medium-pacer Ayabonga Khaka took four wickets for just 32 runs as they defeated Bangladesh Women by 32 runs in an ICC Women's World Cup match at the University Oval here on Saturday.

Electing to bowl after winning the toss, Bangladesh did well to restrict the Proteas to 207 in 49.5 overs, but in a game dominated by bowlers, Sune Luus' side earned full points by bundling out the opponents for 175 with three balls to spare.

Marizanne Kapp (42) and the hard-hitting Chloe Tryon (39) lifted last edition's semifinalists to a fighting but below-par 207 before Ayabonga Khaka, who was declared Player of the



Match came up with match-winning figures of 10-3-32-4 to earn her team a hard-fought win. Bangladesh made a steady start, reaching 69 for one before Khaka let rip and reduced them to 85/4. A late flurry from Nigar Sultana and Ritu Moni came too only 175, and fell way short.

### Brief scores

Brief scores: South Africa 207 in 49.5 overs (Marizanne Kapp 42, Laura Wolvaardt 41, Farha Trisna 3/35, Jahanara Alam 2/28) beat Bangladesh 175 in 49.3 overs (Sharmin Akhter 34, Nigar Sultana 29; Ayabonga Khaka 4/32, Masabata Klaas 2/36) by 32 runs.

## 1st Test: India extends stronghold as Sri Lanka finish day two at 108/4

Mohali | Agencies

India extended their stronghold on day two of the first Test at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium as Sri Lanka ended the day at 108/4 in 43 overs. After declaring at 574/8 in 129.2 overs, India picked four Sri Lankan wickets in the final session to put the visitors on the backfoot while enjoying a lead of 466 runs.

Sri Lanka got off to a steady start as Dimuth Karunaratne and Lahiru Thirimanne got 48 runs in the first 18 overs. India used four bowlers within the first ten overs but didn't get much help from the pitch. Ravichandran Ashwin's introduction made things tough for Thirimanne and eventually, the off-spinner enticed him in defending forward and beating the inner edge to trap the batter plumb lbw. Karunaratne managed to survive testing



over from Mohammed Shami. But Ravindra Jadeja, who got some turn and created chances for lbw shout, struck with his second ball of the day, trapping Karunaratne with a spin-

ning-in delivery and hit him on pads plumb in front of stumps while trying to sweep.

Ashwin then came back for another spell and was rewarded with the wicket of Dhananjaya de Silva on the very first ball. Jadeja had beaten Charith Asalanka on the inside edge and was successful in lbw appeal. Asalanka and Nissanka then ensured that Sri Lanka reached stumps with no further loss of wickets.

I just stayed calm and batted normally: Jadeja



I just stayed calm and batted normally. I always enjoy batting with him (Ashwin), bowling with him, it is all about teamwork, one man can't win you the game and it has to be a team effort.

## Davis Cup: India defeat Denmark 4-0, stay in World Group I

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan saved three match points to register a hard-fought win against the Denmark's Frederik Nielsen and Mikael Torpegaard 6-7 (3-7), 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) in an intense doubles match of the Davis Cup World Group 1 Playoff at the Delhi Gymkhana Club here on Saturday.

In the inconsequential fourth match, India's ace tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan, came back strongly after conceding the first set against the lowly-ranked Johannes Ingildsen, notching up a well deserved 5-7, 7-5, 10-7 victory to make it 4-0 in favour of the hosts.

On March 4, Ramkumar Ramanathan and Yuki Bhambri had given the hosts a comprehensive 2-0 lead defeating Christian Sigsgaard



and Mikael Torpegaard, respectively. The 4-0 comprehensive win ensured India a place in the World Group I for the 2022 season, while Denmark will now again go back to World Group II. World No. 32 in doubles Bopanna showed why he is the best doubles player in the country. He rose to the occasion when it mattered the most, grabbing crucial points with his drop shots on the net. However, world No. 142 in doubles, Divij looked a little shaky in the beginning but later got into the rhythm inspired by his partner. The 35-year-old Divij played well in the third set and took the attack to the opposition.

Nielsen, the senior-most player in the Denmark side, made double faulted at 1-2 and then made a back-hand into the net. It gave India a 4-1 lead which proved enough for hosts to seal the set and match.

## Indian Arrows dominate the numbers against Sudeva Delhi

Mumbai | Agencies

The restart of the I-League was a joyous occasion for the Indian Arrows as they recorded a memorable 1-0 win against Sudeva Delhi FC at the Naihati Stadium.

Shamugam Venkatesh's boys fought well even after defender Amandeep was sent off at the stroke of half-time. With the odds stacked against them, they took the lead when Parthib Gogoi poked the ball into the back of the net in the 60th minute.

Arrows' resolute defence saw off Sudeva's attacks for the rest of the contest and ensured that they bagged all three points and also maintained the record of zero goals conceded so far in the season.

The standout performer and deserving Hero of the Match was Indian Arrows' captain on the day, Parthib



Sundar Gogoi, who netted the only goal of the match. He robbed Aryan Khokhar of the ball before calmly nutmegging the keeper to poke the ball into the back of the net in the 60th minute.

The Assamese also dominated the numbers. He was the protagonist in Arrows' impressive pressing throughout the 90 minutes, as demonstrated by his 20 attacking challenges, the most by any player on the pitch.

Indian Arrows, alongside title-holders Gokulam Kerala,

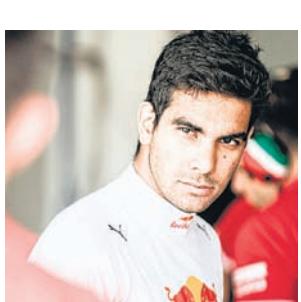
are the only two sides who haven't conceded a goal in the league this year. The young guns performed as a cohesive unit in their own third as Sudeva failed to muster any real chances even with a man's advantage for more than 45 minutes and with an advantage of 2-men by the end of the game.

There were some other standout performers in the young Indian Arrows side as well. Midfielder Vibin Mohanan completed 53 passes with an astounding 89 percent accuracy.

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## ICC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Hamilton | Agencies

Rachael Haynes (130 off 131) and Meg Lanning's (86 off 110) heroics with the bat overshadowed Nat Sciver's unbeaten century as Australia beat arch-rivals England by 12 runs in their thrilling opening match at the 2022 ICC Women's World Cup at the Seddon Park, here on Saturday.

Defending 311, Australia managed to hold their nerve with England needing 16 off the last over. Jess Jonassen gave away just three runs as the Aussies put their first points on board in the World Cup standings. Alana King was the best bowler for Australia. She turned the game in the middle overs with three wickets (3/59), including the important



scalp of Tammy Beaumont while several Aussie bowlers also chipped in with crucial wickets.

Chasing a daunting target, England lost the wicket of Lauren Winfield-Hill for a duck. On the fourth ball of the first over of the innings bowled by Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland took a brilliant diving catch, plucking the ball inches off the ground to give the Aussies the early breakthrough.

England captain Heather Knight and Tammy

Brief scores

Australia 310/3 (Rachael Haynes 130, Meg Lanning 86) beat England 298 for 8 (Natalie Sciver 109 not out, Tammy Beaumont 74, Alana King 3-59) by 12 runs



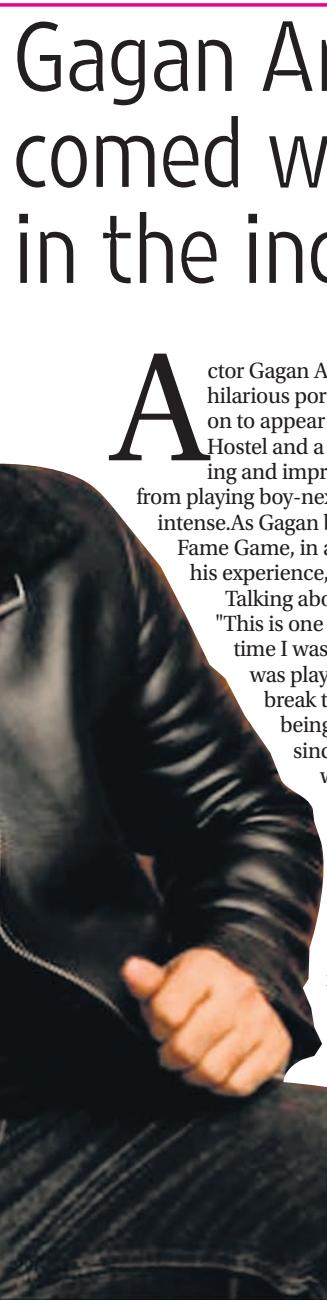
## Gagan Arora: I was welcomed with open hands in the industry

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

**A**ctor Gagan Arora became a household name and a youth icon with his hilarious portrayal of Bagga in the web show College Romance. He went on to appear in other web shows like Basement Company, TVF's Girls Hostel and a lot of YouTube videos. Popularly known for his comic timing and impressive performances, the actor has indeed come a long way from playing boy-next-door characters to ones that are strong, raw, and intense. As Gagan basks in the success of his recently released OTT show, The Fame Game, in an exclusive chat with Absolute India News he opened up on his experience, journey, being typecast, nepotism, and much more.

Talking about his experience of working in the game game Gagan said, "This is one of the characters I really wanted to play because for a long time I was offered roles which were not grey in terms of the backdrop. I was playing the boy-next-door or funny characters so I wanted to break that stereotype since a very long time". He also shared how being typecast took a toll on him. He said, "I was really scared since I was being offered similar kinds of roles. As an actor you want to do different things. People have accepted and liked my performance a lot in the genre of comedy and so even producers and casting directors thought of me as a comic actor. Since I was typecasted there were times I thought I will ever be getting different kinds of roles. I even thought of taking a gap from acting since it becomes a little heavy sometimes." Talking about the performance pressure Gagan said, "I have no connection in the industry. I come from a middle-class family from Delhi and started acting. So constant support from people leads to performance pressure and which is why I strive to perform the best."

When asked if the Bollywood industry has been welcoming to him, Gagan replied, "I do not belong from film family and still the kind of projects I am getting proves that it is welcoming. I haven't seen any kind of nepotism in my workspace. I have given auditions and got work because of my talent. The only benefit for people with film background is they have an idea how the industry works. Right now I feel it's all based on talent."



## ZEESHAN KHAN DOESN'T LIKE TREND OF FALLING IN LOVE ON A REALITY SHOW

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Kumkum Bhagya' actor Zeehan Khan doesn't support the trend to get into a love angle just to win a reality show. He says: "I feel the audience enjoy watching how two strangers in a reality TV show fall in love. As love stories give some hope of finding love of our own. We all need hope in our lives. At times we need to live by stories that help us deal with tough realities. So, it has become a trend for many to start a love story while participating in reality shows. But I don't enjoy the concept of falling in love just to impress the audience or to win the show. Love is auspicious."

Zeehan, who was also seen as a contestant in 'Bigg Boss OTT', feels the audience can easily understand if the romance is for the show or real.



## SAIYAMI KHER FEELS GOOD TO BE WORKING ROUND-THE-CLOCK

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**A**ctress Saiyami Kher shares how she is managing to do multiple projects and juggling her time between the sets of movies 'Ghoomer' and 'Faadu'.

The actress had quite a busy start to the year, with back-to-back film announcements.

Saiyami, who acted in film 'Mirzya' and Anurag Kashyap directorial 'Choked' is quite happy to be occupied and working double shifts to complete the shoot of the new season of 'Breathe: Into The Shadows' and 'Faadu' directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwary.

Saiyami also took cricket training as a part of the preparation for R. Balki's 'Ghoomer'.

Saiyami shares: "It feels so good to be working round the clock. This is all an actor waits for. I know how tough the waiting game has been so now when I have long hours of work I'm just very grateful and very happy."



## Shriya Pilgaonkar returns to theatre

Team Absolute | Mumbai

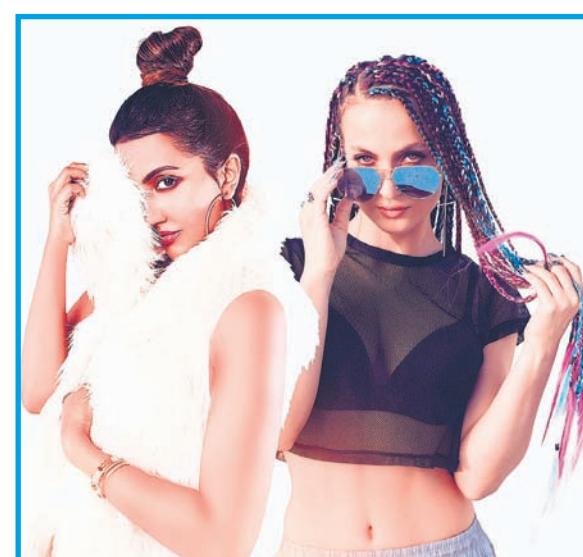
**A**ctress Shriya Pilgaonkar, who is widely known for her portrayal of Sweety Gupta in 'Mirzapur', has returned to the theatre stage after two years of the coronavirus pandemic with her play 'Internal Affairs'.

She recently rehearsed with her theatre coactors Shikha Talsania, Hussain Dalal, and Priyanshu Painyuli at Prithvi Theatre.

Shriya began her acting journey with stage and the actress made a revisit to the medium after wrapping up her recent series, the details of which are still under wraps.

Expressing her excitement over returning to the theatre stage after two years, Shriya Pilgaonkar says, "I was really excited to be back on stage after two years. 'Internal Affairs'

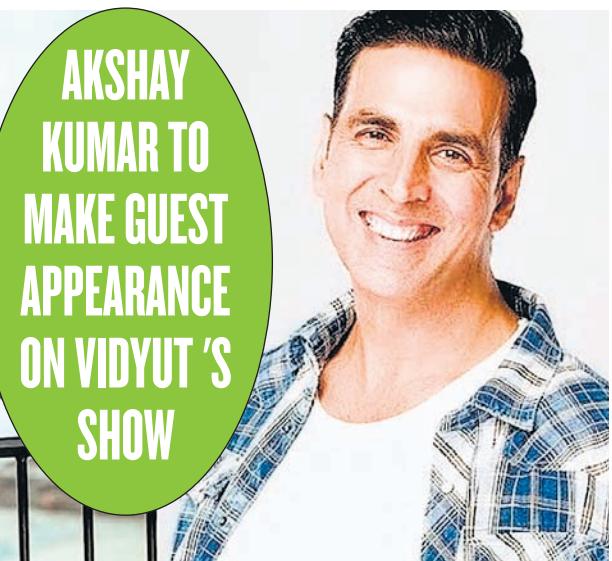
was one of my first plays with Akvarious Productions from where I started my journey. It's a romantic comedy and we've performed more than 90 shows across India and worldwide. These three days of performing at Prithvi were so much fun. The shows were houseful and we got a lot of love." The actress thoroughly loved jamming with her co-actors on stage, as she states, "It has been a fun journey sharing the stage with Shikha Talsania, Hussain Dalal, and Priyanshu Painyuli, who are all not just good actors but close friends. Performing on the Prithvi stage is a special experience and we've always got a lot of love here."



## Elli AvrRam to release song with Avina Shah

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**L**ondon-based singer Avina Shah is all set to release her new song 'Kudi Main Mean' featuring Bollywood actress Elli AvrRam on the occasion of International Women's Day. The song urges the women of the world to be true to themselves and help fellow women to be the best version of themselves. Speaking about the song, Avina, who's known for songs like 'Tere Bina', 'Groove' and 'Husn Di Rani', says, "'Kudi Main Mean' stands for everything that a modern woman wants; independence, individuality and confidence. It is about women empowering other women and helping them become a better version of themselves with self-love. It has been an amazing experience working on this song with my very good friend Elli as both of us believe in the same ideals for women." Elli AvrRam who will next be seen in the movie 'Ganapath' alongside Tiger Shroff uses the song 'Kudi Main Mean' to explore a new side of her artistic personality by taking up the artform of singing, she says, "This is a special dedication to my fans especially for Women's Day and I've thoroughly enjoyed being part of this project in writing lyrics to recording in the studio and performing it." "Self-love and confidence is something we all need more of and I hope people are inspired by the message of this song", Elli further states.



**AKSHAY KUMAR TO MAKE GUEST APPEARANCE ON VIDYUT'S SHOW**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

**B**ollywood superstar Akshay Kumar will join the grand finale of the upcoming action reality show 'India's Ultimate Warrior' hosted by Vidyut Jammwal.

Talking about the show, Akshay said, "I was nine (years old) when I started practicing Martial Arts and I owe everything I am today to this art form. When the show makers reached out to me to be a part of 'India's Ultimate Warrior' revolving around combat disciplines as a guest, I was instantly intrigued by the same."

"It is a standout in the reality genre for its intent and authenticity and I am sure, the series shall open to positive audience reactions."

Vidyut who is going to host the show also shared, "It was enriching for me to play the host as the Dojo master especially because I have lived this subject. To put the students through a certain set of obstacles that needed mental strength to be able to perform the physical feats was the idea behind the show when I first began training."

"With a one-of-a-kind concept, combined with well-researched, expansive

challenges, ranging from Kalaripayattu to Krav Maga, the show promises a unique visual offering unseen and unheard before in the reality genre in India."

In a bid to give India its next 'Mahayuddha', the series produced by Base Films will have Dojo master, Vidyut commands a 'fight camp' along with mentors namely - Shifu Kanishka, whose love for martial arts made him craft his own style Shifu Kanishka Combatives, Shaun Kober, a former Rugby player who served the Australian army, Bi Nguyen AKA Killer Bee, an expert in Muay Thai, one of the hardest martial arts in the world and Mykel Hawke, a Former U.S. Army Special Forces officer.



**INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY**

**Shanaya Kapoor**