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Kerosene, firewood use gathering momentum in rural India

Sanjeev Sharma | New Delhi

Surprisingly, the contribution of petrol and diesel in overall inflation has been declining steadily since October 2021, while there is a steady increase in the weighted contribution of kerosene and firewood in headline inflation. SBI Research said in a report. There is also a decline in weighted contribution of LPG in headline inflation.

It seems that fuel consumption has been declining even before the

Omicron had set in and the trend to alternate sources of fuel like kerosene and even firewood may have gathered momentum and will possibly gather further traction in coming days. This does not augur well for rural demand, says Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, State Bank of India.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has significantly impacted the trajectory of inflation. The latest March'22 inflation print shows wheat, protein items (chicken in particular), milk, refined oil, potato, chillies, kerosene,

firewood, Gold and LPG contributing to overall inflation in a substantive manner.

The conflict has pushed up prices of chicken abruptly as chicken feed imports from Ukraine are getting disrupted. The pressure on sunflower oil supplies from Ukraine has led to change in export policy from Indonesia, thereby leading to lower palm oil imports. Further the war has exacerbated crop loss concerns in South America which in turn has impacted soybean oil supplies. Milk, Refined Oil prices have also jumped

significantly.

CPI inflation surged to 6.95 per cent on yearly basis in March'22 as compared to 6.07 per cent in February'22 mainly on account of food price inflation. Inflation prints are now likely to stay higher than 7 per cent till September. Beyond September, inflation prints could hover in between 6.5 per cent-7 per cent. Our FY23 inflation forecast is now closer to 6.5 per cent, taking into account the possibility of an extended food price shock, the report said.

ZIKA MAY BE A STEP AWAY FROM DANGEROUS OUTBREAK

BE CAREFUL

▶ ZIKA VIRUS, WHICH IS CARRIED BY MOSQUITOES, CAUSED A GLOBAL MEDICAL EMERGENCY IN 2016, WITH THOUSANDS OF BABIES BORN WITH BIRTH DEFECTS SUCH AS MICROCEPHALY AFTER THEIR MOTHERS BECAME INFECTED WHILE PREGNANT.

▶ THE RESEARCHERS FOUND IT IS RELATIVELY EASY FOR ZIKA VIRUS TO ACQUIRE A SINGLE AMINO ACID CHANGE THAT ALLOWS THE VIRUS TO MAKE MORE COPIES OF ITSELF - AND HELP INFECTIONS TAKE HOLD MORE EASILY.

▶ RESEARCHERS FROM LA JOLLA INSTITUTE FOR IMMUNOLOGY (LJI) IN THE US, IDENTIFIED NEW MUTATION -- CALLED NS2B I39V/I39T MUTATION.

▶ ACCORDING TO THE WHO, DENGUE FEVER INFECTS 390 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE 130 COUNTRIES ANNUALLY WHERE IT IS ENDEMIC, WHILE ZIKA VIRUS HAS BEEN DETECTED IN AT LEAST 89 COUNTRIES.

“Unfortunately,” the Zika variant that we identified had evolved to the point where the cross-protective immunity afforded by prior dengue infection was no longer effective in mice. Thus “if this variant becomes prevalent, we may have the same issues in real life.”

Prof. Sujan Shresta, La Jolla Institute for Immunology, US



said Professor Sujan Shresta from La Jolla Institute for Immunology (LJI) in the US, who showed how Zika virus naturally evolves as it encounters more hosts. In the study published in the journal Cell Reports, the team recreated infection cycles that repeatedly switched back and forth between mosquito cells and mice.

“This single mutation is sufficient to enhance Zika virus virulence,” said Jose Angel Regla-Nava, Associate Professor at the University of Guadalajara in Mexico.

“A high replication rate in either a mosquito or human host could increase viral transmission or pathogenicity - and cause a new outbreak.”

Zika virus and dengue virus tend to overlap in many countries worldwide. Like Zika, dengue virus is a mosquito-borne flavivirus, and thus shares many biological properties.

Further, Shresta noted that in areas where Zika is prevalent, a vast majority of people have already been exposed to dengue virus and have both T cells and antibodies that cross-react. In fact, the viruses are similar enough that the immune response sparked by prior dengue exposure can offer protection against Zika.

DELHI GETS 50% INCREASE COVID CASES IN 24 HOURS

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 299 fresh cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday - a rise of nearly 50 percent since yesterday (202). With this, the national capital's caseload has increased to 18,66,881. The national capital has seen an uptick in cases in the last few days after recording a steady decline over the last two months. While no death due to the highly contagious disease was reported in the last 24 hours, the daily positivity rate has gone up to 2.49 per cent, taking the cumulative rate to 4.98 per cent. Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain had earlier said the city government is keeping a watchful eye on the situation and there is no reason to worry until a new variant of concern is detected. “The daily cases in Delhi are being reported in the range of 100-200. We are keeping an eye on hospital admissions and they are going down. Focus shouldn't be on positivity rate much as of now,” he said.

NEW YORK | Agencies

US researchers have found that Zika virus can mutate to become more infective - and potentially break through pre-existing immunity. The finding is in line with the warning issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO), earlier this month. The global health agency warned that the next pandemic could be triggered by insect-borne pathogens, including Zika and dengue. It was found to boost the virus's ability to replicate in both mice and mosquitoes. This Zika variant also showed increased replication in human cells. “The world should monitor the emergence of this Zika virus variant,”

K'TAKA GOVT PERMITS RECITAL OF QURAN AT TEMPLE FAIR

The 'Rathotsav' ceremony at the Belur temple is performed for two days, which is a rare phenomenon in the state. The idol of Channakeshava will be embellished with gold and diamond jewellery gifted by the erstwhile kings of the Mysuru kingdom. Lakhs of devotees throng Belur during this temple fair.

Hassan (Karnataka) | Agencies

Amid the ongoing unrest over incidents of communal polarisation in the state, the BJP government in Karnataka on Wednesday permitted continuation of an age-old ritual of reciting verses from the Quran during a historical Hindu religious fair despite objections from Hindu groups in Hassan district.

The move has been appreciated by thousands of devotees who took part in the 'Rathotsav' of Channakeshava temple at Belur in Hassan district.

Meanwhile, Hindu organisations have objected to the age-old tradition of recital of Quran before moving the chariot this year following a series of developments in the state.

The administrator of the temple had written to the Muzrai department seeking clarification over the continu-



ation of the ritual, which has been going on for years and symbolises Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Commissioner of the Muzrai department, Rohini Sindhoori, gave green signal to the continuation of the ritual. She said that according to Section 58 of the Hindu Religious Act, 2002, there should not be any interference in the rituals and traditions of the temple. After her direction, the temple committee decided to go ahead with the ritual of recital of verses from the Quran.

“The recital of verses from the Quran has been a tradition for generations and it has come from my ancestors. Whatever may be the differences, Hindus and Muslims should live in a united manner and let the God bless all.”

Kazi Syed Sajeed Pasha

IT major Infosys says it won't work with Russian clients

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh said on Wednesday that the company won't work with any Russian clients.

“We work with no Russian clients and the work we do is with a small number of global clients in Russia, and we have started transitioning,” Parekh stated. “We have no impact on our business from an Infosys perspective given what is going on. We are providing reskilling for individuals that are displaced



and see as they move to other locations in Eastern

Europe.

“Given what is going on in the region, we have started to transition all our work from our centres in Russia to our centres outside Russia. We have less than 100 employees in Russia,” he added.

In Europe, Infosys as a company would very much like to see the two sides (Russia and Ukraine) come together and come to some agreement on peace, Parekh said adding: “We have launched a fund, \$1 million, to help in the humanitarian areas.”

BHARAT RATNA DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR
(14 April 1891 - 6 December 1956)

ON THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY
HUMBLE TRIBUTES TO
ARCHITECT OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION

MAHAMANAV
BHARAT RATNA
DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

ROC-2022/23, No-5/C 150

Uddhav Thackeray
Chief Minister

Ajit Pawar
Dy. Chief Minister

Balasaheb Thorat
Minister, Revenue

Aaditi Tatkare
State Minister, Information and Public Relations

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Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Government of Maharashtra.



INDIA MAY SEE LESS MSP PROCUREMENT AS WHEAT EXPORTS COULD INCREASE



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ukraine-Russia war-led speculation surge for Indian export of wheat may bring down government procurement under Minimum Support Price (MSP) to 30-35 million metric tonnes (MMT) against the targeted 44 MMT this year and high vegetable oil prices may shift some unirrigated rice area to oilseeds, a US Agriculture Department report said.

The US Department of Agriculture's 'Grain and Feed Annual - 2022' report for India, released late on Tuesday night (India time) dwells on market possibilities, sowing area, and record productions.

Pointing out that India is heading for a record wheat harvest this mar-

keting year (MY), it said the Foreign Agricultural Service, New Delhi forecasts MY 2022/2023 (April-March) wheat production at a record 110 from 30.9 million hectares, and up from last year's record 109.6 MMT from 31.1 million hectares.

"India is heading for a record wheat harvest this coming marketing year (MY) thanks to highly favorable weather conditions in the major wheat growing areas. If good weather conditions hold through the harvest (April-May), FAS New Delhi (Post) forecasts MY 2022/2023 (April-March) wheat production at a record 110 million metric tons (MMT) from 30.9 million hectares, and up from last year's record 109.6 MMT from 31.1 million hectares," it said.

It blamed global prices fueling domestic pricing and receding fear of

new Covid-19 disruptions to claim that government procurement is set to swing into reverse in 2022/23.

"In February 2022, but just prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Indian government set the 2022/23 procurement target at 44 million metric tons. With speculation rampant about a surge of demand for Indian export wheat, due to high global prices, sources see the government's minimum support price (MSP) procurement dropping to 30-35 million metric tons," it said.

India's 2021/22 (October 2021-January 2022) total rice exports are officially estimated at 6.8 MMT, up from 5.7 MMT during the same period last year on increased coarse rice exports to Bangladesh, China, and African countries, the report said.

"Assuming no significant change in

the current price parity for Indian rice, 2021/22 rice exports are expected to reach 20.5 MMT, and 2022/23 exports are forecast at 18 MMT."

Warning that high vegetable oil prices may shift some un-irrigated rice area to oilseeds, the report said that timely, well-distributed 2022 monsoon rains are critical for forecast area planted and yields as 40 per cent of the rice area is rain-fed (un-irrigated).

Despite 2021 monsoon rains supporting a record corn harvest, 2021/22 total coarse grain production is estimated lower at 49.9 MMT due to lower production of other coarse grains, the report said. Timely planting under above normal 2022 monsoon rains and favorable weather conditions for the winter planted rabi season corn boosted yield prospects with 2021/22 corn production estimated at a record 32.5 MMT.

"However, production of millet, sorghum, and barley are estimated down from last year on lower plantings (area shifted to rice and pulses)," it said. The report also pointed out that despite the record harvest, 2021/22 prices are on the upward trajectory. "Prices have gone up further in the last three months in response to global prices spiking due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Despite India's export competitiveness, Post forecasts 2022/23 exports lower at 2.4 MMT and imports at 100,000 MT on forecast tight domestic supplies and strong demand," said the report that came with a disclaimer that it contained assessment of commodity and trade issues made by the USDA staff and not necessarily statements of official US government policy.

Top MHA officials to review Amarnath Yatra preparedness



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Top Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) officials along with the Intelligence Bureau Director are likely to visit Srinagar soon to review the preparedness of Amarnath Yatra which will commence from June 30 after a gap of two years, the sources in the government set up said here on Wednesday. During the visit to Srinagar, the Union Home Secretary will discuss all aspects of the annual pilgrimage including the security with the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

The sources also said that the Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) and J&K DGP will also join the review meeting in Srinagar.

The J&K DGP will make a presentation on the security aspect during the meeting. The Intelligence Bureau Director is likely to discuss the intelligence input gathered so far, sources said.

The government is concerned about the security of the Amarnath cave shrine pilgrimage. The MHA has asked security forces deployed in the Kashmir Valley to step up counter terror operations against the ultras. So far, eight terrorists have been gunned down in Srinagar in various counter operations in this month only. The sources in the security grid said that security forces deployed in the Kashmir Valley have been asked to scale up operations against ultras and a full proof security shield has to be installed in the union ter-

ritory of J&K so that the 'Yatra' is conducted peacefully. The sources also said that once the security arrangements are put in place, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah will review the all arrangements before the Yatra commences. Meanwhile, the registration for Amarnath Yatra has begun on April 11 and it is expected that a huge number of pilgrims will come to visit the cave shrine. It is expected that around three to five lakh pilgrims are likely to visit the Amarnath cave shrine this year, the officials in the Jammu and Kashmir administration said. This Yatra is commencing after a gap of two years in 2022. The pilgrimage was not conducted because of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

Delhi: 4 children drown in Yamuna river; 1 body recovered

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Four children drowned in Yamuna river in the national capital on Wednesday, officials said.

The official informed that they received a call about the drowning incident at around 3.30 p.m. at Khadda Colony, Jaitpur in south-east Delhi after which two fire engines were immediately pressed into service.

"So far, one body of a child aged around 12-13 years has been recovered," the official told IANS. The body was taken out from the Yamuna river by the boat club staff with the help of Delhi Fire Services personnel at around



5.35 p.m. in the evening.

Meanwhile, DCP southeast Esha Pandey told reporter that the rescue operation was underway. As none had seen the other 3 boys, it was still unclear whether they had even drowned or not.

"None had seen them but their clothes are lying at the river bank so there is a possibility that they too might have drowned," Pandey said, adding that exact information can only be given once the rescue operation ends.

MINOR GIRL ABDUCTED BY UNCLE FOUND AFTER 3.5 YRS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A 10-year-old girl who was abducted by her uncle from Bihar's Araria district in 2018 was finally found in the national capital, and later reunited with her family, an official said on Wednesday.

According to the official, in a matter of family dispute, the family of complainant Aisa Khatoon, a resident of Dhooa Badi village in Araria, was assaulted by the family of her brother-in-law (the uncle of the girl) and his associates, and they took away cash, jewellery and the 7-year-old girl child was also kidnapped by them.

Subsequently, based on a complaint, the Bihar Police had registered an FIR under sections 341, 323, 324, 365, 379, 504 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code, and began investigating the case.

However, despite efforts by Bihar Police, the girl could not be traced.



On February 18, someone spotted the girl roaming in Delhi, and took her to Lahori gate police station that lodged her at Nirmal Chhaya in Hari Nagar.

"In routine practice, a team of anti-human trafficking unit of west dis-

trict, on a mandate to reunite the children lodged in various children's homes, visited Nirmal Chhaya, Hari Nagar and collected the details of the children," Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Ghanshyam Bansal said. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) team consisted of a lady constable Sunita, who has already traced more than 80 children in the last 9 months.

Initially, the girl hesitated to share her identity. However, after constant persuasion by the lady constable, the girl child narrated the whole story as to how she was kidnapped by her uncle from her village in absence of her parents and he brought her to Delhi and abandoned her at New Delhi Railway Station.

Since then, she was roaming here and there and was taken to Lahori gate police station by a passer-by.

After this the Delhi Police contacted the concerned investigating officer (IO) of the case in Bihar and later a video call was arranged between the girl and the family.

The family and the concerned IO were then called to Delhi and with help of AHTU team, the girl was handed over on April 11.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind demands govts to curb anti-Muslim 'mischief'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the recent communal violence witnessed in some parts of the country over Ram Navami processions, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) on Wednesday demanded the Centre and the state governments to curb such acts immediately.

Calling the incidents 'anti-Muslim mischiefs', JIH Vice President Salim Engineer said, "The same pattern was seen in all these places where processions were first taken out on the occasion of a festival, special flags were waved, weapons, especially swords and knives, were openly brandished and provocative and disparaging slogans were raised against Muslims and Islam."

"Attempts were also made to dam-



age some mosques. In some places, property and shops owned by Muslims were also damaged. Incidents of arson and looting were also noted. All these incidents reflect the growing atmosphere of unrest and hatred in the country."

Engineer said that it is a matter of great concern that some state governments through their actions are now inculcating a feeling in the people that they are the governments of a particular people of the country, while governments should treat all citizens fairly.

"This attitude of some state govern-

ments has emboldened the miscreants. Reports are being received from many places that the police are targeting the victims instead of taking action against the culprits. Large number of innocent Muslim youth are being arrested and false charges are being framed against them. In Madhya Pradesh, there are cases of extreme cruelty where people's houses are being demolished by bulldozers," he said. Condemning these incidents, Engineer said, "JIH believes that these incidents are the product of the hatred that is being spread across the country. Some political leaders known for their vitriolic speeches are also responsible for the violence. They should be arrested immediately. These ongoing incidents are undermining public confidence in the government and the administration."

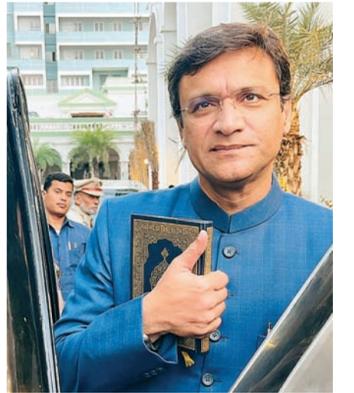
Akbaruddin Owaisi acquitted in hate speech cases

Hyderabad | Agencies

A special court in Hyderabad on Wednesday acquitted AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi in alleged hate speech cases.

The Special Sessions Judge for Trial of Criminal Cases relating to MPs and MLAs acquitted the legislator in both the cases registered against him in Nirmal and Nizamabad in 2013. The court found no evidence of hate speech against Akbaruddin Owaisi, who is leader of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) in Telangana Legislative Assembly. Akbaruddin, the younger brother of AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, was present in the court when the judge pronounced the verdict.

Two cases were registered against Akbaruddin at two police stations in Adilabad and Nizamabad districts in relation to his alleged hate speeches at Nirmal and Nizamabad on December 8 and 22, 2012.



The MIM leader was arrested on January 7, 2013 after his speeches went viral on social networking sites.

V-P, PM pay tributes to Jallianwala Bagh martyrs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tributes to those martyred in Jallianwala Bagh on this day in 1919.

Vice President Naidu tweeted, "My humble tributes to the martyrs who were massacred in #JallianwalaBagh on April 13, 1919. We are eternally indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice for the freedom of our motherland. The best tribute we can pay to our freedom fighters is building an India that they envisioned."

In a tweet, the Prime Minister said, "Tributes to those martyred in Jallianwala Bagh on this day in 1919. Their unparalleled



courage and sacrifice will keep motivating the coming generations. Sharing my speech at the inauguration of the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Smarak last year." Prime Minister Modi also shared his last year's speech at the inauguration of the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Smarak.

4 KILLED IN TN IN LIGHTNING STRIKE

Chennai: In a tragic incident, 4 construction workers were killed at Rosalapatti near Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar after lightning struck them on Wednesday evening, police said. Police said that the dead are Jayasurya, 22, A. Karthik Raja, 28, M. Murugan, 24, and S. Jakkammal, 25. Virudhunagar and surrounding areas have been witnessing heavy rains and lightning on Wednesday evening.

Irrked over dog's barking, 3 shot at in Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad | Agencies

A man and his two sons were allegedly shot at by their neighbours after the victim's pet dog barked at one of the perpetrators, an official said on Wednesday.

The injured were identified as Sushil Kumar (40) and his two sons Aman (17) and Tarun (15).

According to the official, the incident took place near the railway crossing at Manan Dham under the jurisdiction of Madhuvan Bapudham police station in Ghaziabad on Monday night.



The police official said the victim's family was sleeping near the railway crossing on the day of the incident. "They

already had an altercation on some issue with the accused persons and on Monday their dog barked at them which angered the assailants and they fired shots at the victim's family," the official said. The injured were rushed to the Guru Teg Bahadur hospital where they are still undergoing treatment. The official said of the three accused people, two were identified after the incident and an FIR was registered in the case. "The prime accused has been arrested while the other two are absconding," he said. Further probe is underway, the official added.



ED ATTACHES MAHA MINISTER NAWAB MALIK'S PROPERTIES WORTH SEVERAL CRORES

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday provisionally attached five properties belonging to Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik, his family members, and his firms Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday provisionally attached five properties belonging to Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik, his family members, and his firms Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd. These include the sprawling Goawala Compound, a commercial unit and three flats - all in Kurla suburb, two residential flats in Bandra west, and 148 acres of agricultural land parcels in Osmanabad district. A senior Nationalist Congress Party leader, Malik is currently in judicial custody following a sensational pre-dawn swoop at his home by the ED in February and subsequent arrest in an alleged money-laundering case arising out of a 20-year-old land deal involving mafia connections.

ing out of a 20-year-old land deal involving mafia connections. Dawood Ibrahim, Haji Anees alias Anees Ibrahim Shaikh, Shakeel Shaikh alias Chhota Shakeel, Javed Patel alias Javed Chikna, Ibrahim Mushtaq Abdul Razzaq Memon alias Tiger Memon were named as accused in the FIR. The FIR also stated that Dawood Ibrahim, after leaving India, started controlling his criminal activities in India through his close associates such as HaseenaParker alias HaseenaAapa and others. During investigation, the ED learnt that in one such case, prime property of one Munira Plumber was usurped by Malik through Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd, a company owned by his family members and controlled by him with active connivance of the members of D-Gang, including Parker. For usurping this property, Parker

and Malik connived together and executed several legal documents to put a facade of genuinity for this criminal act. Money Laundering investigation revealed that the property belonging to Plumber and her mother Mariyambai had been illegally taken over by Solidus Investments Private Limited and Parker, Sardar Shahwali Khan, Salim Patel. Malik illegally usurped property, proceeds of crime that is a three acre prime land with building, structure etc at Goawala Compound, Kurla (West), Mumbai. The accused illegally transferred the land belonging to Plumber and her mother Goawala by getting it registered on the strength of fake documents in the name of Solidus Investments Private Limited. The said property was thus fraudulently usurped and was Proceeds of Crime," said the ED official. The official said that rent of Rs 11.70 crore had also been received from this property in two entities controlled by Malik namely Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd. and Malik Infrastructure. The official said this Rs 11.70 crore is also proceeds of the crime. Accordingly, EDA provisionally attached the properties. Further investigation in the matter is on.

'Vikrant' funds case: Bombay HC grants anticipatory bail to BJP's Kirit Somaiya

Spelling relief, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted interim protection against arrest to Bharatiya Janata Party activist and ex-MP Kirit Somaiya, accused of allegedly siphoning off Rs 57 crore collected in the name of saving the Indian Navy's defunct aircraft carrier, Vikrant

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Spelling relief, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted interim protection against arrest to Bharatiya Janata Party activist and ex-MP Kirit Somaiya, accused of allegedly siphoning off Rs 57 crore collected in the name of saving the Indian Navy's defunct aircraft carrier, Vikrant. The court directed that in case of arrest, Somaiya should be released on a personal bond of Rs 50,000.



The development came two days after the Sessions Court rejected his plea for relief and a day after his son and co-accused Neil K. Somaiya's anticipatory bail plea was also rejected by the same court. A case has been registered against the father-son duo for allegedly collecting Rs 57 crore for Vikrant through crowd-funding in 2013-2014. Somaiya had said then that the amount collected would be handed over to the Maharashtra Raj Bhavan, but a RTI reply last month made the shocking revelation that the money was not received by the Governor's office. The prosecution informed the court that since the money was collected using the name of the Indian warship, they needed to probe how it was used. They pointed out that Somaiya

had tweeted then about the Rs 140-crore collection, expressed apprehensions of possible tampering with the investigations or pressurising the complainant as he (Somaiya) is a former elected public representative. Soon after the order, Somaiya expressed gratitude to the court for the interim relief and claimed that the Maha Vikas Aghadi government has been exposed as it has not produced any evidence about the Rs 57-crore

SC agrees to list Nawab Malik's plea against arrest by ED

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to list a plea by Maharashtra cabinet minister and senior NCP leader Nawab Malik, challenging the Bombay High Court, which declined his interim release in a habeas corpus petition.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to list a plea by Maharashtra cabinet minister and senior NCP leader Nawab Malik, challenging the Bombay High Court, which declined his interim release in a habeas corpus petition. Malik has claimed that his arrest was completely illegal. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal urged a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana to grant urgent listing on the petition. Sibal said: "This is the Nawab Malik matter where ED is taking proceedings... The Act came into place in 2005, and the transaction is prior to 2000". The Chief Justice said: "Yes, we will list". On March 15, the Bombay high court rejected Malik's interim application

seeking immediate release in a case of money laundering registered against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Malik was arrested on February 23 based on an FIR registered against terrorist Dawood Ibrahim and his aides. The high court held that Malik was arrested by the ED, and subsequently remanded to custody following due process and there was no reason for it to pass any interim order for his release. Maharashtra government case. The plea contended that his petition was strictly on the law, and the high court could not have given prima facie finding regarding Section 3 of PMLA, without giving reasons. The ED has alleged that Munira Plumber's prime property in Kurla, worth Rs 300 crore as per current market value, was usurped by Malik through Solidus Investments Pvt. Ltd, a company purportedly owned by his family members. The agency has claimed that this was done in connivance with Dawood's sister HaseenaParker, her bodyguard Salim Patel and 1993 bomb blasts convict Sardar Shah Wali Khan. In his plea in the top court, Malik claimed his arrest was illegal and violated his fundamental rights, as well as statutory provisions, and he was entitled to writ of habeas corpus.

NOW, COBRA AND CHICKEN JOIN THE MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL CIRCUS!

Many fauna-friendly politicians in Maharashtra frequently invoke a variety of mute creatures to lampoon political parties and their leaders at public rallies to regale the audiences and score brownie points.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Many fauna-friendly politicians in Maharashtra frequently invoke a variety of mute creatures to lampoon political parties and their leaders at public rallies to regale the audiences and score brownie points. Like insects, scorpions and snakes stepped on the dais in the past, this time Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray went a reptile ahead - the dreaded cobra, also symbolic of Lord Shiva. At his large public meeting in Thane late on Tuesday, Raj compared Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)'s Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad with a cobra - in mostly personal remarks at many other leaders. "Look at his (Dr Awhad) face. It is like the open hood of a cobra..." was Raj's poisonous refrain, leaving the crowds in splits, the ruling Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress numb, and the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party chuckling. Not reputed to take such things lying down, Dr Awhad aggressively rolled his bespectacled eyes to pro-



claim he was "proud" to have the countenance of a cobra. "When I open the hood, I can strike back at my opponents," Dr Awhad said, gesticulating his hand like a hungry, angry cobra ready to attack, hinting at a political 'taandav' in future. Then he hissed: "Never mind my face. I am proud of it. But can someone check out which part of a 'chicken' his (Raj's) face resembles?" before slithering away from the stunned media. The 'cobra-chicken' dogfight ignited by Raj sparked off the anticipated political furore with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar frowning and declaring that he will "give a befitting reply at the appropriate time". Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said that "after he (Raj Thackeray) got an Enforcement Directorate notice" he has become the BJP's loudspeaker". Referring to the

MNS's gauntlet to the MVA to dismantle loud-speakers from all mosques in the state within 21 days (May 3), Raut rebuffed saying: "Only (the late) Balasaheb Thackeray had the authority to give such ultimatums". He also dared Raj to invite and facilitate the 'untraceable' BJP Mumbai activist Kirit Somaiya at his swank new home 'Shivtirth' in Dadar. The usually soft-spoken, US-educated NCP state President and Minister Jayant Patil - whom Raj referred to as 'Jant' (worm) - smiled and said "Raj's knowledge is very weak and he needs to be readmitted to primary school to improve himself". Raj also hit out at NCP MP SupriyaSule by comparing her with an elephant, saying she had different sets of teeth for showing (tusks) and chewing. Sule dismissed it by commenting that Raj is living in history, basking in the glory of his illustrious uncle (the late Balasaheb Thackeray), and needs to be ignored. Dr Awhad supported her by asking, "does Raj know how painful it is when one is pierced by a tusk", adding that Raj has taken a 'contract' to spread communal discord in society. Congress Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe merely labelled it as a 'third umpire speech', while other party leaders wondered whether Raj is blind to the problems of spiralling fuel prices, inflation, unemployment to indulge in such lectures. Meanwhile, the Thane Police are reportedly sharpening their knives to book Raj for brandishing a sword at the rally and the NCP planning a befitting reply to the attacks on its leaders at the party's weekend rally.

'Rape' victim in Maha turns the table on BJP leader, MVA exults

In a stunner, an alleged rape victim from Pune has turned the tables on a senior Bharatiya Janata Party woman leader, and now has appealed to the police for protection as she apprehends threats to her life.

Pune | Agencies

In a stunner, an alleged rape victim from Pune has turned the tables on a senior Bharatiya Janata Party woman leader, and now has appealed to the police for protection as she apprehends threats to her life. The alleged rape victim spilled the beans of a purported conspiracy hatched by state BJP Women's Wing Vice President Chitra Wagh, accusing her and some others of seeking to frame Shiv Sena Minister Dr. Raghunath Kuchik, who is the General Secretary of Bharatiya KamgarSena, the party labour wing. Speaking to a private Marathi TV channel, the victim, in her early 20s, claimed that Wagh, along with Mohammed Ahmed 'Uncle', Deepak Pawar and others, had "kidnapped"



her. She further said that Wagh and Ahmed forced her to implicate Dr.Kuchik in a false rape case under threats of death and to 'eliminate' her if required, and used an app for purportedly sending and receiving messages from the accused minister' mobile phone, and sullying his image. The alleged victim charged Wagh and Ahmed of constantly pressurising her, injecting sedatives, confining her for several days, and Pawar forcing her to submit a letter allegedly penned by Dr.Kuchik to Pune police, and then abandoning her in the wild

on the Goa-Pune road. "The mobile phones of my family and mine are being tapped... They immediately call me up whenever I get calls, especially from journalists. Even now our phones are under surveillance... Wagh instructed me what to tell the police or talk to the media. I have been threatened by them several times," the victim claimed. Stoutly rubbing the victim's contentions on camera, Wagh told media persons that she would now be targeted by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) Chairperson and NCP leader Rupali Chakankar said finally, the fraud perpetrated by the "power-lusty BJP playing temple politics" now stands exposed. "Soon after we received the victim's complaint, a full investigation was launched against Dr.Kuchik, and later a Pune court had granted him anticipatory bail. However, the BJP's falsehoods have ruined the victim's future," said Chakankar. NCP women's wing leader Rupali Patil-Thombare said even when the matter was under investigation by the Pune Police and the courts, Wagh held press conferences and conducted a media trial of Dr.Kuchik by displaying

the alleged evidence against him. "With the fresh twist in the case, it is possible that Wagh herself maybe under the scanner," warned Patil-Thombare. Senior Sena leader and Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council Dr. Neelam Gorhe said briefly that the police should give equal weightage to the victim's revelations in the case. Congress state Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe said this is yet another glaring example of how the BJP's dirty tricks department works in Maharashtra and other non-BJP states where they are desperate to topple the governments and grab power by stooping to any depths. Contacted by IANS, Dr.Kuchik declined to comment since the matter is sub-judice and police investigations. The victim had sparked a furore in February when she accused Dr.Kuchik of allegedly raping her on multiple occasions with promises of marriage, abducting, torturing, threatening and intimidating, forcing her to undergo an abortion, etc. Though Dr.Kuchik had consistently refuted the charges as fictitious and baseless, the Pune police and the MSCW initiated a probe while the BJP attempted it to gain political mileage and embarrass the MVA government.

Now, no NOC needed from housing society to sell/rents flats in Mumbai

In a significant decision, Maharashtra Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad on Tuesday announced that henceforth no prior permission or no objection certificate (NOC) from a cooperative housing society would be necessary for owners wanting to sell/rent out their flats.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a significant decision, Maharashtra Housing Minister Dr Jitendra Awhad on Tuesday announced that henceforth no prior permission or no objection certificate (NOC) from a cooperative housing society would be necessary for owners wanting to sell/rent out their flats. This would enable the owners to conduct his/her rental/sale transactions without hassles or delays and prevent harassment by the society committees to green signal such proposals. "We have come to know that many housing societies discriminate on the basis of caste, creed, religion, community, vegetarians and don't permit the owners to sell/rent out their properties," Dr Awhad said. He pointed out how in some societies or localities dominated by any particular com-

munity, certain communities are barred in the name of preferring only 'vegetarians', or preventing Dalits and Other Backward Classes, which is leading to increasing hatred among the people. "Now, if the owner wishes to sell/rent out his flat, he/she will not need the society's NOC," Dr Awhad declared, justifying it on grounds of Mumbai being a leading cosmopolitan city in the world and such tactics were sulling the image of the country's financial capital. Several individuals, societies, and the Maharashtra Societies Welfare Association have approved and welcomed Dr.Awhad's initiative, and urged that it should be formalised through a 'Government Resolution' with punitive clauses for the errant societies/managing committee members. There have been many instances in the past when people, including many celebs, were barred from buying/selling flats in certain areas/housing societies under the garb of the NOC, but now that will stop, said a Kandivali CHS Chairman, preferring anonymity. "Consequently, many lose out on a potentially lucrative deal, their transactions get delayed in the societal red-tapism, some societies even demand a certain amount of the deal as a 'donation' to the building funds, and there was harassment of both the buyers and the sellers on various counts," he said.

Raj Thackeray, two MNS leaders booked for wielding sword during rally in Thane

The case was registered after Thackeray allegedly wielded a sword given to him by local party leaders during a public rally at Gadkari Chowk on Tuesday evening

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An offence has been registered against Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray for allegedly wielding a sword during a public rally in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Wednesday. Offences under sections 4 and 25

of the Arms Act have been registered against Thackeray and the MNS' Thane and Palghar district chief Avinash Jadhav and Thane city chief Ravindra More, an official said. The case was registered after Thackeray allegedly wielded a sword given to him by local party leaders during a public rally at Gadkari Chowk on Tuesday evening, he said.

MAHA MINISTER DHANANJAY MUNDE FAINTS, NOW STABLE

Maharashtra Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde was rushed to a private hospital after he fainted and fell unconscious for some time, late on Tuesday night, top officials said.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde was rushed to a private hospital after he fainted and fell unconscious for some time, late on Tuesday night, top officials said. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said that he met Munde, admitted to the ICU of Breach Candy Hospital



and also discussed his health status with the team of doctors treating him. "Yesterday, after the NCP meet-

ing, Munde suddenly felt giddy, fainted and was unconscious. He was rushed to the hospital in that

state and was subjected to several tests," Pawar said. He however, dismissed certain reports suggesting that the 46-year-old Munde had suffered a mild cardiac arrest, and said he will now undergo all possible medical tests, including MRI scan. "He did not suffer any heart problems as speculated in the media... Doctors have advised him against stress, hospitalisation for at least 2-3 days, and then rest. I appeal to all partymen and supporters not to rush to the hospital from far-off places to avoid inconveniencing him," urged Pawar. Earlier, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that he enquired after his Cabinet colleague's health and he is now stable and advised to take it easy.



EDITOR'S SPECS

GET THE RID OUT OF PARKINSON'S

Eating a variety of foods, regular exercise and adequate amount of sleep can help people with Parkinson's disease to improve their health and enhance the quality of life, say doctors. World Parkinson's Day is marked annually on April 11. Parkinson's is a disease in which nerve cells that deliver the neurotransmitter dopamine to other cells are reduced in numbers. As cell death spreads to ever larger parts of the brain, more centres are affected. This results in an aggravation of motor and non-motor disorders. As individuals age, the most important factor would be the quality of life they will sustain over the many years they live. Parkinson's disease is a commonly witnessed ailment that adversely impacts the quality of a human life as they turn older. Because the exact cause of Parkinson's is unknown, proven ways to prevent the disease also remain a mystery. Early onset of Parkinson's disease can be a worrying diagnosis as it can significantly affect the quality of life of the individual and their family. When Parkinson's is present at a younger age, it is more likely to have a genetic link. It may also progress differently than Parkinson's in older people. Being aware of the symptoms can help a person get the treatment and support they need at an early stage. "While there is no prescription for a Parkinson's disease-specific diet, to maintain overall good health most people living with this disease should eat a variety of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, milk and dairy products, and protein-rich foods such as meat and beans. One must consider, including nuts, olive oil, fish and eggs, to your diet for their beneficial fats. Eating a variety of foods will help you get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals and fibre you need for good health."

CHINA TAKES COGNISANCE OF INDIA'S RISE AS GLOBAL

D.C. Pathak

The ongoing Ukraine-Russia military confrontation has had the world community focus its attention on the moves of the US and Russia as the opposing powers, the role of China that remained firmly inclined towards Russia but did not want to further antagonise the US, and the responses of India -- the sole major power that has been able to tell both Russia and Ukraine upfront that cessation of hostilities and recourse to peace talks are the only sensible option to the unending conflict. It has not gone unnoticed by China that India has successfully balanced its deep democratic bonds with the US and the special bilateral friendship with Russia in a manner that led to both sides acknowledging that India's policy of recognising the concerns of all is conducive to opening up the path of peace.

The unpublicised visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Delhi on March 25 -- at the latter's initiative -- was to assess the state of India-China relations with their known content of disharmony, in the run up to the next BRICS summit, and more importantly, to gauge the Indian outlook on the US-Russia rift on Ukraine.

Both the NSA and India's External Affairs Minister have done well to convey India's unchanged stand that China needs to do more on the borders to take India-China relationship towards normalcy.

In the backdrop of the current military offensive of Russia in Ukraine, it is seen that many strategic analysts at home and outside are unable to come out of their own fixed attitude of the Cold War days that made them deprecatory towards post-Soviet Russia and supportive of the US as the leader of the free world.

They seemed to forget that it is Xi Jinping's China that is determined to become the second superpower against the US, having taken the best lessons from the demise of the USSR and decided principally to follow the economic route, for reaching that position.

To this end, China practises the doctrine of 'winning the war without a battle', wants to spread its political hold in the world through its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), and curiously looks out for any signs of India tilting in favour of the US at the cost of India-Russia relationship.

The non-aligned role of India in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has impacted China's own stakes in this geopolitically significant episode.



China's position is affected by this confrontation in several ways. Conscious of the likelihood of the US administration clubbing China with Russia together in the developing situation, Xi Jinping in his talks with Joe Biden tried to bracket China with the US by referring to the need for the two countries to fulfil 'their international responsibilities' and highlighted the importance of 'peace and security', thereby suggesting that concerns of both Russia and Ukraine have to be recognised in any peace formula.

China was also cautioning the American President not to appear one-sided, positioning China as a peacemaker and ensuring that the Chinese strategy of pursuing the non-military route to becoming a superpower is not jeopardised because of the Ukraine war.

While maintaining its strong alignment with Russia, China is trying to consolidate its geopolitical strength by reaching out to its allies, softening the relationships that were hitherto tense, and claiming to be an advocate of peace.

The Chinese foreign minister's visit to Islamabad, Kabul, Delhi and Kathmandu can be seen in this light. Reaffirming the Sino-Pak strategic alliance was the most important mission of this round trip.

For the first time for China, Wang Yi addressed the ministerial summit of OIC hosted by Pakistan, talked of China's 'Islamic' friends and went on to endorse their stand on Kashmir.

Wang Yi held detailed discussions with Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa during his two-day stay in Islamabad and made a quick visit to Kabul on March 24

before landing in Delhi.

It is clear that China and Pakistan are acting in concert on Afghanistan after the return of the Taliban-led Emirate in Kabul and that the Sino-Pak axis is operating in Afghanistan to the advantage of the two partners and against the interest of India.

One hopes the Joe Biden administration has noticed that through the current Ukraine crisis, Marxist China is using its alliance with the fundamentalist Pak regime to consolidate its geopolitical hold against the US by politically exploiting the strong anti-American stance of the Islamic radicals now ruling Afghanistan.

US policy makers would do well not to underestimate the global implications of the Sino-Pak strategic pact.

India having recorded its strong condemnation of Wang Yi's comments at OIC as Chinese 'interference in the domestic matters of India', it was clear that Chinese Foreign Minister's uninvited trip to Delhi was meant to somehow create an impression of moderation on the part of China in dealing with disputes.

India did well to tell him that the state of India-China relations is going to be determined by the responses of China on the border issues. It seems India's 'unaligned' stance in the US-Russia antagonism on Ukraine is giving a strategic advantage to the country over China in as much as it has given India the status of a global counsel.

China realises that if India were to choose to support US on Ukraine outright, that would strengthen America's case against China

too and take the pressure of Quad against the doings of China in the Indo-Pacific to a new high.

China for once is trying to emulate India in advocating for a peaceful outcome of the Russia-Ukraine conflict as this suits its interests.

The Russia-China bonds remain deep for the reasons of shared antipathy of the two powers against the US-led West, ideological commonality between the Marxist China and the successor to the erstwhile Soviet Union that was the competing superpower believing in International Communism against the US doctrine of Capitalism and free market and a return of the Cold War-type of bipolarity between US-led West and China-Russia combine -- particularly under the Biden Presidency. President Xi of China is encouraging Sinicization of Marxism and invoking the 'civilisational' strength of China to spread its wings. Interestingly, in the current conflict, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky -- a Jew -- injected a religio-political angle by insisting on Jerusalem being the venue for peace talks.

His attempt to underscore the profile of Russia as a White supremacist nation led to the Russian charge that Ukraine was becoming the place for Neo-Nazis. All of this would further put China and Russia on the same side of the fence -- the two Communist states invoking their cultural and historical legacy to deal with the West.

The Russian military offensive in Ukraine is accompanied by an intense 'Information Warfare' which accounts for the prolongation of the conflict and a further accentuation of the refugee problem. India's counsel for a concerted peace initiative from the democratic world remains the best course for the international community to follow -- on the three-point framework of recognition of sovereignty of Ukraine as a democratic nation outside of NATO, a peace agreement between the two warring nations that addresses the security concerns of Russia, and a commitment from Zelensky that all citizens of Ukraine will be on an equal footing in the eyes of the State, which could be monitored by a group acceptable to both sides. The matter has to be resolved in a manner that rules out military solutions for any legitimate inter-state political issues in the future.

(The writer is a former Director of Intelligence Bureau; The views expressed are personal)

international

PUTIN'S 'IDEOLOGIST' PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR EMBEZZLEMENT OF UNDERCOVER UKRAINE FUND

The man who 'invented Putinism' has been detained in Russia and is under house arrest, say reports in Moscow, Daily Mail reported.

London | Agencies

The man who 'invented Putinism' has been detained in Russia and is under house arrest, say reports in Moscow, Daily Mail reported.

If confirmed, the move against Vladislav Surkov appears to show Vladimir Putin is turning on his inner circle, and also deep splits among his closest henchmen.

Unconfirmed accounts say Putin's 'ideologist' is being held in a wide-ranging criminal probe that has also seen the arrest of 150 FSB agents.

The case evidently involves the alleged embezzlement of \$5 billion by the secret services to create an undercover and intelligence network in Ukraine, Daily Mail reported. The shadowy Surkov, seen as crucial to Putin's long-running electoral success, was the man who encouraged



him to believe Ukraine is not a real country. The 57-year-old is a former Kremlin insider, more recently a Putin point man in Ukraine. Before Putin sent troops into Ukraine, Surkov called for Ukraine, Belarus

and the Baltic states to be annexed.

The detention of senior FSB figure Col-General Sergei Beseda, 68, now held in grim Lefortovo jail, is seen as a linked case.

Putin is said to be furious at intelligence failings in Ukraine after huge investment over many years to ensure Russian support in key places.

Russian outlet BuninskayaAlleya reported: 'More and more sources report that Vladislav Surkov is under house arrest.'

'Investigative measures have been carried out allegedly in the case of embezzlement in the Donbas since 2014...'

'It was Surkov who was the representative of the Russian President in Ukraine,' Telegram channel Druid reported: 'According to our sources, Vladislav Surkov is under house arrest', Daily Mail reported.

Drones, cyberattacks suggested as deterrence against N.Korea nukes

A South Korean government researcher on Wednesday floated the idea of using drones, cyberattacks, and high-power microwave (HPM) weapons to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

Seoul | Agencies

A South Korean government researcher on Wednesday floated the idea of using drones, cyberattacks, and high-power microwave (HPM) weapons to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

Speaking at a security forum, Cho Nam-hoon of the state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses stressed the need to devise various contingency measures, including building "left-of-launch" capabilities to defeat a North Korean attack even before its launch, Yonhap news agency reported.

His proposal followed a recent report by a UN panel of experts that Pyongyang has continued to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, despite Seoul's continued push for inter-Korean reconciliation and engagement.



As a contingency scenario for operations in the pre-launch phase, Cho called for using a "drone-based salvo" to attack the entrance of a nuclear weapons tunnel in the North and kinetic energy munitions to cause the tunnel to collapse.

In the boost phase following the launch of a nuclear weapon, the researcher proposed the use of cyberattacks to disrupt or disable its flight and of High Power Microwave (HPM) weapons to destroy its guidance system in the midcourse phase.

Noting the North's plutonium- and uranium-based nuclear weapons programmes, Cho estimated that the number of its nuclear warheads could double by around 2040. The North is known to have dozens of nuclear warheads, though estimates vary.

191 CHILDREN KILLED IN UKRAINE SINCE RUSSIAN INVASION

Kiev: At least 191 children have been killed and over 350 have been injured so far in the war-torn Ukraine due to Russian invasion.



Moreover, juvenile prosecutors of the country emphasised that this data is not final, as work is still going on in places of 'active hostilities', in the temporarily occupied territories, Ukrayinska Pravda reported. Most affected children have been found in regions like: Donetsk - 113, Kiev - 102, Kharkiv - 79, Chernihiv - 54, Mykolaiv - 40, Kherson - 38, Luhansk - 36, Zaporizhzhia - 23, Sumy - 16, Zhytomyr - 15, the report said.

Ukraine's Office of the Prosecutor General issued a statement saying: "During the recording of criminal offences committed by Russian occupiers in Borodianska and Korolivka in the Kiev region, the charred bodies of a 16-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy were found."

"On 11 April, the Russian armed forces fired on civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv. A one-and-a-half-month-old child and a 12-year-old teenager died. Four other children aged one, four, five and nine were injured. "On the same day, a 15-year-old girl was also seriously injured inside a residential building in the Kherson region. "Indiscriminate bombings and shelling of Ukrainian towns and villages by the Russian armed forces have damaged 957 educational institutions, 88 of which have been completely destroyed."

HSF programme for saving Hindu girls in Pakistan

Hindu Sindh Foundation Inc. (HSF) is presenting a comprehensive programme for saving the Hindu girls in Pakistan, to potential patrons, guardians and supporters in the diaspora. The programme envisages relief and assistance both short and long term.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Hindu Sindh Foundation Inc. (HSF) is presenting a comprehensive programme for saving the Hindu girls in Pakistan, to potential patrons, guardians and supporters in the diaspora. The programme envisages relief and assistance both short and long term.

Women and minor girls belonging to Hindu, Sikh and Christian faiths in Pakistan are routinely abducted and forcibly converted to Islam, as per various human rights groups. It is estimated that at least

a thousand such girls were forcibly converted to Islam and this number is the highest from Sindh.

The latest case is that of Pooja Kumari, age 18, who was killed recently after she resisted abduction for forced marriage and conversion.

HSF said Hindus of Sindh are living in mortal fear, especially those who are rearing young daughters. Immediate relief and assistance is required to alleviate the suffering of Hindus of Sindh.

Hindu Sindh Foundation Inc. (HSF) comprehensive programme envisages relief and assistance,

including legal and other assistance to affected families where daughters have been abducted, forcibly converted and forcibly married to Muslims.

It also includes assistance for rehabilitation of survivors who had been abducted, forcibly converted and forcibly married to Muslims, but now have escaped and are trying to settle down back to normal life. It includes rescue of girls who have been threatened by the Muslim men and in all probability it would be a matter of time before they are abducted, forcibly converted and married off, HSF said. The

rescue programme includes but is not limited to by facilitating guardianship and patronship in the US, Canada, UK, Europe and Australia, as well as in India and Nepal, where the girls would emigrate for further studies. The rescue programme also includes possible adoption of young girls after consent of birth parents and proper scrutiny of adopters and their meeting the eligibility criteria as provisioned by law in their home countries, option for "limited adoption" (supervised guardianship without full adoption) would also be available.

1 Palestinian killed, 31 injured by Israeli soldiers in West Bank

Ramallah | Agencies

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian and injured 31 others on Wednesday morning during clashes near the northern West Bank city of Nablus, said medics and eyewitnesses.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said in a press statement that Mohammed Assaf, a 34-year-old lawyer, was killed after he had been shot in the chest, while 31 others were injured, including 11 by live ammunition.

Eyewitnesses said that Israeli army forces stormed Nablus and three villages around the city to arrest Palestinians, who are wanted by the Israeli security forces, as fierce clashes broke out with dozens of Palestinian protestors, Xinhua news agency reported.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Red Crescent

Society said that 17 were injured by Israeli soldiers, including 11 by live ammunition and six by rubber bullets, while dozens suffered suffocation after inhaling teargas fired by the soldiers.

There has been no immediate Israeli army comment on the incidents in Nablus. However, Palestinian security sources said that the Israeli army conducts daily raids in cities, towns, and villages in the West Bank to arrest Palestinian activists.

Tension between Israel and the Palestinians has been flaring in the West Bank and East Jerusalem over the past three weeks. On Monday, Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh warned that the Israeli escalation measures in the Palestinian territories would push the matters to "an uncontrollable situation."



POLITICS HEAT UP OVER KHARGONE VIOLENCE

AMID THE TENSIONS FOLLOWING THE CLASHES DURING THE RAM NAVAMI PROCESSION IN MADHYA PRADESH'S KHARGONE DISTRICT, THE POLITICS IN THE STATE HAS HEATED UP WITH REGISTERING OF AN FIR AGAINST SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER DIGVIJAYA SINGH.



shared a tampered video of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. "On May 19,2019, Shivraj Singh Chouhan had shared a tampered video of the then Congress president Rahul Gandhi. This was a criminal offence by Chouhan and an action should be taken against him," he said in the letter.

The Congress leader has also shared that video with Bhopal police commissioner, said a party spokesman. Meanwhile, actions by the police and the district administration against the rioters continued in Khargone, and around 100 people have been arrested so far. Over 50 buildings were also demolished till Tuesday evening.

However, the several Opposition parties have protested against the state government's bulldozer action, arguing that the any action without proper investigation would be unjust.

The state Home Minister, however, has justified the government's action saying those who can be seen on camera throwing stones are being punished. And the buildings which were demolished were illegal.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Mid the tensions following the clashes during the Ram Navami procession in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district, the politics in the state has heated up with registering of an FIR against senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh.

Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh, who has held district administration and the police responsible for communal violence, has posted a

photo showing a group of people hoisting saffron flag on a mosque. However, the photograph turned out to be a fake and subsequently, Singh's post from his twitter account was deleted.

State BJP leaders, including Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Home Minister Narottam Mishra called Singh's post a "conspiracy to spread communal violence in the state".

Taking it further, the state Home Minister said that action would be

taken against Digvijaya Singh. Subsequently, an FIR was lodged against Singh in a Bhopal police station on Tuesday evening.

In response to FIR, Digvijaya Singh later on Tuesday evening wrote a letter to Bhopal Police Commissioner and as well as Shyamla Hills police station to register a complaint against Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for an old post on social media.

In the letter, Digvijaya Singh mentioned that Chouhan had

Among houses bulldozed in MP's Khargone, one was built under PMAY

Of the several houses demolished by the Madhya Pradesh government in Khargone district to punish those responsible for the Ram Navami violence, one was built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Hasina Fakhroo, the house owner had received an amount of Rs 2.5 lakh from the government under PMAY and the building was completed around six months back. The district administration demolished the house using bulldozers on Monday saying that it was built on government land and was illegal, said Amjad Khan, the son of Fakhroo.

Khan said until 2020, the family was living in a kuccha house on the plot. In 2020, when approval came under the PM Awas Yojana, they built a pucca house. "We got Rs 2.5 lakh from the government and saved another Rs one lakh to get the house constructed," he added.

Talking to IANS over phone, Khan said his house was demolished despite a note on the wall that it was built under PM Awas Yojana. "On Monday morning, a team of municipal workers came with bulldozers. We requested them not to demolish our house but they did not listen and razed it within minutes."

Documents with the family show that the house on Birla Marg was registered in the name of Hasina Fakhroo following the death of her husband who was the original beneficiary of the PM's housing scheme.

This was among the 12 houses demolished by the district administration in the locality as part of a drive against illegal properties. In all, 16 houses and 29 shops were razed across four locations in the town following the clashes Sunday.

Asked whether the government officials



had visited to verify the legality of the plot before the house was constructed and money was allocated, Khan said: "That time they did not say it's a government land. Now, when we spent our hard earned money (including 2.5 lakh received through PMAY), they demolished the house saying it was built illegally."

Meanwhile, amid the tense situation in Khargone city, the district administration, including the collector, visited localities to meet the people.

Situation in the Khargone city has been tense after a communal violence broke out on the occasion of the Ram Navami celebration. Following which, the state government has ordered for demolishing buildings of those involved in violence.

The state home minister Narottam Mishra addressing a press conference in Bhopal on Wednesday said, "So far, 70 people have been arrested and 20 more are being interrogated by the police."

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end."

TO BLESS AND GIVE BEST WISHES TO THE OUTGOING BATCH OF CLASS XII (2021-22), A BLESSING CEREMONY WAS ORGANIZED AT ST. MONTFORT SCHOOL, BHOPAL ON 12 APRIL 2022.



class XI assembled in the courtyard to welcome the students to Class XII to the blessing arena. It was to celebrate an occasion of an end and of a beginning, the end of a carefully supervised school life, and a beginning of a life in the "real world".

The ceremony commenced with the lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries followed by a soulful rendition of a welcome dance performed by the students of class XI. This was followed by a series of melodious songs to revive back all the magical memories and fascinating flashback of their school life. This was followed by a mesmerising finale dance performance and a photo session of all class XII students

with the Principal and teachers. The Blessing Ceremony was probably a moment of mixed feelings for the students, sad at the prospect of leaving behind what was 'second home', with all their friends who have become like siblings after spending so many years together-yet so excited to explore the world that awaits them.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

School Principal, Rev. Bro. Monachan K. K., Vice-Principal, Rev. Bro. Pankaj, Co-ordinators, teachers and students of

CRISP MD Dr. Patil Also Did Plantation

CM CHOUHAN PLANTED NEEM AND SAPTAPARNI SAPPLINGS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Neem and Saptaparni saplings in the CRISP campus. Managing Director CRISP Dr. Shrikant Patil also planted saplings. A group photo of the staff and trainees of CRISP organisation was taken along with Chief Minister Chouhan. The members of Crisp took a pledge to achieve sustainable development of self-reliant Madhya Pradesh and work for the making of clean, green and efficient Madhya Pradesh.

Center for Research and Industrial Staff Performance (CRISP) was established in the year 1997 under the Department of Technical Education, Skill Upgradation and Employment. The organisation is working in the areas of skill development and employment generation, capacity development and IT consultancy and implementation.



Among the saplings planted today, Saptaparni is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. It is used in the manufacture

of various medicines. Neem leaves are considered to be blood purifier. Along with giving cool shade, it is useful in the treatment of many diseases.

Bhopal Round Table 257 provided 03 classrooms and 02 toilets at Government High School Dahod, Mandideep

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Round Table 257 in collaboration with P&G Procter & Gamble provided a new building of 03 classrooms and 02 toilets, constructed at Government High School, Dahod, Mandideep. On this occasion the Plaque was unveiled and the classroom was inaugurated by Tr. Moriya Philip, National President, Round Table India, Tr. Arpit Dubey, Area Chairman, Mahim Agarwal, Plant Head, P&G Procter & Gamblemandideep. It is worth noting that the Bhoomi Pujan of the above works was done three months ago and because of the tireless efforts of the BRT-257 project convenor Tr.



Mayank Kapoor, the said work was completed in record time, which was

greatly appreciated by the chairman Himanshu Goyal and also by the guest present in the event. At the beginning of the program, the Vice Chairman of Bhopal Round Table 257, Tr. Deepesh Asnani, welcomed the guests and the participants present in the program with bouquet and Flowers.

The Cost of the above development works done by Bhopal Round Table 257 was done in collaboration with P&G Procter and Gamble at Rs.16 lakh for the benefit of the students. Furniture in newly built classrooms was donated by Shri Rakesh Sukhramaniand Urinals accessories for Girls Toilet has been donated by Mr. Vishal Narang.

MP govt transfers probe into marijuana 'sale' through Amazon to STF

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The probe into the online sale of marijuana through e-commerce platform Amazon, the case which was busted by the Madhya Pradesh police in November 2021, will now be investigated by the Special Task Force (STF).

A racket, which allegedly sold ganja (cannabis) under the guise of selling a sweetener on Amazon, was busted by Bhopal district police. Following which a case was also registered against executive directors of Amazon India. Earlier, the case was being investigated

by the crime research department of the state police, which now has been transferred to the STF. A vide order in this regard was issued last month by the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), G.P. Singh. "The case registered in Gohad police station of Bhopal district is now being transferred to STF for further investigation," read an order issued by ADGP. The state police, in November 2021, had arrested two persons - Bijendra Tomar and Suraj alias KalluPawaiya and had seized 21.7 kg of ganja from their possession. A case under section 38 of the Narcotic

Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered against executive directors of Amazon India which operates as ASSL in the country. Notably, the Superintendent of Police (SP) Bhind Manoj Kumar Singh, who had busted the case, was transferred within a week after unearthing it. At that time, questions were raised on the sudden transfer. However, the state Home Minister Narottam Mishra had refuted allegations that the state government was under someone's pressure and had claimed that Singh himself wanted to be relocated to Bhopal.

PM will honour Bhopal and Narsinghpur district panchayat on National Panchayati Raj Day

Samman Samaroha will be held in J&K's Pali Gram Panchayat on April 24

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi will confer the Deendayal Upadhyay Panchayat Empowerment Award to Bhopal and Narsinghpur District Panchayat of Madhya Pradesh at Gram Panchayat Pali in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on April 24, National Panchayati Raj Day. Along with this, he will transfer the award money to the accounts of the awarded Panchayat Raj institutions of the country. District, Janpad and Gram Panchayats will be honoured on the basis of the ranking of the works done in the Panchayats and rural areas of the country on National Panchayati Raj

Day in the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. An amount of Rs 50 lakh and citation will be given by Prime Minister Modi to Bhopal and Narsinghpur district panchayats of Madhya Pradesh. Both the Zila Panchayats have done excellent work in the field of rural development.

District Panchayat Bhopal has given good results in rural development for two consecutive years. Special work has been done for cleanliness in Bhopal rural area and all the gram panchayats here have been declared clean in cleanliness. Along with this, 100 percent vaccination has also been done in rural areas. The Nal-Jal Yojana is being maintained by women's groups. District

Panchayat Bhopal is leading in the works of women self-help groups. Didi Cafe has created a wave all over the country. The concept of Maa Ki Bagiya, in which the school has its own kitchen garden and the children get pure food, has been a huge success. Bhopal District Panchayat has got the first place in the list by doing the best work in the state. Zila Panchayat continues to top with its outstanding performance in all categories. District Panchayat Bhopal has consistently topped the ranking for the last two years in the country for working in rural areas. Zila Panchayat has made a distinct identity in the country as well as in the state, with its best performance in the rural areas.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

It is more important to be a good person than a good officer. B.S. Jamod is not only a good person he is also a good officer. State Election Commissioner Basant Pratap Singh said this in the farewell programme of Secretary State Election Commission B.S. Jamod. Jamod has been posted in various capacities from Secretary, State Election Commission to Secretary, Scheduled Tribes Cell, Raj Bhavan.

State Election Commissioner Singh said that Jamod has done remarkable works in the State Election Commission during his tenure of just 7 months. Jamod started the e-office system in the Commission, so that there should be transparency in the working of the Commission. Shri Singh extended his best wishes for the bright future of Jamod. He also presented a bouquet and a memento to Jamod.

Jamod said that in every work, I got

Touching Farewell Given to State Election Commission Secretary Jamod



full cooperation of the officers and employees of the Commission. He shared his experiences in the commis-

sion. Jamod took charge of the post in the commission in September 2021.

Advertisement for 'राजेश राठोड' (Rajesh Rathod) with contact information and a QR code.



KIM KARDASHIAN USES FAKE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT TO STALK FRIENDS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian has revealed she set up a "finsta" (fake Instagram account) to stalk her friends.

Talking to host Amanda Hirsch on the 'Not Skinny But Not Fat' podcast, the mum-of-four confessed to following her off her finsta account, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "I used to follow you from my finsta and then I was like 'I don't go to my finsta that often and just want it on my regular feed.'"

"I had a finsta, that was like a real finsta and it was only following girls who would just post like really wild s*** and I was like, 'This is so lame, I don't want to be in the finsta game.'"

"But then I need a stalking finsta and so my friend Lala, she had a finsta, and I don't want to make one again, so I asked 'what is your password', so I just used her finsta and I kicked her out of her finsta and now I just use her's. Just to stalk people, like fan accounts, or fashion things or just every one you could possibly think of."

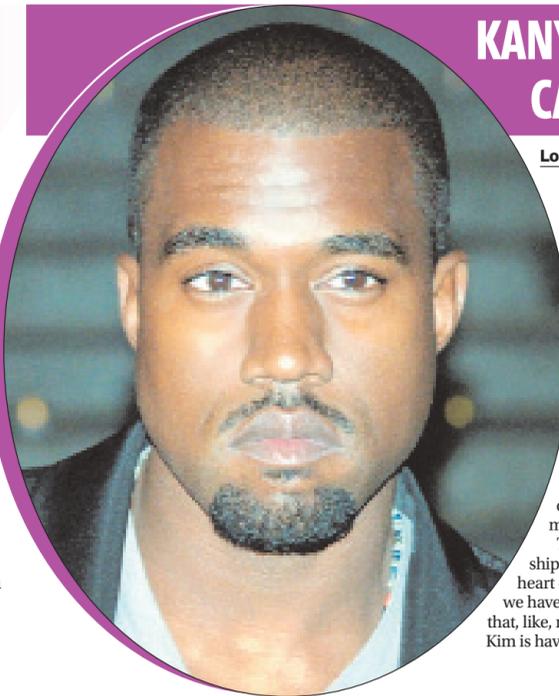
The reality star previously shared that she rakes in the money using the Meta-owned social media app.

The 'Kardashians' star claimed she can earn more cash promoting products to her followers than



she ever did starring on her family's former E! reality show, 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians'.

Speaking to David Letterman on his Netflix show 'My Next Guest Needs No Introduction', she said: "We would not be who we are today without 'KUWTK' and that's why we continue to share our lives. Even if, realistically, we can post something on social media and make more than we do a whole season."



KANYE WEST WANTED TO GIVE UP HIS CAREER TO BECOME KIM'S STYLIST

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kanye West, who has officially changed his name to Ye, reportedly wanted to give up his career to become reality TV personality Kim Kardashian's stylist.

The 'Gold Digger' rapper was willing to throw the towel in and "dedicate his life" to dressing 'The Kardashians' star, who he was declared legally single from in March, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

In the premiere episode of their new Hulu reality series, Kim told her friend while picking out looks for her 'Saturday Night Live' hosting gig: "Kanye wants to quit everything and dedicate his life to being my stylist."

Kim has recently moved on with 'SNL' comic Pete Davidson.

Earlier this week, the businesswoman gushed about "randomly" embarking on a romance with the 28-year-old actor in October, after she filed for divorce from Kanye - who legally changed his name to Ye - in February last year.

Kim said: "I definitely took my time. I took, you know, 10 months or something before I dated or talked to anyone, and I just wanted that time to really figure out and go through the motions: 'Am I making the right decision? How do I feel about this?' So once I went through all of the motions, I finally was, like, 'OK, guys, I am so ready to meet someone.' And I randomly did."

The reality star said she wants to be a "little bit more" guarded about her new relationship. She explained: "I do think that I am holding, you know, a little bit more close to my heart on certain aspects of my relationship with Pete, and it feels good just to know that, like, we have this connection and we have our little bubble of a relationship world that we live in that, like, not a lot of people know about." Kim is having "so much fun" with her beau.

'Fantastic Beasts 3's gay dialogue removed, studio says essence of the film is intact

Los Angeles | Agencies

Warner Bros has removed the references to a gay relationship in their film 'Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore' for the film's China release.

Only six seconds of the movie's 142-minute runtime were removed, reports 'Variety'. As per 'Variety', the dialogue that spoke about the romantic past between male characters of Dumbledore (played by Jude Law) and Grindelwald (played by Mads Mikkelsen), has been axed. The lines "because I was in

love with you" and "the summer Gellert and I fell in love" have been edited out from 'The Secrets of Dumbledore' release (via News.com.au). The rest of the film remained intact, including an understanding that Dumbledore and Grindelwald share an intimate bond.

'Harry Potter' author J.K. Rowling revealed Dumbledore was gay in 2009, but the movies had never explicitly referenced the character's sexuality until this third 'Fantastic Beasts' entry.

Warner Bros told 'Variety' in a statement, "As a studio, we're committed to safe-



guarding the integrity of every film we release, and that extends to circumstances that necessitate making nuanced cuts in order to respond sensitively to a variety of in-market factors. Our hope is to release our features worldwide as released by their creators but historically we have faced small edits made in local markets."

"In the case of 'Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore', a six-second cut was requested and Warner Bros accepted those changes to comply with local requirements but the spirit of the film remains intact. We want audiences everywhere in the world to see and enjoy this film, and it's important to us that Chinese audiences have the opportunity to experience it as well, even with these minor edits", the statement further added.

'BRIDGERTON' SEASON 2

Los Angeles | Agencies

Period drama series 'Bridgerton' Season 2 has landed the title of Netflix's third-most popular English-language TV series, a list that is calculated based on shows' first 28 days on the streaming service, in just 17 days.

Per Netflix's newly released Top 10 data for April 4-10, "The series had 115.75M hours viewed on the English TV list, appearing in the Top 10 in 91 countries, making it the most viewed title for the third week in a row. The season also entered the Most Popular list at #3 with 560.50M hours viewed.



Shondaland now holds three spots on the Most Popular list with 'Bridgerton' (Seasons 1 & 2) and 'Inventing Anna', reports 'Variety'.

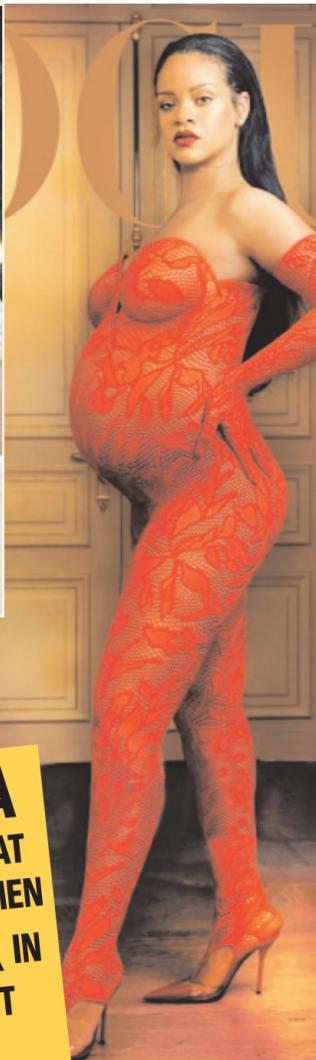
For the weekly rankings, 'Bridgerton' Season 2, which comes from showrunner Chris Van Dusen and executive producer Shonda Rhimes, easily topped all other English-language TV series again with 115.7 million hours viewed between April 4-10.

In a very distant second place was new dating series 'The Ultimatum: Marry or Move On' (43.7 million hours) and third was the first season of 'Bridgerton' (35.8 million hours). At No. 4 was recently dropped limited series 'Jimmy Savile: A British Horror Story' (17.7 million hours) and coming in fifth was 'Inventing Anna' (17.3 million hours).

A 'Better Call Saul' fans catching up on Season 5 ahead of the series' Season 6 premiere this month made it the sixth-most watched English-language TV title of the week (15 million hours). The rest of the Top 10 included, in order, 'Is It Cake?' Season 1 (14.8 million hours), 'Super Pupz' Season 1 (13.8 million hours), 'The Last Kingdom' Season 5 (13 million hours) and 'CoComelon' Season 5 (12.6 million hours).

Netflix's third-most popular English-language show in 17 days

RIHANNA REDEFINES WHAT PREGNANT WOMEN CAN WEAR IN COVER SHOOT



Los Angeles | Agencies

Pregnant Barbadian singer-actress Rihanna has sent the Internet into a frenzy by appearing with her fully grown baby bump on the cover of 'Vogue' magazine. The "Love The Way You Lie" singer took to her social media and shared the adorable picture.

She wrote in the caption, "Our lil fashion kills on da cover of VOGUE!" For the cover shoot, she wore a red strapless jumpsuit with laces from the house of Alaïa, the brand name of the Tunisian couturier Azzedine Alaïa, which she paired with matching gloves.

For footwear, she tied her outfit together with a pair of red and transparent pointed-toe stilettos, also from Alaïa, and rounded her look with Chopard earrings.

As she explores motherhood, the singer shared that it had given her the opportunity to try clothing that she would have never sported otherwise.

Rihanna said in an interview with 'Vogue': "When I found out I was pregnant, I thought to myself, 'There's no way I'm going to go shopping in no maternity aisle.' I'm sorry -- it's too much fun to get dressed up. I'm not going to let that part disappear just because my body is changing." She added: "I'm hoping we are able to redefine what's considered 'decent' for pregnant women. My body is doing incredible things right now, and I'm not going to be ashamed of that. This time should feel celebratory. Because why should you be hiding your pregnancy?"

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kaia Gerber



IPL 2022: PUNJAB KINGS BEAT MUMBAI INDIANS BY 12 RUNS

Pune | Agencies

Punjab Kings produced a clinical all-round performance to beat Mumbai Indians by 12 runs in an IPL 2022 match at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, here on Wednesday.

It was the fifth-successive loss for the five-time champions Mumbai Indians in the ongoing IPL 2022 season.

Invited to bat first, brilliant fifties by Shikhar Dhawan (70 off 50) and Mayank Agarwal (52 off 32) powered Punjab Kings to 198/5 in 20 overs. Apart from Shikhar and Mayank's superb hitting at the top, Jitesh Sharma (30 off 15) and Shahruckh Khan (15 not out off 6) gave late flourish to Punjab's innings at lower down the order.

Basil Thampi (2/47), Jasprit Bumrah (1/28), Murugan Ashwin (1/34), Jaydev Unadkat (1/44) were the wicket-takers for Mumbai



Indians. In reply, the likes of Dewald Brevis (49 off 25), Suryakumar Yadav (43 off 30) and Tilak Varma (36 off 20) tried hard but it wasn't

enough as Mumbai Indians were restricted to 186-9 in 20 overs, losing by 12 runs. Odean Smith (4/30), was the most successful bowler

for Punjab while Kagiso Rabada (2/29) and Vaibhav Arora (1/43) also chipped in with crucial wickets.

Brief scores:

Punjab Kings 198/5 in 20 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 70, Mayank Agarwal 52; Basil Thampi (2/47) beat Mumbai Indians 186-9 in 20 overs (Dewald Brevis 49, Suryakumar Yadav 43; Odean Smith 4/30) by 12 runs

Champions League

Real Madrid hold on after brave Chelsea fightback

Madrid | Agencies

Real Madrid qualified for the semifinals of the Champions League despite having one foot out of the door after a brave Chelsea fightback in the second leg of their quarterfinal on Tuesday night.

Chelsea led 3-0 on the night and were 10 minutes away from going through after losing the first leg 3-1 before Rodrigo took the game into extra-time where Karim Benzema scored the goal that took Real Madrid through on a dramatic night in the Santiago Bernabeu.

Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel said after his side's 3-1 defeat in Stamford Bridge a week ago that his side had no chance of getting back into the tie, but it seems the coach was bluffing as his side tore into Real Madrid. The reigning champions' second goal came four minutes into the second half when Antonio



Rudiger climbed highest to head Mount's corner beyond Courtois' reach to level the tie. Real Madrid had done little in attack, but just after the goal,

Reece James made a timely challenge to block Karim Benzema. Benzema then set up Fede Valverde, who fired just wide, before Marcos

Alonso had the ball in the net only for the VAR to rule it out for handball. Werner did make it 3-0 on the night in the 75th minute, latching onto Matteo Kovacic's pass before beating Casemiro and David Alaba and unleashing a shot that took a deflection on its way into the goal. That made it 4-3 to Chelsea on aggregate, but Rodrigo frustrated their comeback with a cool finish after a move involving Marcelo and Luka Modric in the 80th minute to take the tie into extra time.

CLINICAL VILLARREAL ELIMINATE BAYERN MUNICH

Berlin: A late equaliser from substitute Samuel Chukwueze helped Villarreal draw 1-1 with Bayern Munich and book the semifinals after moving 2-1 on aggregate in the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday night. The German giants started highly motivated, knowing that they had to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first leg, while Villarreal defended deep and lurked for their counterattack opportunities. Even though the Bavarians gained momentum, they had to wait until the 72nd minute to produce their next chance as unmarked Thomas Muller headed narrowly wide from a central position. Villarreal's counterattack strategy paid off in the closing stages as Gerard Moreno's pass into the path allowed Chukwueze to stun Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer from close range against the run of the game in the 88th minute.



Goa, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai to host FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in October

Zurich (Switzerland) | Agencies

The U-17 Women's World Cup will be held across three venues, Goa's Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium, and Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium from October 11 to 30, FIFA confirmed in a statement on Wednesday.

The football's governing body also stated that the draw for the tournament will be held in Zurich on June 24.

Apart from hosts India, six countries - Brazil, Chile, China PR, Colombia, Japan and New Zealand - have been confirmed for the competition so far and are sure to



feature in the draw on 24 June. With a total of 16 teams set to contest the tournament, spots are still up for grabs in several confederations.

Following the cancellation of the 2020 edition of the tournament due to the Covid-19 pandemic, FIFA,

the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) have also confirmed the updated Host Cities for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022 after undertaking a comprehensive review and consultation process. In order to ensure

the safety of the players involved and the other participants in the tournament, Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium, Goa's Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium have been announced as the three venues that will welcome some of the brightest emerging talents and future stars of women's football later this year.

Sarai Bareman, FIFA Chief Women's Football Officer, said, "With qualifying ongoing around the world, we are very excited to announce the date of the draw, as well as confirm the three Host Cities for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022."

MONTE CARLO MASTERS: KORDA UPSETS ALCARAZ IN YOUNG-GUN BATTLE

Monaco: Sebastian Korda earned the biggest win of his season at the Monte Carlo Masters, edging Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-3 to reach the third round here on Wednesday.

World No. 11 Alcaraz arrived in Monte Carlo in red-hot form, having captured his maiden ATP Masters 1000 crown in Miami. However, the 18-year-old, who was making his debut at the clay-court event, was unable to cope with American Korda's heavy-hitting, variety and the windy conditions. The American rallied from a break down in the third set with the wind leading to errors and few long rallies as the match went on. With his three-hour, one-minute victory, Korda gained revenge for his defeat to Alcaraz at the 2021 Intesa Sanpaolo Next Gen ATP Finals, where the Spaniard triumphed in the championship match.

Albert Ramos-Vinolas continued his clay-court dominance over World No. 10 Cameron Norrie as he emerged a 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 winner from an engrossing battle of the lefties on Court des Princes.

No marked gains for Indians; Afridi climbs to No. 10 in T20I rankings for bowlers

Dubai | Agencies

Only one Indian, KL Rahul, figures in the top-10 of the ICC T20 Men's Player Rankings, the latest edition of which was released on Wednesday. Rahul is 10th on the list of T20I Rankings for batters, which is led by Pakistan skipper Babar Azam and has team-mate Mohammad Rizwan at No.3.

India's all-format skipper Rohit Sharma is further down at 14th, while former skipper Virat Kohli is 16th. In the T20I Rankings for bowlers, Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi's 2/21 in the one-off T20I against Australia sees him climb four spots to No.10. Despite the best efforts of the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year 2021 in the penultimate over, Australia got over the line with five balls to spare. Australian pace bowler Josh Hazlewood, who did not feature in the one-off T20I



game, has dropped a spot to No.3 while England's Adil Rashid has moved to No.2. In the Test Rankings for all-rounders, India's Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin continue to hold the top two spots, while in the Test Rankings for bowlers, Ashwin and pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah are second and third, respectively behind Australian skipper Pat Cummins. Among batters in the Test Rankings, Rohit Sharma (8th) and Kohli (10th) figures in the Top-10. The list is led by Australia's Marnus Labuschagne.

Shooter Niraj Kumar aces men's 50M Rifle 3 Positions T3 trials

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Navy's Niraj Kumar aced the men's 50M Rifle Positions (3P) T3 trials at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range on Wednesday, getting the better of two Olympians-Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar of Madhya Pradesh whom he beat 17-11 in the gold medal match and seasoned Sanjeev Rajput, who had to settle for bronze.

On Day 6 of the National selection trial 3 & 4, Niraj was up against it in a strong field of 94 and made it through to the final stages with a 584/600 in qualifying, which was enough to give him fourth place. Sanjeev Rajput topped the qualifiers field with a 588, including a perfect 200/200 in the first Kneeling position and a



199/200 in the Prone position. In the top eight-stage, Niraj finished second with a score of 404.7, narrowly edging out Rajput, who managed 404.3. Aishwary topped this stage with a 407.9. In the junior men's 3P T3 competition, Himachal's Surya Pratap Singh Banshtu won gold with a 16-12 victory over M P's Avinash Yadav. Earlier on Tuesday, Maharashtra's

Rudranksh Patil recorded a rare double, winning both the men's and junior men's 10M Air Rifle T4 competition. Rudranksh got the better of former state-mate and current Railwayman Shahu Mane with a favourable 17-11 result in the men's gold medal encounter, while beating Rajasthan's Yash Vardhan 17-13 in the junior men's final.

Rayudu's one-handed catch to dismiss Akash Deep sets social media on fire

Navi Mumbai | Agencies

Chennai Super Kings, the defending champions in IPL 2022, finally managed to snap their four-match losing streak with a 23-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore at the DY Patil Stadium.

In Tuesday's match, everyone was left floored on seeing the carnage from the bats of Shivam Dube (95 not out off 46 balls) and Robin Uthappa (88 off 50 balls). But their attention was taken away by Ambati Rayudu, whose services weren't needed with the bat, producing a moment of brilliance on the field, leaving social media in awe.

On the fourth ball of the 16th over when Bangalore, under scoreboard pressure, were struggling to chase a mammoth total of 216, Rayudu increased their troubles when he plucked a sensational one-handed stunning catch of Akash Deep off



captain Ravindra Jadeja. Jadeja bowled a short-of-length ball which stopped on Deep, who tried to drive on the up. Rayudu, who was fielding at short cover, sensationally dived to his right and threw himself in the air to take the catch with his right hand. He did

not let the ball go off his hand even after falling on the ground. Rayudu's athleticism on the field drew a lot of attention and awe from the cricketing world on social media. "Ambiti Rayudu just took the catch of the season!!!" tweeted former West Indies cricketer and commentator Ian

Bishop. "Is it a Bird or is it a Plane? Nah! It's Namma @RayuduAmbati," commented CSK's official fan club account. "How old is Ambati Rayudu? He's literally flying! #WhistlePodu #CSK," wrote a CSK supporter on Twitter.

FIH Hockey Pro League

India look to consolidate lead at top of the table against young German side

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

Indian men's team will look to consolidate their lead at the top of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 points table when they take on Germany in the two-legged contest on April 14 and 15 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium, here.

The Indian team are currently placed on top of the FIH Pro League table with 21 points in 10 matches. They come into the double-header with 3-3 (3-2 SO) and 4-3 wins against England.

Speaking at the pre-match virtual press conference, India captain Amit Rohidas stated that the team will look to maintain its position at the top. "We played exceptionally well against England and managed to win both the games. It's a very good feeling to lead the league table. It's a team effort and we will look to maintain our position at the top," Amit said. Speaking about the preparedness for the two-legged contest against Germany, the Indian Captain said, "We have done our



homework through the video analysis and worked on the areas we needed to improve upon. From

practicing PCs to ball position, we have worked on everything. Meanwhile, vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh, who achieved the 100-goal milestone during India's previous FIH Hockey Pro League match against England, said, "It's more of a team achievement for me. I am just happy that I was able to contribute to the team's victory. I am also happy with our performances and we are always looking for creating more and more chances whenever possible."

When asked if India will have an advantage over the young German squad, Harmanpreet said, "We don't think about who our opponent is, whether it's a young team or an experienced one, we just want to do well as a team and improve our performance with every game. Also, we should be wary of the young team as they will give their 100% to win the game and prove themselves."

On the other hand, the World No. 6 Germany are placed second in the Pro League points table with 17 points in eight games.

Don't think we have played our best cricket yet: Devdutt Padikkal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rajasthan Royals' left-handed batter Devdutt Padikkal feels his side are yet to play their best game in IPL 2022.

Rajasthan are currently the table-toppers with six points in four matches and would look to consolidate their pole position when they face Gujarat Titans at DY Patil Stadium on Thursday.

"I think there's a lot we can improve upon. I don't think we have played our best cricket yet. But we are progressing in every game and we are moving forward, which is a really good sign. Hopefully, we continue to improve ourselves to fill those small gaps as a team," said Padikkal in the pre-match virtual press conference.

This will be Rajasthan's first night game at the venue



after having played a day match against Mumbai Indians, where Jos Buttler had scored a sizzling hundred. "It will be very different as compared to the day game. The dew factor might come into play. Like we saw last night at DY Patil, it was really a high scoring game. So, we can expect a lot of runs and hopefully, come out as winning side," observed Padikkal.

In this IPL, compared to

his slot as an opener in his previous team Royal Challengers Bangalore, Padikkal has batted at number three before opening alongside Jos Buttler in Rajasthan's last match against Lucknow Super Giants, which they won by three runs. The young left-handed opener isn't bothered by change in positions and wants to give his best effort to lead his side to victory.

RANBIR KAPOOR ALIA BHATT wedding

Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

The hush-hush ceremony has grabbed the headlines ever since the news about the power couple's wedding broke out. The day we have all been waiting for is finally here! Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor's pre-wedding functions have reportedly begun at Ranbir Kapoor's residence Vastu in Mumbai. Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's mehendi ceremony will be today at Vastu.

Families of Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor have started to arrive at the latter's house. Her family members - father Mahesh Bhatt, sister Pooja Bhatt and brother Rahul Bhatt were spotted leaving the venue. Ranbir's cousin sisters the actress Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor were also seen arriving at the venue. Where Kareena was seen in a gorgeous white lehenga and Karisma Kapoor in a yellow outfit. Riddhima Kapoor & Neetu Kapoor too looked dazzling. Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's best friends Ayan Mukerji came in a desi avatar and Filmmaker Karan Johar was dressed in a white and yellow sherwani. There was a lot of speculation surrounding the Bollywood stars wedding date and venue.

According to reports, the couple is set to knot at vastu on April 14.



RAIMA SEN OPENS UP ON THE CHALLENGES OF DOING ACTION SEQUENCES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Raima Sen is all set to be seen as antagonist Neelam in the upcoming series 'Mai'. The actress for the first time is doing a character with grey shades and also performing a lot of action-packed sequences. Sharing more about her experience, Raima shares: "Initially, I found it difficult because the gun was heavy and I couldn't even press my finger against the trigger. However, after working with an action master, I realised that the most important thing is to just stay in the zone."

"The idea was to make the action sequences come out as realistic and still have a cinematic edge to it. Eventually, it turned out really well. Needless to say, it was quite a thrilling experience," she adds. 'Mai' revolves

around a middle-class mother (Sakshi Tanwar) whose daughter (Wamiqa Gabbi) is run over by a truck right in front of her eyes.

Now Sakshi wants to take revenge from those responsible for her daughter's death.

'Mai' will be streaming from April 15 on Netflix.



PRASHANTH WAS WORRIED ABOUT MY HEALTH; I WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MY ROLE: SANJAY DUTT

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

As the 'K.G.F: Chapter 2' fever sweeps the country, Bollywood veteran Sanjay Dutt, who plays the villain 'Adheera' in the film, had an incredible journey that he describes as nothing short of inspiring.

The 'Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.' star demonstrated a warrior's spirit both on and off-screen when he was diagnosed with cancer during the filming of 'K.G.F: Chapter 2', but returned to the set with vigour and strength as soon as he recovered.

Speaking about his work experience with Prashanth Neel, Sanjay Dutt said, "Team KGF was very supportive and accommodating, aside from my wife being



my greatest strength and my children's motivation."

"Prashanth was concerned about my health and well-being, while I was concerned about my role Adheera", Sanjay conveyed. Sanjay Dutt revealed that director Prashanth Neel was extremely concerned about his health and insisted on using a body double for certain scenes in 'K.G.F: Chapter 2'. However, Sanjay Dutt chose to do them himself and had everyone spellbound by his sheer determination. What's more inspiring is that, in addition to being Sanjay's first film after battling cancer, it was also one with a lot of action, which he is said to have pulled off like a pro. Releasing nationwide on April 14, in Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam, 'K.G.F: Chapter 2' is written and directed by Prashanth Neel, one of the most sought-after directors. Produced by Vijay Kiragandur, under the Hombale Films banner, 'KGF 2' is the second instalment from the 'KGF' franchise which was first released in 2018. Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment and AA Films are presenting the film in north Indian markets.

SATISH KAUSHIK: PLAYING SAFE IS THE BIGGEST RISK FOR ANY CREATIVE PERSON

Team Absolute | Mumbai

If there's one actor who has constantly stepped into different territories and has broken the shackles of typecasting, it is Satish Kaushik. Throw any role at him and he will adapt to the character's sensibilities to the molecular level.

As the Bollywood veteran celebrates his birthday on Wednesday, he spoke with IANS about reinventing himself, the risk of playing safe and the experience of working with the late Rishi Kapoor in 'Sharmaji Namkeen'.

Having done a plethora of work in the capacity of an actor, writer and a director, the key to excellence for him lies in keeping up with changing times. He considers his ability to reinvent and adapt to his surroundings as his biggest strength.

He says, "I do have the ability to adapt myself to the changing times. I am always receptive towards getting things which can help me as an actor whether it is reading, watching or getting inspired by an actor. I think that is why I have reinvented myself as an actor and even as a director."

Revealing how even at this stage in his career, he is always nervous before stepping into a project, he adds, "I am a person who is always nervous before starting anything. But I think this nervousness is something which helps me grow. I'm still hungry for roles and great work." He is one of the very few actors, who have a keen eye for the writing process, (he has written dialogues for many projects including Kundan Shah's cult classic 'Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro').



Mitaali Nag

REVEALS WHY APRIL IS SPECIAL AND CELEBRATED AS POETIC EARTH MONTH

Team Absolute | Mumbai



As the month of April is celebrated as Poetic Earth Month, actress Mitaali Nag, who is currently seen playing Devyani in the show 'Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Meiin', feels it is the month for every person to be inspired to look after the world around us.

She says: "Poetic Earth Month is about having a life-based approach to issues concerning our planet in a creative way. As an artist, I always look forward to inspiring my people with something that will encourage them to take action. "The Month aims to create a beautiful place so that the everyday person is inspired. Poetry, story, and art are the most beautiful ways that can help connect everyone with each other to our planet and educate them about the major issues."

Mitaali known for featuring in shows like 'Afsar Bitya', 'Draupadi' and 'Dil Ki Nazar Se Khoobsurat' feels human greed has been the reason behind the current situation.

She continues: "There is a saying, everybody wants to change the world but nobody is ready to change themselves for the world. Perhaps it is time for us to reflect on ourselves. It is all the little things that matter, and if everyone contributed indirectly, the planet will be a beautiful place to live in."

"By less resources needed, less destruction and better environment. We have destroyed this beautiful planet at an alarming rate. Putting aside global warming and climate change, no species is as greedy as the human race, we take more than we need and leave a trail of destruction." Mitaali who is a well known singer too, looks at the month as an opportunity to make efforts in a creative way.

RANVEER SINGH TO PERFORM AT IIFA 2022

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Gully Boy' star Ranveer Singh will deliver a live wire onstage performance at the 22nd edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards 2022 on May 22. The actor's performance will serve as one of the attractions of the event which celebrates and honours the excellence in Indian cinema. The IIFA awards which is scheduled to be held on May 20 and May 21 along with the IIFA weekend will bring its global brand presence to Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. The global event will be hosted by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, Riteish Deshmukh and Manish Paul.

Speaking on the occasion, Ranveer Singh said in a statement, "Yas Island is like home to me, as I am the brand ambassador of such a spectacular destination! I am super thrilled to be heading there to entertain people with a performance that will be super special."

"The 22nd edition of the biggest celebration of Indian cinema - the International Indian Film Academy & Awards, is taking place in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, and it doesn't get bigger than this! I am looking forward to a 'KHAAS' (special) IIFA experience at Yas because I know that from the hospitality to the awe-inspiring celebrations, it's going to be epic", he added.



Adah Sharma