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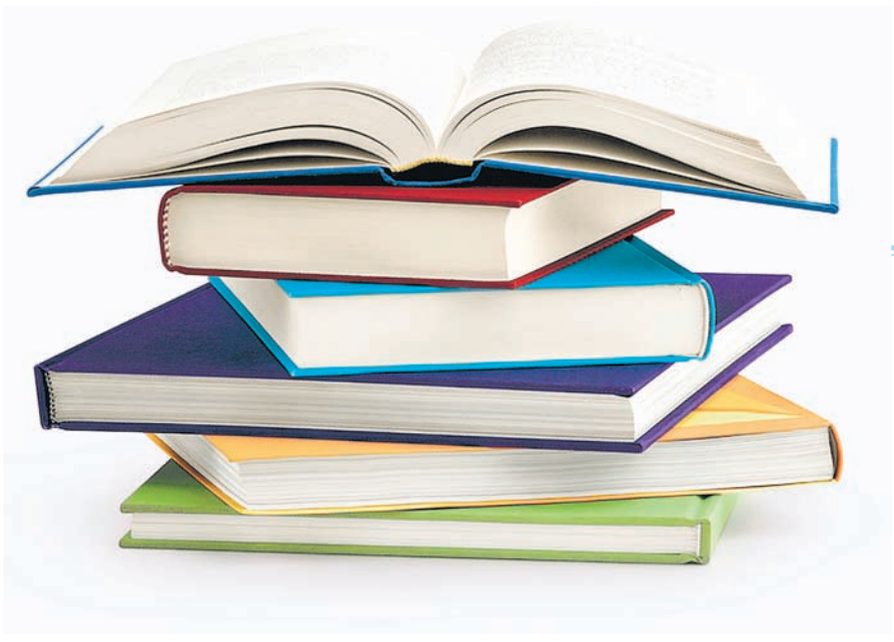
NCERT DEVELOPS BRIDGE COURSE MODULES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN



COVID-19 HAS INTERRUPTED THE LEARNING OF STUDENTS FROM PRE- SCHOOL TO GRADE 12. EDUCATION IS IN THE CONCURRENT LIST OF THE CONSTITUTION AND MAJORITY OF THE SCHOOLS ARE UNDER THE DOMAIN OF RESPECTIVE STATE AND UT GOVERNMENTS. DURING PANDEMIC, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAD SEVERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE STATES AND UTS TO ASSESS THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

THE ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC CALENDAR CONSISTS OF INTERESTING ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO TOPICS AND THEMES IN THE SYLLABUS. IT MAPS THE TOPICS AND THEMES WITH THE LEARNING OUTCOMES & FACILITATES TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS IN STUDENTS' LEARNING IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. ALSO LINKS FOR E-RESOURCES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED FOR THOSE LEARNERS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With a view to address the issues related to gaps or loss of learning among students, during and after the lockdown, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed bridge course modules for out-of-school children including various activities which are helpful for bridging the learning gaps.

Different States have also been requested to prepare and implement School Readiness Module Bridge Course in classrooms for initial one or two months for each grade. The information was given by Minister of State for Education, Annpurna Devi in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

NCERT has also prepared 'Alternative Academic Calendar' which is a week-wise learning plan for grades 1 to 12.

A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy called 'National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)' has also been launched by the Ministry of Education (MoE) on July 5, 2021 under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha, the minister said.

The National Mission lays down priorities and actionable agendas for States to achieve the goal of proficiency in foundational literacy and numeracy for every child by grade 3. Vidya Pravesh module has been launched for class 1 students. This is a play based on 3 months of school preparation program for children entering in Class I.According to the ministry of education, in addition, a comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital, online, on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.

MISSILE SHOT DOWN IN KIEV, WRECKAGE DESTROYS RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

DEVASTATING DEFENCE

KIEV | Agencies

Ukraine anti-aircraft defence shot down a missile in Kiev and its wreckage fell on a residential neighbourhood destroying a five-storey building.

Vitalii Klitschko, Mayor of Kiev said that missile wreckage fell onto the road. One person was killed and six were injured, with two taken away by ambulance.

An empty tram was completely destroyed. Windows were shattered, the balconies of the nearest houses and commercial premises on the ground floors were damaged, Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

Earlier reports said Russia does not rule out taking "full control" of Ukraine's major cities, the Kremlin said.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, "The Russian armed forces do not reject taking 'full control' of Ukraine's major cities to ensure maximum security for citizens.".

Peskov also says that, at the beginning of the war, Russian President Vladimir Putin allegedly gave the order "not to assault the cities immediately, including Kiev", Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

The reason for that was "the deployment of weapons by militants in the cities". It is unclear what was meant, although Russia says it is "demilitarising Ukraine", namely destroying these weapons.

Earlier, an artillery shell hit a nine-storey apartment building in the Obolon district of Kiev, killing two people.

MOVE UN HQ FROM US TO NEUTRAL COUNTRY: RUSSIA

New Delhi: Russia has called for the possibility of moving the UN Headquarters from the US to a neutral country. Director of the Department of International Organizations of the Russian Foreign Ministry Pyotr Ilyichev said: "We are positive about the idea of moving the UN headquarters to a neutral state. Such a step would make it possible to remove unnecessary tension from the complex process of searching for collective answers to the global challenges of our time. "In addition, our work would become much less politicized than it is now."

US EMBASSY IN KIEV ASKS AMERICANS TO LEAVE UKRAINE

***Kiev:** The US Embassy in Kiev on Monday asked American nationals in Ukraine to leave the war-torn nation as Russia continued its assault for the 19th day. Taking to Twitter, the Embassy said: "We urge US citizens to depart Ukraine now via ground transport if safe. Border crossings are open. Consider routes & risks; roads may be crowded, exposed to combat or have damaged infrastructure. "Sheltering in place may be the best option for some." The Embassy's announcement on Monday came shortly after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dymtro Kuleba.*

MPS DEMAND TO WAIVE EDUCATION LOANS FOR UKRAINE STUDENTS

New Delhi: As the second part of the budget session resumed on Monday, the parliamentarians demanded a policy for students evacuated from Ukraine so that they can continue their studies in India. Congress Member of Parliament from Kerala, Kodikunnil Suresh demanded to waive education loans taken by students pursuing education in Ukraine by invoking the clause of 'act of war' to save them from falling in a debt trap. He said that the evacuated students face an uncertain future due to their inability to complete their education. Suggesting to set up a student welfare wing in every embassy as a policy intervention to help students, Kodikunnil Suresh demanded government to extend specialised help to students to overcome the mental trauma faced in the war zone. Another Congress member Rajmohan Unnithan claimed that thousands of students from Kerala were still stranded in Sumy in Ukraine and demanded that the government take urgent steps to bring them to safety.

SKM announces next phase of movement to demand MSP guarantee

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a coalition of over 40 farmers' unions, on Monday announced the next phase of its nationwide agitation. The SKM will observe April 11- April 17 as MSP Legal Guarantee Week.

The SKM also planned a nationwide protest on March 21 regarding the role of the government in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, wherein four farmers among others, were mowed down by a vehicle allegedly belonging to MoS Home Ajay Misra Teni.

In a meeting of all the organisations associated with the SKM at Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi, it was unanimously decided that during this week (April-11-17), all the constituent organisations associated with the Samyukta Kisan Morcha will organise dharnas, demonstrations, seminars, demanding legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (C2+50 per cent) as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission, to all farmers on all their agricultural produce.After reviewing the legal process in the Lakhimpur Kheri case, concerns were expressed that the police administration and the prosecutors together are trying to protect the criminals and implicate the innocent farmers. "It is a matter of surprise that in such a serious case, the son of the Union Minister got bail so soon while the farmers implicated in the same case are still in jail," the Samyukt Kisan Morcha said and expressed serious concern at the news that a key witness in the case has been attacked after Monu Mishra's release.

The SKM decided that there would be no relaxation in the legal battle in this matter, and full legal help would be given by the Morcha to the families of the farmers, a statement after the meeting said.

The Morcha reiterated that the SKM supports the call for Bharat Bandh by trade unions on March 28 and 29, and that farmers across the country will actively participate in it.

'SKIN-TO-SKIN' VERDICT

Centre accepts Justice Pushpa Ganediwala's resignation

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Centre on Monday issued a notification confirming the resignation of Bombay High Court's Additional Judge, Justice Pushpa V. Ganediwala, who quit her post last month after some controversial judgements delivered last year. The Ministry of Law & Justice said that Justice Ganediwala's resignation has been accepted with effect from February 11, 2022 - a day before her tenure was due to expire - as the Supreme Court collegium did not recommend extending her term or elevating her.

Justice Ganediwala, of the Nagpur Bench of Bombay HC, shot to headlines for two verdicts in child sex abuses cases delivered in January-February 2021 that generated immense controversy, and were later overruled by the Supreme Court.

One pertained to the proposition that direct 'skin-to-skin' contact was necessary for constituting an offence of sexual assault under the POCSO Act, and another of holding a minor girl's hand to open the zip of the man's pant did not constitute an office under POCSO but under the IPC.

Following widespread reactions to the verdict, the apex court collegium revoked its recommendation of January 20 to make her a permanent judge of Bombay HC, and in February 2021, it recommended extending her term as an Additional Judge by one year.

SIKHS EMPLOYED ALLOWED TO CARRY SMALL 'KIRPAN' IN AIRPORT

New Delhi: The Centre has allowed Sikhs working in the aviation sector to continue carrying small sized 'kirpan' within the airport premises.

In Sikh religion, 'kirpan' or a dagger is considered a holy object.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) amended its order issued on March 4 by deleting the para restricting the entry of Sikh employees inside the airport carrying 'kirpan' of specified size. The new order issued on March 12 restored the position prior to March 4.

As per the order, the length of the kirpan's blade should not be more than six inches, and its total length should not exceed nine inches.

In its earlier circular, Sikh travellers on domestic flights were allowed to carry the specified length 'kirpan' on their body.

13 major river rejuvenation through forestry interventions

- *The Ministry is aiming that the forestry interventions will increase overall health of the rivers and recharge groundwater from the increased cumulative forest cover by 7,417.36 sq kms across these 13 riverscapes.*
- *The Detailed Project Report (DPRs) on rejuvenation through forestry interventions were released for rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, Cauvery, and Luni.*
- *These 13 rivers collectively cover a total basin area of 16,11,149 sq km that represents 49.01 per cent of the geographical area of the country. The length of 13 rivers, including all of their tributaries (202 in all) within the delineated riverscapes is 42,830 km.*

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Modelled on the lines of the work done as part of the Clean Ganga Mission for the river and acknowledging that the growing water crisis is on account of degradation of river ecosystems, the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry on Monday launched an ambitious river rejuvenation plan through forestry intervention for 13 major rivers and their tributaries across India.

The proposed interventions will also help to sequester 50.21 million tonnes CO2 equivalent in 10-year-old plantations and 74.76 million tonnes CO2 equivalent in 20-year-old plantations, it hopes. These DPRs are funded by National Afforestation & Eco-development Board, under the Ministry, and prepared by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun.Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav explained how the DPRs envisage convergence of budgets from multiple line ministries and will be part of Green India Mission II.

Terming the whole exercise as a "much needed initiative", Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said: "We are custodians of the jal (water), jungle and zameen (land) and we are duty-bound to hand it over to the future generation as we got it or even better."

The proposed cumulative budget outlay of 13 DPRs is Rs 19,342.62 crore. These DPRs are expected to be executed through the state Forest Departments as nodal departments and with convergence of schemes of other line departments in the states towards the activities proposed in the DPRs and funding support from the Centre.

TATA SONS CHIEF CHANDRASEKARAN APPOINTED AS AIR INDIA CHAIRMAN

New Delhi/Mumbai: Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran has been appointed as Air India Chairman, a group spokesperson said. The development comes as the Tata Group scouts for a new Air India CEO-MD.

Earlier this month, ex-Turkish Airlines head Mehmet Ilker Ayci, who was named as the new Air India CEO-MD, declined the position. No reason was given for Ayci's decision.

Last month, the Tata Group-led Air India announced the appointment of Ayci as the new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the airline. At that time, Ayci while accepting the position said he is "delighted and honoured to accept the privilege of leading an iconic airline and to join the Tata Group".

'NEVER VISUALISED': SC HINTS AT CAG PROBE IN FAKE COVID DEATH CLAIMS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday reiterated its concern regarding fake claims for Covid death compensation and that it may direct a probe by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in this matter.

It suggested that inquiry into alleged fake death claims could be entrusted to the government auditor's office.

A bench of Justices M.R. Shah and B.V. Nagarathna said: "We never visualised that this kind of fake claims could come. It's a pious world. We never thought this scheme could be misused."

The bench added that if some officers are also involved in it, then it is "very serious".

As advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal pointed out at the Section 52 in the Disaster Management Act, which addresses such concerns, Justice Shah said: "We need somebody to file a complaint."

Counsel suggested a random examination of the compensation claims by the state legal services authorities. During the hearing, the top court said its earlier order regarding ex-gratia of Rs 50,000 to the family members of those who succumbed to Covid is "very clear" and the payment is to be made for each death. The bench made this observation while dealing with an application filed by the Assam government, seeking clarification whether each of the children of the deceased parents would be paid compensation, in case there is more than one child.

The bench clarified that ex gratia payment of Rs 50,000, ordered by it, is to be paid for each death due to Covid-19 and not to each child of the affected family. In January, the top court had directed all the state governments to reach out to those children, who have lost their parents to the viral disease, and pay them compensation. On March 7, the Supreme Court expressed concern at doctors issuing fake medical certificates to people for claiming ex-gratia compensation for Covid deaths, and added that it might order a probe into the matter. The Centre had submitted that an outer limit may be fixed for submitting Covid death related claims, otherwise the process will become endless, and added that some state governments have come across fake medical certificates issued by doctors. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta also pointed out that the apex court's order on ex-gratia compensation, through a doctor's certificate, has been misused in certain cases.

Expressing concern on fake medical certificates, the bench said: "What is worrying is the fake certificate given by doctors... it is a very serious thing."

It also agreed with Mehta's submissions that there should be a time limit for registering Covid death claims. "There must be some time limit, otherwise the process will go endlessly....".

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Bansal in connection with the disbursal of ex-gratia compensation by state governments to the families of Covid victims. It is monitoring the disbursal of Rs 50,000 ex-gratia for Covid-19 deaths by various state governments.

4 killed, 14 injured in scrap shop blaze in Jammu city

JAMMU | Agencies

Four persons were killed and 14 others injured on Monday in a massive blaze inside a scrap shop and surrounding 'jhuggies' (shanties) in Jammu city, police said.

Locals said the fire broke out in the evening initially in the scrap shop and engulfed the surrounding 'jhuggies' in the Residency Road area.

SSP, Jammu, Chandan Kohli, also said that the fire broke out in the scrap shop located in the Residency Road area this evening and some gas cylinders also exploded, spreading the blaze to the surrounding shanties.

"Electric short circuit is suspected to be the cause of fire as per preliminary reports," he said.

Police, fire and emergency services, and the locals worked hard to rescue the injured.

Police said 4 persons died in this blaze and 14 are injured. The injured were being treated in the hospital.

Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha has sanctioned ex gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh each for the families of the killed persons.

A sum of Rs 1 lakh each has been sanctioned to the families of those severely injured while those with minor injuries will get Rs 25,000 each.

Several trapped after building collapses in Delhi's Kashmere Gate

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as eight people were reportedly trapped after a building collapsed in North Delhi's Kashmere Gate area on Monday evening.

The fire department received the information about the incident at around 5:25 pm.

"A call was received regarding the building collapse at Nicholson Road in Kashmere Gate. We sent five tenders to the site for the resuce operation. Many people were trapped. We have rescued two labourers. The rescue operation is still goin on," said a fire official.

The official said that a team of NDRF was also called for the help. The local police and CATS ambulance were also pressed into service.

The official said that they were facing trouble in the rescue operation due to narrow lanes.

The two persons, who were rescued from the debris, were admitted to a nearby government hospital. Their condition is stated to be critical. The police and fire officials have cordoned off the area to avoid more casualties.

Further rescue operation is underway.

DELHI RIOTS: FORMER CONGRESS COUNCILLOR ISHRAT JAHAN GETS BAIL

New Delhi: A court here on Monday granted bail to former Congress councillor Ishrat Jahan in a case related to the alleged larger conspiracy in the 2022 Delhi riots.

Ishrat Jahan was allowed bail by Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat, who have reserved his order last month after hearing the submissions.

She was arrested by Delhi Police Special Cell on February 26, 2020, and was charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Indian Penal Code, tnhe Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, and the Arms Act.

During the last hearing, advocate Pradeep Teotia appeared for Ishrat Jahan and Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad appeared for the government.Ishrat Jahan's counsel, in the last hearing, had argued that she has been a lawyer and a young political person.

"She has a brilliant acumen. I was victorious from a ward where Muslims were less in number. Both the sects had given the vote to her. No Muslim had even won from the said ward." Teotia argued.Further, he argued that she was a popular lady, saying they have no "single iota of evidence" regarding her involvement in the conspiracy.As per the prosecution, Ishrat Jahan was in touch with other accused with whom she had no connection and the same was only to further the object of conspiracy to commit riots.

Chitra Ramkrishna sent to 14 days judicial custody

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Chitra Ramkrishna, the ex MD and CEO of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), who was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the NSE co-location case, was on Monday remanded to fourteen days judicial custody by Delhi's Rouse Avenue court.

Ramkrishna was produced before the special court after the expiry of her custodial remand. After Monday's hearing, the court remanded her to 14-day judicial custody. She will be lodged at Tihar Jail.

The CBI had on March 6 arrested Chitra Ramkrishna, accused of grave lapses at India's largest stock market including sharing confidential information with an individual. She was produced before the court on March 7 after her anticipatory bail plea was rejected by the court a day earlier.

Anand Subramanian, the ex Group Operating Officer, was also arrested by the CBI. He was interrogated at length during the custodial period. He is also currently in judicial custody.

Govt looking for alternative market for fuel purchase: Puri

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister for Petroleum Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday informed the Rajya Sabha that the government is looking for an alternate market for fuel purchase amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Responding to a question during 'Question Hour', he said that the government has been exploring all options such as currency to facilitate purchase, supply of oil in markets, insurance and freight.In response to Congress lawmaker Shakti Singh Gohil's question whether the government intends to reduce diesel rates, the Minister said that the prices of diesel were deregulated. "Whenever we felt that the common man needed more relief, we went ahead and reduced the price. In November 2021, we brought down the fuel prices by Rs 10," Puri said in the House.Congress MP K.C. Venugopal said that petrol prices have increased 63 times and diesel 61 times. He also said that since November, the government has not hiked the price and asked whether the price will remain the same or will be a hike or not.The Petroleum Minister also informed that Venezuela is a country which was subjected to sanctions by another country. He further said that there was hope and expectation that oil from other sanctioned countries would become available, the Organisation of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries would increase their oil production and there would be persuasion by the international community in this regard.Puri also said that neither the union government nor the oil companies are going to float oil bonds.

"All legitimate steps would be taken to maintain prices of oil," he said.

INTERNATIONAL KABADDI PLAYER SHOT DEAD IN PUNJAB

Chandigarh: nternational kabbadi player Sandeep Singh from Nangal Ambiyan village was shot dead by assailants during a match at Malian village in Jalandhar district on Monday.At least 20 bullets were pumped into his head and chest. The disturbing video of the crime went viral.

A former captain of the Indian kabaddi team, Sandeep hailed from Nangal Ambian village in Shahkot. He is survived by his wife and two sons, who are currently in England, where he was settled.

Gandhis responsible for Congress's rout: Capt Amarinder Singh

CHANDIGARH | Agencies

Holding the Gandhis solely responsible for the complete rout of the Congress in all the recent Assembly polls, PLC chief Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday slammed the Congress Working Committee (CWC) for blaming him for the defeat in Punjab instead of gracefully admitting their own blunders.

"The Congress has not only lost in Punjab but also in UP, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur and the Gandhis are entirely to be blamed for the party's shameful defeat," he said, adding that the fact was that the people, across the country, had lost faith in the leadership of the Gandhis.

Pointing out that many senior leaders within the party were outrightly blaming the infighting in the Punjab Congress and the 'anti-party' statements of Navjot Sidhu for the abysmal performance in Punjab, the former chief minister said the Congress was comfortably placed in the state till he was sacked to favour certain sycophants.

The party had dug its own grave in the border state the day they decided to back an "unstable" and "pompous" person like Sidhu, and naming a corrupt man like Charanjit Singh Channi as chief minister just months before the polls, he said.

RLD dissolves all party units, MLAs to meet on March 21

LUCKNOW | Agencies

Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Chaudhary has dissolved all the units and fronts of the party in Uttar Pradesh with immediate effect.

"As per the orders passed by RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary, party's state, regional, and district units and fronts in Uttar Pradesh have been dissolved effective immediately," the RLD tweeted. The RLD will also hold its first meeting of its UP legislators in Lucknow on March 21. The RLD had contested the recently-concluded Uttar Pradesh assembly elections in alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP).

The party, which was reduced to a single seat in the 2017 state elections, fought on 33 seats this time and won eight of them, while the SP bagged 111 seats, a significant improvement from 2017 polls when it won only 47 seats.

Heat wave warning in western Rajasthan for next two days

JAIPUR | Agencies

As the advent of early summers in Rajasthan have led to the temperatures rising in the middle of March, the Meteorological Department has warned of heat wave in the next two days in different parts of the state.

As per the department, the heat may wreak havoc in western Rajasthan this summer.

On March 15 and 16, heat waves are likely in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts and the Meteorological Department has issued a heat wave warning and a 'yellow alert'.

Meteorological Department Director Radheshyam Sharma said that heat waves can push the temperatures high in Barmer and Jaisalmer, as well as in other districts too. According to the Meteorological Department, heatwave may continue in the western areas of the desert state for the next few days. On Tuesday, heat wave is likely to prevail in Barmer, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer in western Rajasthan, and on Wednesday in Bikaner, Barmer, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, and Jalore districts.

Winters had also wreaked havoc this season and smashed all records.

At the same time, rains, hailstorm, and winds lashed the state a few days back. Now, the heat wave warning in the middle of March has driven people inside as the temperature is soaring each day.

CENTRE TO BEGIN COVID VACCINATION FOR 12-14 AGE GROUP FROM MARCH 16

New Delhi: The Union Government after deliberations with scientific bodies decided on Monday to start Covid vaccination for 12-14 year age group from March 16. Those teenagers born in 2008, 2009 and 2010 or those who are already above 12 years of age of population will be administered Covid vaccines from March 16. The Covid-19 vaccine to be administered would be Corbevax manufactured by Hyderabad based Biological E, said the Union Health Ministry. The government has also decided that the condition of co-morbidity for Covid-19 precaution dose for population over 60 years of age will be removed forthwith.The ministry said that the population above 14 years of age is already being administered vaccine under the ongoing vaccination drive. "Hence, from 16th March 2022 onwards, the entire population above 60 years of age will be eligible for Precaution Dose of COVID19 vaccine", said the ministry.

Vigilance Raid: Ducati, Harley-Davidson bikes seized from Odisha engineer

BHUBANESWAR | Agencies

Three imported Ducati and Harley-Davidson bikes along with several plots and buildings were seized from the possession of a civil engineer in Odisha during a vigilance raid, officials said on Monday.

The vigilance sleuths conducted raids on the properties of Ajaya Kumar Mishra, Assistant Executive Engineer, Roads & Buildings Division-IV, Bhubaneswar, at six places in three districts, after allegations were levelled that he had assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

The raids were launched at around 5 a.m. and they were continuing till the filing of this report.

The vigilance teams found one Ducati motorcycle worth Rs 8 lakh, one Harley-Davidson bike worth Rs 7 lakh, one Roster-1200 Harley-Davidson bike worth Rs 5.45 lakh, two scooters worth nearly Rs 1.5 lakh, one Hyundai i10 (Rs 8 lakh) car along with jewellery, cash and bank deposits over Rs 40 lakh.Besides, three multi-story buildings and seven plots at important locations registered in the name of Mishra's wife and son have also been found during the raid, whose valuation has not been done so far, the vigilance officials informed.Just a month ago, the vigilance department had seized assets worth over Rs 11 crore, including luxury cars and bikes with the same fancy registration number (0005), from the possession of Trinath Mishra, an additional SP. Later he was arrested and the government forced him to take compulsory retirement.

GOVERNOR ASKS YOUTHS TO BE CUSTODIAN OF GLORIOUS CULTURE OF SARVAJAN HITAY, SARVAJAN SUKHAY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has asked the youths to participate in building the nation and society with the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. By becoming the custodian of our glorious culture, lead the new society with the spirit of Sarvajan Hitay, Sarvajan Sukhay (everybody's good, everybody's happiness). Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given opportunities of endless possibilities for the youths in building a new India. Contribute in building a capable, strong and prosperous country with everyone's development, cooperation, trust and efforts. Governor Shri Patel was addressing the Golden Jubilee celebrations of BSSS College.

Patel said that for success in life, sensitivity is also necessary along with knowledge. There can be many means of attaining material pleasures, but the most effective way to attain inner satisfaction and inner peace is by serving the needy. He has expected the teachers to motivate the students to build a self-reliant India through self-reliance with discipline and values to make the students recognised as good citizens in the society. By inculcating in them the sense of seriousness of values, standards and responsibilities, fill them with a commitment to serve the society, nation so that students can establish new dimensions in the field of life which they pursue. Contribute your best in the building of the country and the state. With their behaviour and actions, they will bring laurels to the college family, society and the country and the state. In the Golden Jubilee celebrations, he asked to make efforts to make students aware of the culture and art of their country, so that the younger generation gets acquainted with the country's glorious history, academic and economic prosperity. At the same time become committed to building a new nation by taking inspiration from the causes of subjugation of a strong nation and the stories of the struggle and sacrifices made for the freedom from it.

In the ceremony, the Vice Chancellor of Barkatullah University RJ Rao appreciated the efforts of the college. He extended good wishes to the students for a bright future.

Archbishop Father Durairaj, Chairman of BSSS College, said that in line with the efforts to realise the vision of a healthy society under the leadership of the PM Modi, efforts are being made for quality education while coordinating with social service, diligence and changes in the field of education. Along with the study of elective subjects, special emphasis is also being laid on research and exploration. Recalling the sequence of development of the college, he also mentioned the contribution of former principals.

Principal Father John PJ, in his welcome address, informed about the social-service, village development works being done by the college and the cooperation of the students in the time of Covid epidemic. He said that the former students of the college have set an example of national unity by contributing to the Prime Minister's relief and the grand Ram temple construction fund in Ayodhya. He told that the NAAC grading of the college is A. Here more than 5 thousand students are studying in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The new education policy has been adopted by the college in the form of semester system. Along with teaching subjects like science, commerce, computer etc. to the students, initiatives have been taken to establish Indian values and virtues in life.

Patel was honoured by the Archbishop with a shawl, shrifal, bouquet and was presented a memento. Father John expressed gratitude. Programme was conducted by Manju Mehta.

Arrested JBM members sent to 14-day police custody

A day after four members of banned organisation Jamaat-e-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested from Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal, on Monday they were produced before the court which sent them to 14-day police custody.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A day after four members of banned organisation Jamaat-e-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested from Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal, on Monday they were produced before the court which sent them to 14-day police custody.

The police submitted before the Bhopal district court that several fake documents have been recovered from the possession of JMB members. These documents including Aadhaar card have been procured from UP's Saharanpur, police said and requested 14 days custody for further investigation in the matter. A senior police official said, UP police has been informed about it and a team of Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) will be sent to Saharanpur for further investigation.The police will find out the possible involvement of other persons who provided shelters to these JMB members. Police have claimed that arrested terrorists have been living as tenants in Bhopal for one-and-a-half year. During the preliminary investigation, police found that they (arrested persons) came out of the building only on Friday to offer namaz."The court has allowed 14-day police custody of arrested terrorists for further investigation. Now, we will find out the possible link of other people in the matter and those who provided help," a senior police officer said. Meanwhile, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra has directed the police to issue high alert in the capital and conduct a search operation of suspected people.Four members of Jamaat-e-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested from two locations in Bhopal on Sunday. The operation was carried out by a joint team of state police and the centre's agencies in Aishbagh and Karond areas in the early hours of Sunday based on a tip-off.

During the raid police recovered a large quantity of jihadi literature, electronic equipment and incriminating documents.

CM Planted Karanj and Saptaparni Saplings in Smart Garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Karanj and Saptaparni in Smart Udyan today. Under the Women and Child Development Department, Sunayana Mahajan, Maya Mehte, Sunita Prajapati and Komal Chouhan, who impart employment training to the young women, also planted saplings.

These women are working to connect the young women living under the protection of Shaskiya Paschatvarti Dekhrekh Sangathan (government aftercare organisation) in the mainstream of society by teaching employable skills. The group is also continuously active in the field of environment and cleanliness. Along with this, the work of motivating people to plant trees, keep the city clean and maintain cleanliness is also being done in Bhopal. A large number of saplings are planted every year by the organisation on Women's Day and National Girl Child Day.

Among the saplings planted today, Karanj is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj is also used in religious works. Saptaparni tree is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. It is used in the manufacture of various medicines.

Two tribal women sexually molested on road in MP's Alirajpur

TWO TRIBAL WOMEN WERE SEXUALY ASSAULTED BY A GROUP OF MEN IN A VILLAGE IN MADHYA PRADESH' TRIBAL ALIRAJPUR DISTRICT, POLICE SAID ON SUNDAY, ADDING THAT TWO ACCUSED HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE CRIME.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Two tribal women were sexualy assaulted by a group of men in a village in Madhya Pradesh' tribal Alirajpur district, police said on Sunday, adding that two accused have been arrested in connection with the crime.

The incident came to light after a shocking video surfaced on social media, showing the two women, standing beside a vehicle on a busy road in Alirajpur, nearly 400 km away from Bhopal, being forcibly sexually assaulted by a group of men on broad day light, while some others were seen capturing the incident on their mobile phones.

After verifying viral video, local police said the incident occurred during a popular tribal festival.

The clip shows one of the women appearing to hide behind a vehicle parked on the roadside when a man, passing the spot, grabbed and assaulted her.

She gets rescued by a passerby, who pulled the man away. However, in the meantime, another man grabbed another woman standing at the same spot and molested her. "A case has been registered against a group of persons. Two persons involved involved the case has been arrested. A search for another accused is underway," Alirajpur's Superintendent of Police, Manoj Kumar Singh, said.

DANG TOURS 40 VILLAGES IN A DAY TO TAKE STOCK OF CROP DAMAGE

Bhopal: Environment, New and Renewable Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Dang visited more than 40 villages in Mandsaur district on Sunday to take stock of crop damage and discussed with the farmers. He observed the condition of hailstorm affected crops in different villages of Suwasra, Sitamau Gramin and Sitamau Nagar.

Dang visited villages Semli Kankar, Dhabla Dewal, Dhanvada, Gailana, Dhakadkhedi, Lodhakhedi, Ramnagar, Devpura Nagar, Runija Bharpur, Amba, Hanumantiya, Dhanyakhedi, Angari, Guradia Bamni, Devpura, Borkhedi, Semli, Bavdikheda, Mamatkheda, Karnali, Gopalpura, Dhaturia, Deepakheda, Dhandheda, Hanadi, Surkheda, Sakhtali, Aakya, Rawati, Ravta, Kochariakhedi, Bhagor, Kalyanpura, Lasudia, Khajuri Nag, Kundala, Bharatpura etc. and discussed with the farmers.

In connection with the hailstorm in Suwasra area recently, Dang directed the Mandsaur Collector to get the assessment of crop damage by hailstorm done at the earliest. Shri Dang get started the relief process immediately after discussing with the farmers and public representatives over the phone.

Scindia's view on 2023 MP polls, Congress

Jyotiraditya Scindia's switch to the BJP in 2020 - along with his loyalists - had led to the fall of the Kamal Nath government in 2020.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the BJP retained four of five states last week where assembly elections were held, Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Sunday said that his party was set to return to Madhya Pradesh too in 2023. "Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has been working day and night for the welfare of the people and I am sure the BJP will win with a majority in the upcoming 2023 assembly elections," the 51-year-old minister was quoted as saying by news agency ANI, adding that the "historic results" in the 2022 state polls were a result of "guidelines of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief JP Nadda."

On a day when the Congress was holding key talks over the setback in this round of state elections, Scindia - responding to a question about the party said, "Congress was my past and I don't want to waste time on the past, will talk about my present and future."Jyotiraditya Scindia's switch to the BJP in 2020 - along with his loyalists - had led to the fall of the Kamal Nath government in 2020. He had been with the Congress for nearly 18 years. Later, when differences were reported between Sachin Pilot and Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot, there was a speculation that he was headed the same way. The top leadership in the party, however, ironed out the differences.On Sunday, the Congress Working Commitee unanimously decided that Sonia Gandhi will continue to be the chief till the organisational polls are held. However, the national party has yet again come under criticism after failing to revive its fortunes in the state polls.

After winning Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa, the BJP has set its eyes on the next round of the state elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held a huge roadshow in Gujarat. Karnataka chief minister Basavraj Bommai and Tripura's Biplab Deb have said the party will return to the states in 2023.

"KANTHA FORER SAREE" is second exhibit of the Week at IGRMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under its Latest and popular online series of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) entitled 'Exhibit of the Week' the "KANTHA FORER SAREE" (An embroidered traditional Tussar saree) collected from 2006 is on dispaly. The Community of Rural People, Birbhum, West Bengal. It's Measurement Length -610 cm width -110 cm, displayed in the audience as the second Exhibit of the month of March, 2022 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that Kantha is a centuries old tradition of embroidery evolved from the thrift of rural women in West Bengal. This embroidery work is done on discarded apparel, transforming them into extraordinary, renewed creation with extended life. It is a craft of skill widely practiced by the women of rural areas. The present object is an embroidered traditional Tussar saree which is the most preferable attire of women having contrast of elaborate and intricate colourful running stitches known as kantha stitch on a plain background. The body of the saree is decorated with kantha stitch made motifs like sun, tree, huts, birds, winnowing fan, human figure etc. with brown, green and yellow colours. The border and the pallu of the saree is well adorned by exquisite kantha work which gives the saree a wrinkled and wavy look and transform the saree into extraordinary creation. Earlier kantha stitches were employed primarily in the making of quilts known as Nakshi Kantha and bed spreads for children. Now-a-days the embroidery cloth has many uses including shawls, covers for mirrors, suits, pillows etc.

Visitors can see this object from home through the Official site (https://igrms.com/wordpress/?page_id=8466) and Facebook site (https://www.facebook.com/NationalMuseumMankind), Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

Cops To Get Leave To Watch The Movie 'The Kashmir Files'

- 'The Kashmir Files' depicts the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the state after systematic killings of people from the community by Pakistan-back terrorists.

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The Madhya Pradesh government today announced that policemen in the state will be granted leave to watch the recently-released film "The Kashmir Files".

State Home Minister Narottam Mishra told reporters that Madhya Pradesh policemen will be given leave to watch the movie 'The Kashmir Files'. He said that instructions for this have been issued to Director General of Police Sudhir Saxena.

"I have just told the DGP to grant a leave whenever any policeman in the state wants to go watch 'The Kashmir Files' with their family," Mishra told reporters.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had on Sunday exempted 'The Kashmir Files' from entertainment tax in Madhya Pradesh.

He said that the government decided to make it tax-free as the movie deserves to be watched by maximum people.

The movie, directed and written by Vivek Agnihotri, depicts the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the state after systematic killings of people from the community by Pakistan-back terrorists.

The film stars Anupam Kher, Darshan Kumar, Mithun Chakraborty, and Pallavi Joshi among others.

Chouhan said that the movie is a "heart-wrenching narration of the pain, suffering, struggle, and trauma faced by Kashmiri Hindus in the 90s".

Goa caretaker Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has also said that 'The Kashmir Files' would be screened with maximum possible shows in the state.

Development is the right of every poor - my government will surely give it: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that our government is a government that gives development rights to the poor. We are concerned about the development of every section. The poor and deprived who have been left behind in the race for development, are being given the right to development on priority basis. In the Vindhya region, there has been unprecedented development in agriculture through the canals of Bansagar Dam. Now the wheat of Rewa is in demand not only in the country but also abroad. Survey will be conducted for irrigation facilities in Sirmour area. Orders have been given for the survey of the irrigation scheme from Tamas river.

Chouhan was addressing the Hitgrahi Sammelan and dedication and bhoomi-pujan programme of development works at Sirmour in Rewa district today. Chief Minister inaugurated construction works worth Rs. 222 crore 79 lakh and performed bhoomi-pujan. Also, benefits worth more than Rs.6 crore were distributed to the beneficiaries. The Chief Minister also gave several gifts of development works to Sirmour region.Chouhan announced the opening of SDM Court and upgradation of Community Health Center into Civil Hospital in Jawa. Along with this he also announced the opening of college in Baikunthpur from the next session, restoration of the dilapidated building of Janpad Panchayat Sirmour, renaming of Nashtigawan to Divyagram and Nashtigwan College to Shaheed Birsa Munda College, Sirmour Civil Hospital as Bhimrao Ambedkar, renaming ITI College after former MP Late. Shri Chandramani Tripathi and Lalgaon Higher Secondary School after Lal Rukmani Raman Pratap Singh. The Chief Minister also announced opening of sub-tehsil in Baikunthpur and upgradation of Sirmour ITI and giving funds for construction of building with 6 new trades.

Chouhan said that houses of 84 thousand poor families have been built in Rewa district under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. After conducting a survey of the eligible families of the scheme, they will also be given the facility of pucca housing replacing their kutcha houses. He said that a provision of Rs 10,000 crore has been made in the budget for the housing of the poor in the state. In the next three years, 30 lakh houses will be built for the poor in the state. Along with this, more than one lakh families in Rewa district will be given land pattas under Mukhyamantri Bhu-Awas Adhikar Yojana. If government land is not available for pattas, then private land will be purchased and given to the poor.Chief Minister said that CM Rise School would be established in Sirmour, the building of which would be constructed at a cost of Rs 24 crore. It will have all the facilities of modern education. Ayushman cards have been given to more than 7 lakh families in the district. Due to this, the poor are getting free treatment in government as well as private hospitals. The nutrition food plant set up in Pahariya of the district will be operated by the women of self-help groups. The Chief Minister said that Basaman Mama had laid down his life to protect the Peepal tree. Every person must plant saplings on his birthday and other important occasions. Also they must contribute in keeping their village and city clean.

EDITOR'S SPECS

51% MLAs with criminal cases UP Assembly

Out of the 403 newly elected legislators in Uttar Pradesh, 205 (nearly 51 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves. Of these 143 (36 per cent) MLAs have made the declarations in their affidavits. According to an analysis report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 158 (39 per cent) winning candidates have declared serious criminal cases, including cases related to murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, crimes against women, etc. There are five winning candidates who have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section-302) against themselves. Winning candidates with cases related to attempt to murder are 29 while six winning candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women - one of whom has a case related to rape. According to ADR analysis, there are 111 (44 per cent) out of 255 winning candidates from the BJP who have criminal antecedents, 71 out of 111 winning candidates are from SP, 7 out of 8 winning candidates from RLD, 4 out of 6 winning candidates from Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, 4 out of 6 winning candidates from Nishad Part, 3 out of 12 winning candidates from Apna Dal, 2 from Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, 2 from Congress and 1 from the BSP. Nearly 233 out of 255 newly elected legislators from the BJP, 100 out of 111 from SP, 9 out of 12 from Apna Dal, 7 out of 8 from RLD, 6 from Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, 6 from Nishad party, 2 from Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, 2 from INC and 1 BSP winning candidates have declared assets worth more than Rs 1 crore.

AFGHAN MINERAL WEALTH ATTRACTS COMPETITORS

Even when the American occupation of Afghanistan was in full steam and apart from the fighting there were mainly reports of the on-going fighting, yet there were secret reports, which spoke of the vast mineral wealth which Afghanistan possesses. There were further reports, which reported questioningly the Americans taking plane-loads of soil from various regions of Afghanistan to get them analysed in their country. Yet, few believed those reports.

But now new findings are emerging which say that those reports might be true to a certain extent. Afghanistan, which is one of the world's poorest countries at present, contains huge riches in the shape of mineral deposits of gold, precious stones, coal, oil and gas, lithium, and rare-earth minerals.

Afghanistan's mineral wealth

A decade back some US geologists had calculated the mineral reserves in Afghanistan to be in excess of $1 trillion, which must have increased many fold by now, as it comprises many rare earth elements. Technological advances in the West and china both depend to a large extent on possessing these rare earth minerals as many new energy alternatives are based on their steady supply.

China already controls most of the world's rare-earth minerals, which are used to manufacture a variety of technologies, including components in electric vehicles and smartphone touch screens.

Now China has plunged in the troubled waters of Afghanistan, after the US withdrawal. In the recent past China has courted the Taliban administration with much fanfare. Its embassy in Kabul kept functioning when Western missions fled after the Taliban takeover.

Reportedly, even Iran, which has facilitated several round of talks for restoring the new government in Afghanistan has jumped into the fray and has tried to foster good ties with the top Taliban honchos.

As per a report in the Wall street Journal, China is negotiating with Taliban authorities to start mining in the Logar province, a two-hour drive from the capital, reportedly containing one of the world's biggest untapped reserves of copper, called Mes Aynak.

Beijing is also in talks to begin work on oil-and-gas reserves in the north of the country, Amu Darya. Both projects were on hold for years because of the war, which ended when the Taliban seized power in August.

Obviously the US officials are concerned that China will fill the vacuum left by the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Taliban's Minister for Minerals and Petroleum, Shahabuddin Dilawar bemoans the fact that his country was engaged in war for past 43 years and thus could not mine these resources for Afghanistan's development.

Of the current Taliban administration, its Mining Ministry is apparently engaged in a lot of activities. However, Dilawar is reported to be exercising a cautious and pragmatic approach to decide which country to allow mining these resources for Afghanistan.

Reportedly he wants American and other Western companies to also come to Afghanistan now that the American military presence is gone. And would prefer American mining companies due to their expertise.

With commodities in a bullish cycle that could keep prices buoyant for years and the end to fighting between U.S. forces and the Taliban, the time might be right for mining in Afghanistan, according to analysts.

Archaeological issues

However, what queers the way forward for Chinese companies is that these copper deposits sits under the ruins of a vast ancient city, Mes Aynak, dating back about 2,000 years. Mes Aynak was a grand outpost of a Buddhist civilisation that thrived in Afghanistan and what is now north-western Pakistan centuries before Islam rose.

Countering the deeds of the past Taliban administration, which blasted the two Bamiyan statues in 2001, this time Dilawar tries to assure by saying that these antiquities would be protected but how it hasn't been decided. His preference would be to move the whole city to somewhere nearby and reconstruct it. Many prize artefacts have been shifted to the Kabul Museum.

Mes Aynak flourished between the first and seventh centuries. Reportedly there are Buddhist monasteries, stupas, graveyards and wall paintings beneath the mountain. Its eastern flank is covered with antique structures that formed the city.

Archaeologists say that excavation of the site was about 70 per cent complete after a decade of work on it, and no mining should be done until the excavation is completed.

Experts say if the Chinese were prepared to mine underground through tunnels, which would enable the city ruins to remain where they are, it would take at least three more years of archaeological excavation before mining could begin.

Further, if the Chinese plan to do open-pit mining, seven to 10 years would be needed to document and move the ancient remains. Further, more than half of the antiquities might beside losing and the archaeological integrity of the site, as it is not possible to relocate everything. At present talks with Chinese companies are struck as what the Taliban want them to deliver and what they are ready to deliver, differ. The mining minister said the 2007 contract required China to build a power plant that would supply energy to the site, surrounding area and Kabul; process the copper in Afghanistan; construct a railway to the Pakistani border at Torkham; transfer the antiquities; and buy land from villagers. He categorically said that Chinese were given two projects earlier, and we may not give them a third until we see practical actions in those two. China's state-owned mining company Metallurgical Corp. of China, which was awarded the contract for Mes Aynak in 2007 by the then-US-backed government in Kabul, never started the work because of the scale of the antiquities discovered, the war and disagreements over terms with the Afghan government. There are reports that MCC is trying to back-off earlier obligations. Apparently, mining looks to be the best bet for Taliban, as after their takeover they immediately came under international sanctions, asset freeze and slowing business activities leading to an economic collapse. To raise revenues fast, mining seems to be best option for them, but they'll have to tread cautiously in choosing their partners besides ensuring measures to preserve the archaeological treasures of the country.

(Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

international

UKRAINE SUSPENDS RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN MERCENARIES AFTER STRIKE ON YAVORIV

The Ukrainian authorities have asked to suspend sending of French volunteers to the country after a Russian strike on the Yavoriv military training ground in the Lviv region, as a result of which up to 180 foreign mercenaries were killed.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Ukrainian authorities have asked to suspend sending of French volunteers to the country after a Russian strike on the Yavoriv military training ground in the Lviv region, as a result of which up to 180 foreign mercenaries were killed.

"According to our information, one of the main organisers of sending French volunteers to Ukraine, Hugo Pellegrini, announced that at the moment the recruitment of volunteers for the International Legion has been suspended by the decision of the Ukrainian side," Izvestia reported.

As a result of the strike of the Russian Armed Forces, at least one Frenchman was killed, RT reported.

On March 13, the Russian army attacked the training centers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the village of Starichi and at the military training ground Yavorovsky with precision weapons. According to the Ministry of Defence, up to 180 foreign mercenaries were destroyed. According to the department, there was a training and combat coordination point for foreign mercenaries, as well as a storage base for weapons and military equipment coming from foreign countries.

Top nuke envoys of S Korea, US, Japan hold talks over N Korea

The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the US and Japan on Monday denounced North Korea's recent missile tests and called on Pyongyang to cease acts that could escalate tensions, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said.

Seoul | Agencies

The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the US and Japan on Monday denounced North Korea's recent missile tests and called on Pyongyang to cease acts that could escalate tensions, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said.

Noh Kyu-duk, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, his US counterpart Sung Kim and Japan's Takehiro Funakoshi spoke on the phone amid rising tension on the Korean Peninsula over the possibility of Pyongyang's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system test, reports Yonhap News Agency. The trio denounced the North's recent spate of ballistic missile launches as violations of UN Security Council resolutions and urged it to return to dialogue at an early date, the ministry said in a release. They also agreed to closely monitor Pyongyang's moves and remain in close cooperation to respond to its acts, it added. South Korea and the US accused Pyongyang on March 11 of having tested a new ICBM system on February 27 and March 5 ahead of a full-range missile test. Seoul and Washington have detected signs that North Korea is preparing to conduct another ICBM firing as early as this week, according to informed sources. Concerns have persisted that the North could engage in more provocative acts as it made a veiled threat in January to lift its years-long self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and ICBM tests.

SL plans to create 1mn new jobs for youth

The Sri Lankan government said it plans to create 1 million new job opportunities for young people through a new initiative as the country looks to return to normalcy from the Covid-19 pandemic, local media reported here Monday.

Colombo | Agencies

The Sri Lankan government said it plans to create 1 million new job opportunities for young people through a new initiative as the country looks to return to normalcy from the Covid-19 pandemic, local media reported here Monday.

The initiative, "Hope for Sri Lanka", will be launched in May and a series of exhibitions covering all nine provinces in the country will be held where job seekers, entrepreneurs, foreign employment agents, those involved in skills development, vocational training will be brought under one roof, Xinhua news agency quoted Namal Rajapaksa, Minister of Sports and Youth, evelopment Coordination and Monitoring, as saying. R In addition to jobs in both the government and private sector, young people will be directed to go abroad as skilled workers or start new businesses as entrepreneurs, the minister added. Sri Lanka's health officials last week said the Covid-19 pandemic was easing in the country as a majority of local citizens have been vaccinated and received their booster doses.

Western countries want to organise artificial default of Russia by freezing accounts

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said that the freezing of foreign currency accounts of the central bank, as well as the country's government, can be regarded as the desire of the West to organise an artificial default of Moscow.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said that the freezing of foreign currency accounts of the central bank, as well as the country's government, can be regarded as the desire of the West to organise an artificial default of Moscow. "The freezing of currency accounts of the Bank of Russia and the Russian government can be regarded as a desire of a number of foreign countries to organize an artificial default that has no real economic grounds," RT News quoted the Minister as saying. Earlier, Siluanov said that the Ministry of Finance would try to pay for eurobonds in the currency of their issue, provided that the currency accounts of the Central Bank and the government were unfrozen. Russia has denied statements that it cannot fulfil its obligations under the public debt. He stressed that the country has the necessary amount of funds. "Statements that Russia cannot fulfil its obligations under the public debt do not correspond to reality. We have the necessary amount of funds to service our obligations," the Ministry's press service quoted Siluanov as saying. Russia is also ready to make payments in rubles at the exchange rate of the Bank of Russia on the date of payment, he noted. "Moreover, for issues of Eurobonds issued since 2018, such an opportunity was laid down directly in the issuance documents," Siluanov recalled referring to payment in ruble. The Ministry of Finance will additionally inform about the fulfilment of their obligations by agent banks under the terms of Eurobond issues. Earlier in the day, Siluanov told local media that nearly half of the country's roughly $640 billion of gold and foreign currency reserves have been frozen in the wake of Moscow's ongoing war on Ukraine. The Russian authorities will closely monitor inflation and the state of the country's pensions, Siluanov noted. "Of course, we have enough money to ensure the production of vital goods. The Central Bank will provide the necessary liquidity to the financial system," he said. Since Russia started the war on February 24, there has been an onslaught of Western economic sanctions, including asset freezes, in response.

TURKISH PREZ, GREEK PM VOW TO BOOST COOPERATION 'DESPITE DISAGREEMENTS'

Istanbul: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis pledged to boost mutual cooperation "despite their disagreements".

Erdogan and Mitsotakis met in Istanbul behind closed doors on Sunday, Turkey's presidential office said in a statement, adding the main agenda of the discussions was bilateral and international relations, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, reports Xinhua news agency.

Erdogan and Mitsotakis agreed to keep communication channels open and improve bilateral relations despite some disagreements between the two countries, said the statement.

The Turkish leader told the Greek Prime Minister that he maintains his belief in taking relations to a high level and making progress in issues that strained their relations.

The relations between the two NATO allies have long been at odds over a series of issues, including maritime and energy issues in the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Meanwhile, addressing the Greek community at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul earlier in the day, Mitsotakis called for an immediate ceasefire on all fronts in Ukraine so that new opportunities for dialogue, reconciliation, and peace might be present.

NOT SCARED OF JAIL, SAYS FADNAVIS IN MAHA ASSEMBLY

A day after Mumbai Police recorded his statement at home regarding the phone-tapping scam, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said he was not afraid of jail.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A day after Mumbai Police recorded his statement at home regarding the phone-tapping scam, Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said he was not afraid of jail.

Hitting out at the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the Maharashtra assembly, Fadnavis recalled how his father had spent two years in prison without any charges during the Emergency.

"I am not scared of jail. I will continue to expose the corruption," declared Fadnavis who was quizzed by a Mumbai Cyber Police team for two hours at his residence on Sunday.

The police team questioned him on the probe into the alleged illegal tapping of telephones of prominent personalities and leakage of confidential information pertaining to alleged corrupt practices in police department transfers/promotions that erupted last year. Speaking on the issue, Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said that there is no immunity in criminal cases and Fadnavis had been duly served notices in the routine course. "The notice under CrPC Section 160 was sent to Fadnavis, not as an accused, but to record his statement. It's a routine exercise and not done deliberately," Walse-Patil said.The police have filed an FIR in the unauthorised phone tapping case and statements of 24 others have already been recorded, he added. Walse-Patil said that the police have asked the Union Home Secretary to share a copy of the pen-drive given by Fadnavis pertaining to the alleged irregularities and graft in police transfers/promotions. BJP Member Sudhir Mungantiwar, who raised the matter, said MLAs are given protection by privilege and cannot share their sources, and even the Supreme Court has upheld this. Fadnavis said that when he was sent the questionnaire recently, the questions asked then were meant for an 'eyewitness account', but the questioning at his home on Sunday (March 13) was for an accused, and said he knew "who changed the questions and why." He pointed out that he enjoyed protection as a whistle-blower under the Act and would continue to expose corruption in the government.

Deshmukh's Bail Rejected In Money Laundering Case

Money Laundering Case: Anil Deshmukh, an NCP leader, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on November 2, 2021. He is currently in judicial custody.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special PMLA court here on Monday refused bail to former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in an alleged money laundering case.

Anil Deshmukh, an NCP leader, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on November 2, 2021. He is currently in judicial custody.

Special judge RN Rokade rejected his bail plea on Monday.

There is "enough evidence" to prima facie hold that he was "involved" in the money laundering case, the judge said.

There are contradictions in the witness statements, but that cannot be considered at this stage (of bail plea), he said.

This was Anil Deshmukh's first regular bail petition. Earlier, the special court had rejected his plea for default bail, filed on technical ground.

In the regular plea filed in January this year, Anil Deshmukh contended that he is a victim of "gross persecution" by probe agencies.

The former minister had said "harassment was being meted out to him at the hands of certain unscrupulous vested interests for blatantly malafide considerations."

He claimed the case reflects "shocking abuse of power and authority" by officials concerned who have virtually unleashed a reign of terror by subverting the process of law.

"If such adventurism, which has been indulged into in the instant case is allowed to go unchecked, it will spell a death knell to the fundamental rights as guaranteed in the Constitution," Anil Deshmukh said in his plea. The ED had opposed his plea, alleging that he was the "main conspirator" in the case. On his instructions, former policeman Sachin Waze, an accused in the case, had collected money from bar owners, the probe agency had said.

Anil Deshmukh was accused of corruption and bribery by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh, after which the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered cases against the former state home minister.

The ED's case is that while serving as Maharashtra's home minister, Anil Deshmukh allegedly misused his official position and through Sachin Waze collected Rs 4.70 crore from various bars in Mumbai.

The money was laundered to Nagpur-based Sai Shikshan Sansthan, an educational trust controlled by the Deshmukh family.

Sachin Waze was dismissed from police service after his arrest in the case of an explosives-laden vehicle found near the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in Mumbai and killing of businessman Mansukh Hiran.

Mumbai, Thane, Raigad other regions likely to experience heatwave

The IMD Mumbai has issued heatwave warning for Palghar, Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued heatwave warnings for several regions in Maharashtra. The heatwave warning has been issued for Palghar, Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. Due to the advection of warm and dry winds from Northwest India, heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are very likely over parts of Konkan-Goa, including Mumbai during the next 3 days. Due to the prevailing clear skies and low humidity values, the temperatures are expected to rise and similar conditions are likely to prevail for the next 2-3 days over the region, the IMD Mumbai stated. Intense heatwave conditions in some areas of Thane on March 14 and 15. Heatwave conditions were likely in isolated regions of Thane on Wednesday. Raigad region is projected to experience severe heatwave conditions on Monday and Tuesday. Some regions of Raigad may continue to experience heatwave on March 16. Ratnagiri expected to experience heatwave conditions on Monday, while the intensity would decrease on March 15 and 16, the IMD Mumbai said. Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are very likely to occur at isolated pockets in the North Konkan region from March 14-16. The IMD warned of heatwave to severe heatwave conditions very likely to occur at isolated regions of South Konkan.

NAVI MUMBAI FIRST MAHARASHTRA CITY TO ACHIEVE 100% COVID-19 VACCINATION: OFFICIAL

A civic official said Navi Mumbai was the first city to complete administration of the first dose to all eligible citizens and now had also achieved top rank for completing full vaccination within its jurisdiction.

Thane: Navi Mumbai is the first city in Maharashtra to achieve 100 per cent Covid-19 vaccination, with over 11 lakh people getting both doses, an official said on Sunday. Navi Mumbai municipal commissioner and administrator Abhijit Bangar said 111 vaccination centres had been set up to ensure 100 per cent inoculation against COVID-19. "We adopted all methods to ensure every eligible citizen above the age of 18 received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. All 11,07,454 eligible citizens under Navi Mumbai limits are now fully vaccinated. I am thankful to the people for their wholehearted participation in this drive," he said. A civic official said Navi Mumbai was the first city to complete administration of the first dose to all eligible citizens and now had also achieved top rank for completing full vaccination within its jurisdiction.

MAHARASHTRA HSC EXAMS 2022 PAPER LEAK

Coaching centre owner arrested over alleged 12th Chemistry paper leak

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A private coaching centre owner has been arrested due to their alleged involvement in the Maharashtra HSC Exams 2022 Chemistry paper leak. This arrest comes after multiple reports of paper leaks and mass cheating during the Maharashtra HSC Exams 2022. The Class 12 Chemistry exam for the Maharashtra Board was conducted on March 12, 2022 during the morning shift. As per reports, Vile Parle police arrested a private coaching class owner in Malad over his alleged involvement in the Chemistry Paper leak for the HSC Class 12 Exam 2022.Multiple reports of paper leaks and mass cheating have been reported by students and teachers on social media. Students have expressed their troubles while appearing for the Maharashtra HSC Exams 2022 and have demanded that the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, MSBSHSE and State Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad, take appropriate action. MSBSHSE offered students one mark in compensation. Allegations regarding the mass cheating and unfair means of examination is yet to be confirmed by the state board of education and state officials.

MEDICAL TEACHERS SUSPEND WORK; OPDS, OT TO BE HIT

The medical teachers want the government to meet their demands of pay hikes under the 7th pay commission and job security by regularising the temporary teachers and have been in protest.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Medical teachers in Maharashtra have been protesting for the last 45 days and now they have given an ultimatum to the government and have withdrawn all patient-related work from today (14th March). Their demands of pay hikes and regularisation of temporary lectures are not met by the government yet and the protest is likely to intensify more in the coming days.

There are more than 2500 medical teachers and nearly 1400 lecturers in Maharashtra. They have stopped taking lectures since 5th January. The teachers have also stopped all the administrative and official work. They are also boycotting the examination work too. The stir has escalated and teachers have now threatened the government to stop working in patients related work until their prime demands are met. Although the emergency ward and ICU ward would be operational, says MSMTA. Dr Sunanda Dhivare from JJ hospital says, "From last 31 years, I am into the practice but still as an associate professor. I joined the service in 1987 and completed my MDS in 1997. I waited for MPSC for long 20 years. Only in the year 2016, I became assistant professor through MPSC." She also added, If I go to a private hospital, I will be easily absorbed. My motive to serve the government and people has made me survive. I am going to retire in two years, will I retire as an assistant professor? The administration should strengthen us.

A young doctor, Dr Pradhnya Dev said, "On the contractual basis the vacancies are filled. For systematic promotions, we have to go through MPSC every year. "She is in the service for the last 7 years and urges the government to change the system and acknowledge the needs of government-run medical college teachers.

Ramdas Athawale backs Devendra Fadnavis in transfer-probing case, alleges Maharashtra govt misusing its power

A team of Mumbai Cyber Police on Sunday recorded the statement of former Maharashtra Chief Minister and leader of Opposition in state Assembly Devendra Fadnavis in connection with the transfer posting case.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale on Sunday extended his support to Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis in the transfer probing case and accused the state government of misusing its power to harass the leader.

Athawale said, "The police have the right to record the statement of Fadnavis but they don't have the right to send the notice to him. The state government is misusing their power and it is dangerous to democracy."

The Union Minister said the government has the power to prove accusations against the Leader in Opposition but sending a notice like this is not the right way.

"These are the deliberate tactics to harass the leaders. If the state government continues to disrespect democracy and the constitution, then we demand from Centre to implement President rule here in Maharashtra," Athawale said. A team of Mumbai Cyber Police on Sunday recorded the statement of former Maharashtra Chief Minister and leader of Opposition in state Assembly Devendra Fadnavis in connection with the transfer posting case.

Speaking to the media Fadnavis said, "A police team recorded my statement in the transfer, posting case. I answered all questions. Maharashtra government had been brushing aside the case for the past six months. I am a whistleblower of this case." On February 26 this year, Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil claimed that former Pune Police Commissioner Rashmi Shukla had tapped phones of political leaders like Nana Patole, Bachchu Kadu, Sanjay Kakade and Ashish Deshmukh.

In March 2021, Fadnavis raised questions about the transfer posting of the police department during a press conference. At present, the CBI is investigating this case. So far, former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Paramvir Singh have been questioned in this case. Now the statement of Devendra Fadnavis has also been recorded.

5 Killed, 7 Injured As Jeep Hits Truck

Five jeep passengers died, while seven others suffered injuries and they were referred to a hospital in Jalna for treatment, the official said.

Buldhana | Agencies

Five people were killed and seven others injured when their jeep hit a truck in Maharashtra's Buldhana district on Monday, a police official said. The accident took place around 5.30 am in Deulgaon Raja city when the jeep occupants, all from Rohanwadi village in Jalna district, were going to offer prayers at a temple in Shegaon town here, he said. When the jeep reached a T-point, its driver could not make out whether to take the city route or the bypass and dashed against a truck coming from the opposite direction, the official said. Five jeep passengers died, while seven others suffered injuries and they were referred to a hospital in Jalna for treatment, the official said. The accident took place at around 11 pm on Sunday near Kondi village, located nearly 250 km from Pune, they said. "The warkaris (devotees of Lord Vitthal) were going in the tractor-trolley to Pandharpur to celebrate 'Ekadashi' (on Monday)," an official from Solapur rural police station said. On the way, one of the truck tyres burst, following which its driver lost control over the wheels. The vehicle then hit the tractor-trolley from behind, he said. , were injured and taken to.Four of them, including a woman, were declared brought dead, the official said.

NO LEAK OF HSC BOARD CHEMISTRY PAPER: GAIKWAD

The Maharashtra government on Monday officially dismissed reports claiming that the Chemistry paper of the ongoing HSC (Class XII) Board 2022 final exams allegedly leaked in Mumbai, last weekend.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government on Monday officially dismissed reports claiming that the Chemistry paper of the ongoing HSC (Class XII) Board 2022 final exams allegedly leaked in Mumbai, last weekend.

"The Chemistry exam paper was scheduled on Saturday morning but had apparently reached the mobile phone of many candidates (students) in their WhatsApp group," Deputy Commissioner of Police (VIII) DS Dwami told IANS. However, School Education Minister Prof Varsha E Gaikwad on Tuesday morning informed the Maharashtra Assembly that there were some misleading reports stating that the HSC Chemistry paper had leaked. She said that the alleged incident was reported on Saturday (March 12) at 10.24 a.m., from the Vile Parle Exam Centre No 3601, when certain portions of the question paper were detected in the mobile phone of a girl student. "A complaint was lodged with the Vile Parle Police Station and immediate investigations were taken up. The Board Chairman also enquired at his end and said the question paper was distributed to the students for reading at 10.20 a.m. and was found on the students' mobile phones only after that. Hence, there is no basis for saying that the question paper has leaked," Minister Gaikwad told the House. Meanwhile, soon after the complaint was lodged, a team led by Vile Parle Senior Police Inspector Sanjay Narvekar moved swiftly, managed to zero-in on and detain a private coaching class owner from suburban Malad, and two others in connection with the incident. The police are checking for the status of the other question papers of the HSC exams - which started on March 4, the modus operandi, how a private coaching class owner gained access to the highly confidential question papers of a major public exam and involvement of Board officials if any.

महाराष्ट्र शासन

संचालनालय, वैद्यकीय शिक्षण आणि संशोधन, मुंबई

शासकीय दंत महाविद्यालय व रुग्णालय इमारत चौथा मजला, सेंट जॉर्जेस् रुग्णालय आवार, पी. डीमेलो रोड, फोर्ट, मुंबई- ४०० ००१

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संकेतस्थळ: http:/www.dmer.org

E-Tender No./DMER/ Expression of Interest/ 2103/2022 Dt :- 11/03/2022

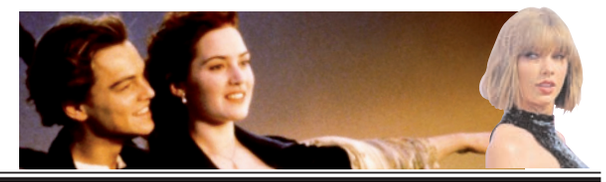
Notice

The Medical Education & Drugs Department (MEDD), Government of Maharashtra invites Expressions of Interest (EoI) in the operationalization of newly built super specialty teaching hospitals at Latur and Aurangabad through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Interested bidders may visit the DMER website for further information **(www.med-edu.in).**

Virendra Singh
Commissioner
Medical Education,& Research Mumbai.

ROC-2021-22/No – 5/C 5161



Kid Cudi joins Brittany Snow's directorial debut 'September 17th'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Brittany Snow announced that rapper Scott Mescudi, better known by his stage name Kid Cudi, has been cast in her feature directorial debut 'September 17th'.

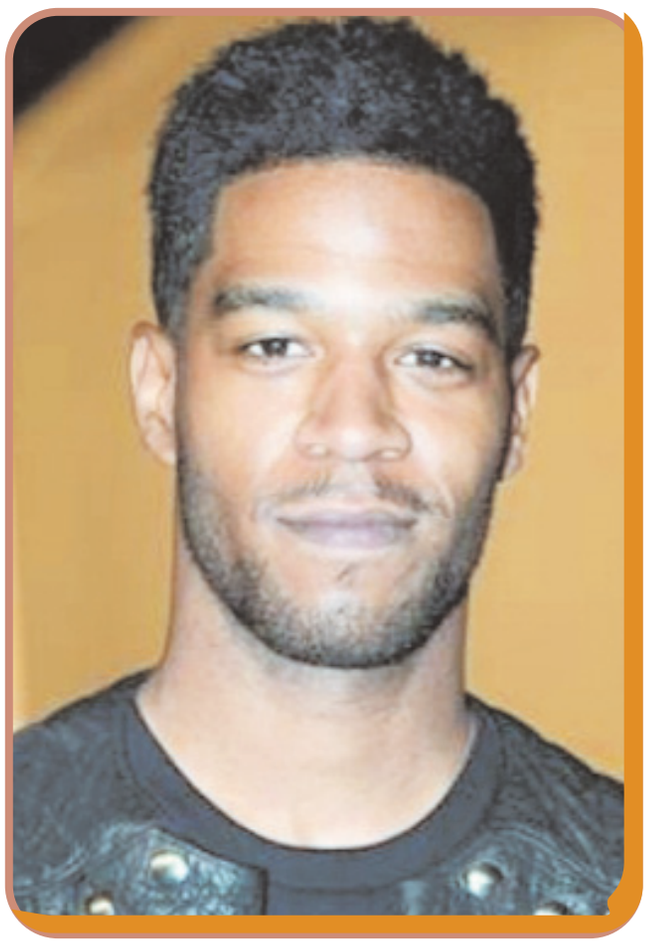
In an interview with Variety about 'X', the horror film that Cudi and Snow star in together, the two shared their excitement about continuing to work together, reports variety.com.

"I can't really speak too much, except that Scott's doing a part in the movie, so that's cool," Snow said.

"I couldn't believe that she wanted me in it," Cudi said. "She had told me about the movie while we were on set (for 'X'), but she never asked me to be in it. I was like, maybe she's waiting to see how ('X') turns out. It's gonna be awesome. Really great script." "I was watching Ti (West, director of 'X') a lot during the filming of this," Snow said.

"And I think that something that I learned from him that I'll take with me is the specificity of knowing the through line of what you want, and being really strong and clear in your convictions of it. "I like to play around on set, but it lends itself really nicely when you know that your director has a complete handle on exactly what they want. I hope I can live up to what everyone else has been doing." 'September 17th' follows a woman, named Riley, who struggles with food and body image issues and has recently been discharged from rehab.

Cudi is best known for his music career.



Courteney Cox sold swimming pools for a living!

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Friends' star Courteney Cox once worked in a swimming pool store and was said that she was "one hell of a salesman" before becoming an actress.

She revealed: "(My dad) always thought I was a good salesman and that I should probably move back to Alabama and sell swimming pools. I did work in a swimming pool store, and I was one hell of a salesman. I tested a lot of pool water." Cox also mentioned that, despite owning a pool now, she can't use any of the old water testing skills she knows. She added: "I have a saltwater pool now, so I don't know how to test that." The 'Shining Vale' star also emphasised the importance of her father's influence in her life. She told Willie Geist on his 'Sunday Sitdown' podcast: "My dad's not alive, but I think (winning an award) is something he would be proud of. ... I remember the first time I had a billboard on Sunset, it was for 'Dirt,' and I really wanted my dad to see that because he would have been proud." Despite being most well-known for her role in 'Friends,' Cox credits her appearance in Bruce Springsteen's 'Dancing in the Dark' music video as the moment that sparked her career. She said: "The Bruce Springsteen video was the thing for sure. I was on screen for 24 seconds, but who doesn't love Bruce Springsteen, and who doesn't love that song, 'Dancing in the Dark'? I just went onstage, and people really wanted to know, 'What's Bruce really like?' And I was like 'okay, I'll tell you.' I didn't really know, he's just a great guy, but that was like a lead-in to getting in the door."

LAVERNE COX

FIRST MET LEONARDO DICAPRIO WHEN SHE WAS A WAITRESS

Los Angeles | Agencies

'The Orange Is The New Black' star Laverne Cox can recall first meeting Hollywood star Leonard DiCaprio when she was working as a waitress in a New York City club.

She said: "I remember during the early 2000s being in a club called Lot 61... I was a waitress at the time, an aspiring actress... this is 2000... around the year 1999 or 2000…and Leonardo DiCaprio was two feet away from me.

"There were about 12 to 20 women who could be Victoria's Secret models sort of, you know, surrounding (Leonardo Dicaprio, David Blaine, and Elijah Wood).

"I saw this live. So this was kind of my life, and I remember in the late 90s and early 2000s being in proximity to Leonardo DiCaprio feeling so utterly and completely fabulous because I was two feet away from Leonardo DiCaprio in the same club. It made me feel so fabulous and like I was, you know, like I was somebody," reports female-first.co.uk.

Cox's early experiences came back to her when she was first introduced to Netflix's 'Inventing Anna', the true story of 'fake heiress' Anna Delvey, in which she plays Kacy Duke.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Benedict Cumberbatch says it's impossible to ignore the war in Ukraine.

Speaking before the BAFTA event at the Royal Albert Hall in London, he shared: "We have brothers and sisters who are suffering. It is a really shocking time to be a European, two-and-a-half hours' flight away from Ukraine. It's something that hangs over us."

Cumberbatch is keen to do everything he can to support the people of Ukraine, following the Russian invasion of the country, reports femalefirst.co.uk. The actor said he would even like to be part of a programme to take in Ukrainian refugees.

He told Sky News: "Everyone needs to do as much as they can. I think already today the news has broken that there's been a record number of people volunteering to take people into their homes, and I hope to be part of that myself."

Stephen Graham has also voiced his support for the people of Ukraine. The 48-year-old actor insisted the war in eastern Europe cannot be ignored.

Speaking on the red carpet, he said: "It's lovely to be here with my family but at the same time it's important for me to acknowledge in public what is happening over there." Meanwhile, Sir Kenneth Branagh has spoken out about the war, saying he hopes it ends "very soon".

Benedict Cumberbatch has voiced his support for Ukraine

Catherine Zeta-Jones joins original series 'National Treasure'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Academy Award and Tony Award-winning actress Catherine Zeta-Jones will play a leading role in the series 'National Treasure'. The news about original series was announced by Disney Branded Television and Disney+ Hotstar.

The live-action series is an expansion of the 'National Treasure' movie franchise centres on a young heroine, Jess (Lisette Alexis), a brilliant and resourceful dreamer who embarks on the adventure of a lifetime to uncover the truth about her family's mysterious past and save a lost Pan-American treasure.

Zeta-Jones will portray Billie, a billionaire, black-market antiquities expert, and treasure hunter who lives by her own code. She transformed herself from a penniless orphan to a shrewd, stylish businesswoman and adventurer. Billie's used to getting what she wants-and she wants the Pan-American treasure. But not just for the money. This treasure has deeper stakes for her.

Catherine Zeta-Jones is a multi-award-winning actress whose talents range from film to theater. She garnered an Academy Award for her portrayal of the scandalous Velma Kelly, in the screen adaptation of 'Chicago'.

Catherine was also nominated for a Golden Globe and took home the Critics' Choice Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award and the BAFTA Award for Best Supporting Actress for her performance.

She won the Tony Award for Lead Actress in a Musical for her critically acclaimed Broadway debut as Desirée Armfeldt in Stephen Sondheim's 'A Little Night Music'.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY

Kristen Wiig

Rousing speech from Halle Berry, Billy Crystal has fun at Critics Choice Awards

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 27th annual Critics Choice Awards celebrated the best in television and film at a glittering ceremony here at the Fairmont Century Plaza Hotel. Jane Campions 'The Power of the Dog', as reported by IANS, and the comedy drama series 'Ted Lasso' led the night's winners with four trophies each. The dark comedy series 'Succession' took home three awards.

The night's big moment came when Halle Berry received the See Her Award from Issa Rae, who joked that the Critics Choice Association, the organisers of the awards, only fed the attendees hummus and wine, so reading the teleprompter might be a little challenging, reports 'Variety'.

Berry, however, delivered a passionate speech of her own, thanking Rae for inspiring her with her work. "You have rearranged the way we see ourselves as women of colour on television and in the world," she said.

As she reflected on her career, Berry revealed that she used to think she was "winning" by playing a part for a white man. But those roles didn't really work. Why?

"Because I'm not a white man," she said, according to 'Variety'. "So, for those roles to work, they would have to be substantially changed. It would have to be written with the reality of my journey, in all of its beauty, and all of its pain."

PINK BALL TEST

INDIA BEAT SRI LANKA BY 238 RUNS TO WIN SERIES 2-0

Bengaluru | Agencies

Dimuth Karunaratne scored his 14th Test century on a difficult pitch but it was not enough to deny India a win by 238 runs on Day three of the second Test at M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Monday.

With the huge win inside the first two sessions on Day three, the hosts have completed a 2-0 series sweep and pocketed 12 points as part of World Test Championship (WTC) tally. Karunaratne put up a defiant show against a relentless India bowling attack as Sri Lanka began day three on a positive note. The visitors showed some fight in the start of day's play as Karunaratne used his feet straightaway to take two boundaries off Ravindra Jadeja through the off-side. Runs began to flow for the visitors' as Kusal Mendis glanced and lofted Ravichandran Ashwin for boundaries. Sri Lanka's aggressive and positive play continued as Mendis swept Jadeja through deep square leg while Karunaratne was lucky in surviving an inner edge off Ashwin. The positivity and decisive attitude in play resulted in Mendis reaching his 12th Test half-century off 57 balls. The 97-run partnership, highest for Sri Lanka in this series, was broken by Ashwin as Mendis was foxed by drift and dip from round the wicket angle. Mendis danced down the pitch to counter the delivery but the ball went past the outer edge and was stumped from behind by Rishabh Pant. One brought two for India as Jadeja bowled a quicker delivery to hit Angelo Mathews stumps through the gate. Ashwin then claimed his second wicket of the session as Dhananjaya de Silva was caught at forward short leg, enabling the off-spinner to go past Dale Steyn in the list of leading wicket-takers in Test cricket. Amidst the wheels coming off Sri Lanka's resistance, Karunaratne stood tall and brought up his fifty in 92 balls. He then welcomed Mohammed Shami with a four whipped through mid-wicket and danced down the pitch to flick Axar Patel through the same region. Supporting him was Niroshan Dickwella, who has managed to hold fort against a relentless India bowling attack. Karunaratne began the post-lunch session by using the pace of Patel to lap over leg slip. But Patel bounced back to get Dickwella stumped as the left-hander came down the pitch for a swing across the line but the ball went past outside edge and Pant behind did the rest. Patel took his second wicket of the day as Charith Asalanka flicked straight to leg slip. After a reverse sweep off Patel took him into the 90s, Karunaratne then played a conventional sweep over square leg for four. He then raised his century by flicking through backward square leg off Jasprit Bumrah, becoming only the third Sri Lanka captain to score a Test hundred in India. Karunaratne followed it up by using Bumrah's pace to steer a short ball over the slip cordon. Karunaratne's resistance ended at 107 as Bumrah got one to come back in and went through his gate to crash into the stumps. In the next over, Ashwin beat Lasith Embuldeniya on the inside edge to trap him lbw in front of stumps. Bumrah then clean bowled Suranga Lakmal and Vishwa Fernando holed out to mid-off off Ashwin to end Sri Lanka's innings at 210, their highest total in the two-match series.

Brief scores :
India 252 and 303/9 d in 68.5 overs (Shreyas Iyer 67; Praveen Jayawickrama 4/78) beat Sri Lanka 109 and 208 all out in 59.3 overs (Dimuth Karunaratne 107; Kusal Mendis 54; Ravichandran Ashwin 4/55, Jasprit Bumrah 3/23) by 238 runs.

RANJI TROPHY

Kushagra, Nadeem take Jharkhand to record 880 against Nagaland

Kolkata | Agencies

Kumar Kushagra scored 266 off just 270 deliveries and Shahbaz Nadeem struck 177, helping Jharkhand continue to torment Nagaland's bowlers in the pre-quarterfinal of the Ranji Trophy at the Eden Gardens on Monday.

After two days of determined batting, Jharkhand continued to pile the misery on a hapless Nagaland attack, finally folding for a massive 880 on the third day in Kolkata. Shahbaz Nadeem, who was on 123 overnight, finished on 177, while No. 11 Rahul Shukla remained unbeaten on 85, as the final-wicket stand yielded 191.

In reply, Nagaland were tottering at 130 for 4 with Chetan Bist batting on 46 with Abu Nechim on 13.

Jharkhand began Day 2 on 402 for 5 and resumed their process as Kushagra found his next able ally in Anukul Roy. Earlier, he had already added 175 runs for the fifth wicket with Virat Singh.

The Kushagra-Anukul pair added another stand in excess of 100, with Anukul getting a brisk half-century. After Anukul, it was Shahbaz Nadeem who piled the misery on a hapless Nagaland attack, making 177 runs. He and Kushagra added 166 for the seventh wicket, taking the team total past 650.

It was a brief relief for Nagaland as Kushagra fell after a scintillating knock that involved 37 fours and 2 sixes. But at the other end Nadeem, who has one previous first-class hundred to his name added another to it in the company of the team's No. 11 Rahul Shukla.

By stumps, Nadeem reached 177 -- his best first-class score -- and Shukla had 85 to his name while Jharkhand amassed 880, their highest-ever total since featuring in the Ranji Trophy since 2005.

Brief scores :
Jharkhand 880 (Kushagra 266, Nadeem 177, Shukla 85 not out; Lemtur 4-179) Nagaland 130 for 4 (Bist 46 not out, Mundhe 39, Nadeem 1-17) lead by 750 runs

Sevilla held, Barca cruise and Real Madrid can go 10 clear in La Liga

Madrid | Agencies

Second-placed Sevilla were held to a 1-1 draw away to Rayo Vallecano on Sunday.

Thomas Delaney's 63rd minute goal gave Sevilla a point with a smart far-post finish, after Bebe's control and powerful finish had put the home side ahead a minute into the second half.

Barcelona enjoyed an easy 4-0 win at home to Osasuna to remain third. The game was as good as over before the half hour with two goals from Ferran Torres, the first of which came from the penalty spot and the second after an excellent pass from Ousmane Dembele.

Real Betis kept their top-four hopes open with a 1-0 win at home to Athletic Bilbao, thanks to Borja Iglesias' header midway through the first half.

Athletic controlled the second half, but failed to create clear chances even after Betis were reduced to ten men after Nabil Fekir was sent off for a direct red card with 10 minutes left to play. Martin Zubimendi's 70th minute header gave Real Sociedad a 1-0 win in their Basque derby at home to Alaves, to keep their top-four hopes alive and keep their rivals in the relegation zone.Dani Parejo's goal midway through the second half gave Villarreal a narrow 1-0 win at home to Celta Vigo to strengthen his side's chances of playing in Europe next season. Jose Bordalas' return to face former club Getafe as Valencia boss ended in a predictable 0-0 draw in which Getafe had a goal ruled out for handball and Valencia failed to have a shot on target in the entire game. Goals from in-form Joao Felix and Rodrigo de Paul gave Atletico a scrappy 2-1 win at home Cadiz, who found the target through Alvaro Negredo's header on the stroke of halftime.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

BANGLADESH MAKE HISTORY WITH 9-RUN WIN OVER PAKISTAN

Hamilton (New Zealand) | Agencies

Debutants Bangladesh eked out a nine-run victory against favourites Pakistan to make history at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, with Fargana Hoque and Fahima Khatun playing crucial roles to negate a fine century from top-order batter Sidra Ameen at the Seddon Park here on Monday.

Bangladesh's Hoque scored a clinical 115-ball 71 batting first to guide her team to a competitive 234/7 in 50 overs. Khatun then took three crucial wickets to thwart Pakistan's chase as the Bismah Maroof-led side suffered a fourth loss in as many outings despite a fighting 104 from opener Sidra Ameen.

Brief scores :
Bangladesh Women 234/7 in 50 overs (Sharmin Akhter 44, Fargana Hoque 71, Nigar Sultana 46; Nashra Sandhu 3/41) beat Pakistan Women 225/9 in 50 overs (Nahida Khan 43, Sidra Ameen 104, Bismah Maroof 31; Fahima Khatun 3/38, Rumana Ahmed 2/29) by nine runs.

Brief scores :
South Africa 236/7 in 49.2 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 77, Sune Luus 36; Anya Shrubsole 2/34) beat England 235/9 in 50 overs (Tammy Beaumont 62, Amy Jones 53; Marizanne Kapp 5/45, Masabata Klaas 2/23) by three wickets.

SOUTH AFRICA BEAT ENGLAND BY THREE WICKETS

Mount Maunganui: *All-rounder Marizanne Kapp starred with both bat and ball as South Africa defeated England by three wickets in a thrilling match of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup at Bay Oval on Monday. The third straight defeat means that England, the defending champions in the tournament, are now staring at an early exit from the showpiece event.*

SHREYAS IYER NAMED ICC MEN'S PLAYER OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY 2022

Dubai:India batter Shreyas Iyer on Monday was named as the ICC men's player of the month for February 2022, said cricket's governing body. Iyer pipped fellow nominees, UAE's Vriitya Aravind and Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee to claim the award. Iyer earned the award on the back of his brilliant white-ball exploits during the home series against West Indies and Sri Lanka respectively in February 2022. The right-hander struck a well-crafted, match-winning 80 in the third ODI against the West Indies in Ahmedabad to complete a 3-0 series sweep and followed it up with a brisk 16-ball 25 in the closing game of the subsequent three-match T20I series in Kolkata, also ending in a 3-0 sweep. Iyer went even better in the T20I series against Sri Lanka, aggregating 204 runs without being dismissed across three innings at a highly impressive strike-rate of 174.36. He registered unbeaten scores of 57 off 28 balls, 74 off 44 balls and 73 off 45 balls across three matches, while striking 20 fours and seven sixes collectively in an astonishing Player of the Series performance.

SPANISH PARA-BADMINTON

Doubles shuttler Raj Kumar shines with two gold, Team India ends with 21 medals

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Experienced doubles shuttler Raj Kumar shone with two gold medals as the Indian team returned home with a total of 21 medals from the Level 1 Iberdrola Spanish Para-Badminton International 2022 in Cartagena, Spain.

According to information received here, Kumar, the 35-year-old from Punjab, first paired up with Parul Dalsukhbhai Parmar to defeat fellow Indian pair of Ruthick Ragupathi and Manasi Joshi 21-17, 21-18 in the mixed doubles SL3-SU5 final before he along with Chirag Baretha claimed the men's doubles SL3-SL4+SU5 title.

Baretha and Kumar, in fact, came out with a brilliant show to rally from a game down and win 19-21, 21-15, 21-16 over fellow Indians Ragupathi and Hardik Makkar in a thrilling 44-minute final.

Overall, Team India had claimed five gold medals -- with reigning world champion Joshi (WS SL3), Nithya Sre (WS SH6), and the men's doubles SH6 pair of Raja Magotra and Krishna Nagar emerging the champions in other .

AMERICAN TOMMY PAUL SHOWS WORLD NO.3 ZVEREV THE EXIT AT INDIAN WELLS

Indian Wells: World No. 3 Alexander Zverev of Germany made an early exit from the BNP Paribas Open, losing to Tommy Paul of the US 6-2, 4-6, 7-6(2) in the second round on Monday (IST). It was the 24-year-old Paul's biggest win of his career and helped the American reach the third round in Indian Wells for the second time. Paul reached the fourth round here in 2021, beating then-world No. 5 Andrey Rublev of Russia on the way to his best run at an ATP Masters 1000 event, according to atptour.com. This was Paul's fourth victory over a top-10 opponent, a tally that includes a previous meeting with Zverev in Acapulco, Mexico in 2020. Paul will meet Alex de Minaur of Australia in the third round, after the 29th seed defeated countrymate John Millman. De Minaur, who had reached the fourth round at Indian Wells for the first time in 2021, broke Millman three times on way to a 7-6(4), 6-3 win.

ASIAN SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP

Happy to start on a winning note, says Pankaj Advani

Doha | Agencies

Defending champion Pankaj Advani started his campaign for the Asian Snooker Championship 2022 by winning two consecutive matches on day one. Advani is in Group A with Mansour Alobaidli from Qatar, Mohamed Thaha Irshath from Sri Lanka and the recently crowned World Snooker Champion Pakistan's Ahsan Ramzan.

Advani, who has already won 10 Asian titles, easily defeated Thaha by 4-2 in the first match. The 36-year-old Indian started with a break of 52 to win the first match but lost the second. Later he won the next two frames to lead 3-1 and after that Thaha crafted a break of 55 to cut the deficit but again Pankaj won the 6th frame with a decent margin to seal the match 4-2. His second match was against Mansour Alobaidli from Qatar where Pankaj was in a different zone. After winning the first frame, he was on fire and crafted breaks of 50 & 58 in the second frame, 110 in the third and 75 in the fourth frame to close the match proceedings in less than an hour.

ASIAN YOUTH & JUNIOR BOXING

Shaheen, Nivedita star as five Indian women punch to gold

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Shaheen Gill and Nivedita Karki were among five women youth boxers to strike gold medals as India had another good day at the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan on Monday.

Tamanna (50kg), Ravina (63kg) and Muskan (75kg) were the other three boxers who also registered victories in the finals and bagged gold medals. Nivedita provided India an ideal start for the day when she clinched a sensational 3-2 win over Uzbekistan's Saidakhon Rakhmonova in 48kg final.

Tamanna handed the country its second gold with a win over another Uzbek boxer Robiyankhon Bakhtiyorova by a similar margin in the 50kg thriller. Both Nivedita and Tamanna clinched their second successive medal after the silver medal in the last edition.

Shaheen and Ravina then added two more gold medals to the country's tally with dominating triumphs by unanimous decisions against their respective Uzbek opponents. While Shaheen (60kg) outperformed Mukhlisa Tokhirova, Ravina thrashed Uzbekistan's Sitora Bahodirova.

Next in action, Muskan also produced an aggressive show against Kazakhstan's Aidasaribarova, who found it difficult to match the Indian's game and conceded heavy blows on her face, before the referee stopped the contest after initial few minutes in the first round and declared Muskan as the winner.

Meanwhile, Priyanka and Kirti suffered defeats in the final and concluded their campaigns with silver medals. While Priyanka went down fighting 1-4 against Kazakhstan's Bakytseidish in the 66kg category, Kirti (+81kg) endured a 0-5 loss against Sakhobat Khusanova of Uzbekistan.

Renu (52kg), Tanisha Lamba (54kg), Prachi (57kg), Pranjal Yadav (70kg) and Sneha (81kg) are the five boxers who secured bronze medals with semi-finals finish earlier as Indian women signed off with medals in each of the 12 categories in the youth section.

Rashmika Mandanna sends her love, power to fans going through tough times

Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who has made a name for herself in both the Tamil and Telugu film industries, has sought to send out some positivity to those who going through a tough time.The actress, whose recent Telugu film 'Pushpa' has gone on to emerge a superhit, took to Instagram to send out some positive vibes.She said, "The world's a much better place with you in it! By you, I mean all of you. You all make me so happy and each one of you is so important."So, if any of you are finding today difficult painful or unbearable, I know how you feel. And so, know that here's me sending you my love and power to get through today. "One step at a time right. You'll be fine and keep telling yourself that. This too shall pass. I love you!."

PANDEMIC MADE AAMIR KHAN REALISE THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan shared that the pandemic drew his attention to a lot of things and that it gave him the time to contemplate and reflect on his life.

Speaking on the sidelines of a media event on the occasion of his birthday, the 'Dil Chahta Hai' actor said: "Like a lot of people, the pandemic too gave me the time to contemplate and look back on what has happened so far in my life. I consider myself privileged to have reflected on this, it made me realize how fragile life is, how precious it is."For him, the essence of life is in making the most of it and to live each day to the fullest: "We all will have to depart one day and bid adieu to this world, how and when it would happen, that no one can really say. So, when we know that is inevitable, we should be using our time wisely. We should dedicate our time equally to work, family and ourselves."

The actor also made a remark in jest about being called the Mr. Perfectionist of Bollywood as he said that it's the title that media has given and that he's the most imperfect guy anyone could ever know.

PAN-INDIA FAN BASE WAS A CO-INCIDENCE: POOJA HEGDE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Pooja Hegde, who is riding on the success of 'Radhe Shyam' that also stars 'Bahubaali' fame Prabhas, says finding her fan base across the country wasn't her career strategy but just a co-incidence because she is only going with the flow.

Pooja made her debut in Bollywood opposite Hritik Roshan in 'Mohenjo Daro' in 2016. However, she became a star in the south with a string of successful films like 'Oka Laila Kosam', 'Duvvada Jagannadham', 'Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava', 'Maharshi' and 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo'.

Now that 'Radhe Shyam' is released in multiple languages and she is getting praised for her acting, Pooja told reporter that language never stopped her from connecting with her fans, rather it has empowered her.

Pooja told reporter: "When I started working in south Indian films, I was just going with the flow without strategising much. It is a blessing that the audience has accepted me in every region. 'Radhe Shyam' is an important film for me because it's a multi-lingual movie.

"I worked hard on my character too. Earlier, people would say that I have a strong screen presence and that I am 'beautiful'. I think that was more of a compliment for my parents because I got my good looks and physic from them. My acting and my contribution to a successful film makes me happy and satisfie. It fuels my energy to do more," she said.

The actress now has an interesting line-up in Hindi, including Rohit Shetty's 'Cirkus' opposite Ranveer Singh and Salman Khan's 'Bhaijaan'.

She will also be seen in the Telugu film 'Acharya' starring Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan, and Tamil film 'Beast' alongside Vijay.

SUKHMANI SADANA PLAYING A 'BADASS' WOMAN

Mumbai: Actress Sukhmani Sadana has opened up on her character in the web series 'Apharan 2' in which she plays a strong character named Nafisa.

Talking about her character, Sukhmani says: "I play the role of Nafisa in 'Apharan 2'. This is the first time that I've played a badass woman. Nafisa is someone everyone fears, she is super hardcore, strong, tough and very dangerous. But the best part is not even that."

Sukhmani is known for her roles in 'Sacred Games' and 'Tandav'. She has also been part of several travel shows on television besides hosting live events.

The actress says her character plays an important role in making the web series more intriguing.

"One of the most exciting parts of 'Apharan' is when Nafisa brings a twist and a surprise element. You have to watch the show to know more," she adds.

'Apharan 2' also stars Nidhi Singh, Varun Badola, Jeetendra and Snehil Mehra, among others. Directed by Santosh Singh, 'Apaharan 2' will premiere on Voot Select on March 18.

Poonam Pandey calls Nisha Rawal 'bloody housewife' on the show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Nasha' actress Poonam Pandey called co-contestant and actress Nisha Rawal 'bloody housewife' on the reality show 'Lock Upp'.

The two were seen having a heated argument over the arrangements of the bed and none of them were ready to sleep on the floor during a task.

"You are a bloody housewife!" yelled Poonam.

Nisha is taken aback by this remark and becomes enraged, to which Poonam responded: "I said it to myself, not to you!".

Poonam tried to avoid any further argument with Nisha.

During the weekend episode, host Kangana Ranaut announces that there will be no elimination this week. She also advised Kaaranvir Bohra and Payal Rohtagi to improve their games because they have the fewest votes. She also gives them a chance to prove their capabilities.

"Choose your teams right now," said Kangana.

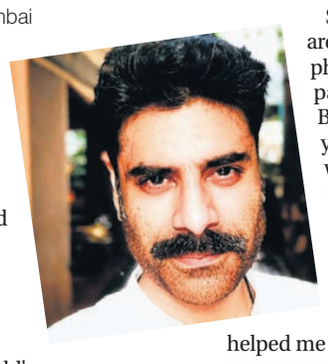
Kaaranvir's team consists of Poonam Pandey, Munawar Faruqui, Shivam Sharma and Sara Khan, while Payal's team consists of Nisha Rawal, Saisha Shinde, Siddharth Sharma and Babita Phogat.

The nominated contestants for this week are Poonam Pandey, Saisha Shinde, Kaaranvir Bohra, Payal Rohtagi, Sara Khan, Nisha Rawal, Munawar Faruqui and Babita Phogat.

'Lock Upp' streams on ALTBalaji and MX Player.

SIKANDER KHER: 'AS ACTORS, WE CONSTANTLY GO THROUGH PHASES IN OUR CAREERS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai



Sikandar Kher feels that it's truly a blessing for an actor to be busy and is grateful for getting the opportunity to be associated with some really big projects this year.

The line-up for Sikandar in 2022 includes the thriller web-show 'Chidiya Udd' and 'Dukaan'. Apart from these projects, the actor would also be collaborating with the 'Slumdog Millionaire' fame Dev Patel on an International project titled 'Monkey Man' and along with resuming his role in Sushmita Sen's family crime drama web-show 'Aarya'.

Sikandar says "As actors, we all are constantly going through phases in our careers, some parts do work out, some don't. But the key is to keep going till you eventually hit a point where something clicks with the audience."

He added: "Fortunately, that has happened for me with some of my recent work being appreciated and liked by people which has in-turn helped me in getting work. I also feel that my presence on OTT has helped a great deal in achieving this as the format allows an actor to be seen more, which in due course leads him/her to work more."

"Grateful to everyone who has seen and appreciated my work and look forward to entertaining everyone on a much larger scale in 2022."

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY

Shivani Singh

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