

# absolute india

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## ARMS POURING IN UKRAINE, RUSSIA BROADENS ITS OFFENSIVE

# WAR INTENSIFIED

Ukraine has already received critical weapons, including Javelin missiles and anti-aircraft missiles, from NATO Allies, as well as millions of euros of financial assistance. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Sunday said he intends to increase its military aid to Ukraine by offering weapons. Germany reversed a historic policy of never sending weapons to conflict zones. The German will send 1,000 anti-tank weapons and 500 Stinger anti-aircraft defense systems to Ukraine. France will send defensive military equipment to Ukraine. The Netherlands said it will send 200 Stinger anti-aircraft defense systems to Ukraine. Belgium announced it would supply Ukraine with 2,000 machine guns and 3,800 tonnes of fuel.

**ZELENSKY'S CALLS FOR ARMS AND AMMUNITION WERE IMMEDIATELY TAKEN UP BY US, NATO MEMBERS AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.**

**RUSSIA PUTS NUCLEAR FORCES ON HIGH COMBAT ALERT**

New Delhi: Russia's ground units, equipped with intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as vessels from the Northern and Pacific Fleets, have been placed on high combat alert, the Russian Defence Ministry confirmed on Monday. The Russian Navy includes submarines armed with nuclear missiles, RT reported. The ministry said the move was made in accordance with the order issued by President Vladimir Putin on Sunday, RT reported.

Putin cited "illegitimate sanctions" against Russia and "aggressive statements" by Western officials, without elaborating. Many countries, including the US, the UK and EU member states, have imposed sweeping sanctions on Russia in response to its military operation in Ukraine. Earlier, Putin had placed the country's nuclear deterrent forces on "special" alert on Sunday, RT reported.

President Volodymyr Zelensky had sought weapons and ammunition from the US and other countries in the fight against Russia. When the US had asked Zelensky to leave the country, he said, "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride." In a video posted two days ago, Zelensky said he is still in Kiev. "I am here. We are not putting down arms. We will be defending our country, because our weapon is truth, and our truth is that this is our land, our country, our children, and we will defend all of this. That is it. That's all I wanted to tell you. Glory to Ukraine," he added. A senior senior defense official said the US continues to supply security assistance to Ukraine. President Joe Biden authorized an additional \$350 million of military assistance from Defense Department inventories including anti-armor, small arms, various

munitions, body armor and related equipment -- to support Ukraine's frontline defenders, who are facing down Russia's unprovoked attack, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby had said. NATO allies sent thousands of anti-tank weapons, hundreds of air-defence missiles and thousands of small arms and ammunition stocks. The allies are also providing millions of euros worth of financial assistance and humanitarian aid, including medical supplies to help Ukrainian forces. Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United States have already sent or are approving significant deliveries of military equipment to Ukraine.

**HEAVY SHELLING IN KHARKIV FROM GRAD MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHERS**

New Delhi: Many civilians have been killed by Russian shelling on residential areas of Kharkiv. According to the Regional Military Administration, the Russian invaders are shelling residential areas of Kharkiv, where there is no strategic or military infrastructure that could be targeted by armed forces. Shelling is currently ongoing in the neighbourhoods. As a result, local authorities are unable to provide emergency services and eliminate the consequences of shelling on time, the report said. Dozens of victims have been reported in Kharkiv after mass fire from Grad multiple rocket launchers on Monday, said the Advisor to Minister of Internal Affairs, Anton Gerashchenko. The exact number of dead and injured is currently unknown, according to the Ukrainska Pravda.

**RUSSIA TAKES CONTROL OF ANOTHER UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR PLANT**

New Delhi: Russian forces have taken over the area around the Zaporozhskaya Nuclear Power Plant, the Ministry of Defense announced on Monday. Last week, Moscow took control of the Chernobyl facility, RT reported. "Russian Forces have taken control over the cities of Berdyansk, Energodar. Russian troops have complete control and are protecting the territory around the Zaporozhskaya Nuclear Power Plant," spokesperson Major General Igor Konashenkov said. "The station staff keeps working to maintain the facility and control the nuclear environment in normal mode. The radiation levels are normal", RT reported. It is reported that the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the site of the worst nuclear catastrophe in history, is stable, with radiation levels being monitored at least six times a day, the report said.

**KYIV, MOSCOW START TALKS**

New Delhi: A convoy of Belarusian tanks and troop carriers were seen queuing near the Ukrainian border today as officials from Moscow and Kyiv started peace talks, Daily Mail reported. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky admitted he was not confident of a positive resolution, adding that he owed it to his people to at least try and engage, the report said. Ukraine has indicated it will request a ceasefire and full withdrawal of Russian forces but Moscow has remained tight lipped over what the negotiations, held at noon in Gomel in southeastern Belarus, could entail. But columns of Belarusian military vehicles were spotted today heading east from the southwestern corner of the country in what appeared to be preparations to join the invasion of Ukraine, Daily Mail reported.

## India may see fourth Covid wave from June



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India may start around June 22 and peak from mid-to-late August, a modelling study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur suggests. The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, recently posted on the preprint repository MedRxiv, used a statistical model to make the prediction, finding that the possible new wave will last for four months. The study led by Sabara Parshad Rajeshbhai, Subhra Sankar Dhar, and Shalabh of IIT Kanpur's Department of Mathematics and Statistics shows that the severity of the

fourth wave will depend on the emergence of a possible new coronavirus variant, and vaccination status across the country. "The data indicates that the fourth wave of COVID-19 in India will arrive after 936 days from the initial data availability date, which is January 30, 2020," the authors of the study said. "Therefore, the fourth wave starts from June 22, 2022, reaching its peak on August 23, 2022, and ends on October 24, 2022," they wrote in the research paper. However, the researchers noted that there is always a fair chance that a possible new variant of coronavirus may have an intense impact on the whole analysis.

**AMUL INCREASES RATES BY RS 2/LITRE FROM MARCH 1**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Milk and milk products giant Amul on Monday announced an increase, by Rs 2 per litre, in milk rates for metro market - Delhi NCR, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Kolkata - with effect from Tuesday. This is the second time that the brand is hiking its rates in this financial year. Full cream milk rates are set to rise to Rs 60 per litre from Rs 58 per litre at all four of these cities. Toned milk will be Rs 48 per litre in Ahmedabad, up from Rs 46 per litre while it will be Rs 50 per litre in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, and Kolkata, up from Rs 48 per litre, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GMMF) said. Standard double toned will be Rs 42 per litre at Ahmedabad while it will be Rs 44 per litre at Delhi NCR and Kolkata. The standard milk will be available at Rs 54 per litre at Ahmedabad and Kolkata. Similarly, Amul Gold milk will be priced at Rs 30 per half a litre, Amul Taza will be priced at Rs 24 per half a litre, while Amul Shakti will now cost at Rs 27 per half a litre.

## India's FY22 GDP now expected to grow at 8.9%

**ON MONDAY, THE 'SECOND ADVANCE ESTIMATES OF NATIONAL INCOME FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-22', ESTIMATED THAT 'REAL GDP' OR 'GDP AT CONSTANT PRICES' (2011-12) IN THE YEAR 2021-22 WILL RISE TO RS 147.72 LAKH CRORE FROM THE 'FIRST REVISED ESTIMATE OF GDP' FOR 2020-21 AT RS 135.58 LAKH CRORE. AS PER THE ESTIMATE, REAL GVA AT BASIC PRICES IS ESTIMATED AT RS 136.25 LAKH CRORE IN 2021-22, AS AGAINST RS 125.85 LAKH CRORE IN 2020-21, SHOWING A GROWTH OF 8.3 PER CENT.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's economy is estimated to clock a real GDP growth of 8.9 per cent in FY22 down from the earlier estimate of 9.2 per cent, official data showed on Monday. In 2020-21, India's economy had contracted by 6.6 per cent. "The growth in GDP during 2021-22 is estimated at 8.9 per cent as compared to a contraction of 6.6 per cent in 2020-21," the National Statistical Office (NSO) said. In terms of sectors, the estimates showed growth from agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing and construction at 3.3 per cent, 12.6 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. The GVA at basic prices for 2021-22 from the electric-



ity, gas, water supply and other utility services sector is expected to grow by 7.8 per cent.

In addition, the GVA from trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcast-

ing, financial, real estate and professional services, and public administration, defence and other services grew at 11.6 per cent, 4.3 per cent, and 12.5 per cent, respectively.

## Indian media coverage of Ukraine biased, says Russia

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Russia has called out Indian media coverage of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine to be "biased and misleading" and urged it to be "objective in information". The Russian Embassy in India in a tweet stated: "With regard to the crisis in Ukraine, the Indian media is requested to be accurate so that Indian public receives objective information." It pointed out Indian media reports about negotiation with Ukraine, nuclear

sites in Ukraine are said to be unsafe. The Embassy said that "Russia repeatedly initiated and indicated its readiness for dialogue and negotiations." Russia also stated that nuclear sites in Ukraine are safe and secured as confirmed by the IAEA. India media had purportedly reported attacks on radioactive waste-disposal site in Kyiv, and Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Even IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi commented over

this, saying such incidents highlight the very real risk that facilities with radioactive material will suffer damage during the conflict, with potentially severe consequences for human health and the environment. Russia said such reports are "biased and misleading". In the meantime, Russia has so far not allowed any media organisation to visit the country to cover the ongoing conflict which started on February 24 when Russian troops started entering Ukrainian territory.

## MAHA'S ACTING DGP SANJAY PANDEY NEW MUMBAI POLICE COMMISSIONER



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra Government on Monday appointed Acting Director-General of Police Sanjay Pandey as the new Mumbai Commissioner of Police, a DGP-rank post. He replaces Hemant Nagrale, who has been appointed as the new Managing Director,

Maharashtra State Security Corporation, a post held by Pandey. The new postings came 10 days after the state government appointed Rajnish Seth as the new DGP in place of the acting DGP Pandey. Pandey was serving as the acting DGP since April 9, 2021, after then incumbent Subodh Jaiswal was transferred as CBI Director.

## Without emission cuts, heat and humidity will cross limits of human survivability: IPCC report

These are the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) Working Group II (WRG II) report - titled IPCC AR6 WGII 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability' - that pointed out the range of impacts India is vulnerable to: heat stress, which can increase beyond the threshold of human survivability, impacts on food production due to climate change, which includes food crops, fisheries, compounding disasters, and disasters elsewhere that will impact international supply chains, markets, trade, and result in economic shocks among others.

**THE STUDY ALSO MENTIONS THAT UNDER THE HIGH EMISSIONS SCENARIO, THE END OF THE CENTURY, LUCKNOW AND PATNA WOULD BE AMONG THE CITIES PREDICTED TO REACH WET-BULB TEMPERATURES OF 35 DEGREES CELSIUS IF EMISSIONS CONTINUE TO RISE, WHILE BHUBANESWAR, CHENNAI, MUMBAI, INDORE, AND AHMEDABAD ARE ALL IDENTIFIED AS AT RISK OF REACHING WET-BULB TEMPERATURES OF 32-34 DEGREES CELSIUS WITH CONTINUED EMISSIONS.**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At the current emission cuts promised, many parts of northern and coastal India would reach extremely dangerous wet-bulb temperatures - a measure combining both health and humidity - of over 31 degrees Celsius towards the end of the century, a new UN report has warned. A wet-bulb temperature of 31 degrees Celsius is extremely dangerous for humans, while a value of 35 degrees Celsius is unsurvivable for more than about six hours, even for fit and healthy adults resting in the shade. Even below these levels, heat can be deadly, especially for old or young people or those doing hard physical work. Citing a study,



the IPCC report said, if emissions are cut, but only by the levels currently promised, many parts of northern and coastal India would reach extremely dangerous wet-bulb temperatures of over 31 degrees Celsius towards the end of the century. However, if emissions continue to rise,

wet-bulb temperatures will approach or exceed the unsurvivable limit of 35 degrees Celsius over much of India, with the majority of the country reaching wet-bulb temperatures of 31 degrees Celsius or more. Overall, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab will be the most severely affected, but if emissions continue to increase, all Indian states will have regions that experience wet-bulb temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius or more by the end of the century, the report said. Critically, the impacts of extreme heat are experienced disproportionately within cities with the poorest populations and those with lower access to green spaces affected most, the report said.



# INDIA SENDING AID TO UKRAINE, DEPLOYING MINISTERS TO FACILITATE EVACUATION: MEA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India is sending humanitarian aid, including medicines, to war-hit Ukraine at the request of Ukraine's Ambassador to India, Igor Polikha, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday.

Briefing mediapersons here, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "India is sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine."

He also said that India has decided to send four Union ministers to the neighbouring countries of Ukraine to help evacuate Indian citizens stuck at various border areas.

Bagchi said: "Four Union ministers are going to four countries near Ukraine to help in the evacuation of the Indian students who are stuck there." According to the spokesperson, Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia will travel to Romania and



Moldova; Kiren Rijiju will be at the border with Slovakia; Hardeep Singh Puri will be at the Hungary border; while former Army chief General V.K. Singh will be in Poland.

They are going as special envoys of Indians to help evacuate those who are stuck on various borders.

Under 'Operation Ganga', India is bringing back students who are stuck in the conflict zones as well as in non-conflict zones in Ukraine.

The decision to send four ministers to oversee smooth evacuation was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Replying to a query over students being asked to pay exorbitant amounts for evacuation, the spokesperson dismissed it as rumour and said: "No one is paying any money for these evacuation flights. The government is not changing any money to bring them

back." He also stated that till now, six evacuation flights have landed in India with almost 1,386 Indian nationals. A flight from Budapest landed earlier on Monday with 240 Indians. It is estimated that when Operation Ganga was launched, around 15,000 Indians were left in Ukraine. After Ukraine closed its airspace, India identified four land evacuation points through Poland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Talking about military help in evacuation like what happened in Afghanistan, Bagchi said the situation is different in Ukraine as compared to Afghanistan when India had sent military aircraft to evacuate Indians after Afghanistan was taken over by Taliban forces in August last year. "We are evacuating through commercial flights and we are open to using military aircraft if the need arises. Sending military aircraft there involves more countries," he added.

# Manipur records 78.3% polling amid stray incidents

Imphal | Agencies

Amid stray incidents of violence, Manipur on Monday recorded 78.03 per cent voter turnout in the first phase of Assembly elections in which 38 out of the 60 Assembly seats are being contested, election officials said.

Of the five districts where the first phase of elections were held, highest turnout of 82.19 per cent was recorded in Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts, followed by 76.64 per cent in Imphal East, 74.45 per cent in Churachandpur and 73.44 per cent in Bishnupur district. The police said that at least one person was injured in a clash between the workers of two rival parties in Churachandpur district. Clashes were also reported from different parts of Imphal East, Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts, but the security personnel tackled the situation by mobilising additional forces. Manipur Chief Electoral Officer Rajesh Agrawal said that the final polling percentage would be available after the return of all the polling parties. He said that incidents of damaging EVMs by unknown miscreants were reported from



seven polling stations under five Assembly constituencies -- Saikul, Saitu, Singhat, Henglep and Thanlon. FIRs were registered in all these cases and voting in these polling stations was completed with new sets of EVMs, the CEO said, adding that preventive firing (in the air) by security personnel was reported from some polling stations under Saitu, Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts, but the security personnel tackled the situation by mobilising additional forces. Manipur Chief Electoral Officer Rajesh Agrawal said that the final polling percentage would be available after the return of all the polling parties. He said that incidents of damaging EVMs by unknown miscreants were reported from

## AKHILESH FINALLY SAYS CRIME CONTROL HIS TOP AGENDA

**Lucknow:** Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has finally sent out a strong and clear message that crime control will be the top agenda for the Samajwadi Party if it forms the government after the Assembly elections.



Akhilesh said that those who want to encourage crime and criminals should not vote for the SP. Talking of 'poor law and order under the BJP regime', Akhilesh said those who don't want to follow the law or encourage crime and criminals, should not vote for Samajwadi Party.

"If anyone here does not want to follow law or encourage crime and criminals, those who want to break the law or want to go beyond the law, please do not vote for us," he said.

Akhilesh, while addressing election meetings on Sunday evening in Deoria, Kushinagar and Gorakhpur, said no one will be allowed to do anything that is insulting or disrespectful for any fellow human being.

Attacking the BJP leadership over its claims of addressing the concerns of the backward castes and deprived sections of the society, Akhilesh said if the BJP was concerned about OBCs and Dalits then the Centre should not have stonewalled the demand for caste census.

## Odisha govt puts curbs celebration of Holi at public places

Bhubaneswar | Agencies

The Odisha government on Monday issued Covid-19 guidelines for March, imposing restrictions on celebration of Holi at public places.

"Holi and its related rituals shall not be observed in public places throughout the state. People may celebrate Holi with family members in their houses only and not in any public places including public roads," Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena said in an order. Mahashivaratri, on March 1, will be observed as per the order issued by the SRC on February 25. During celebration of Dola Punima, people will have to follow Covid appropriate



behavior. All religious rituals are allowed with strict adherence of Covid-19 protocols, Jena said. There will be no night curfew across the state. The government

has allowed all social, religious, political and sports gatherings along with exhibitions, trade fairs, expo and melas with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols. As

urban elections are scheduled to be held on March 24, the state government has allowed political gatherings, meetings, rallies, door to door campaigns as per the instructions/guidelines issued by the State Election Commission from time to time. Maximum 500 persons will be allowed for marriages, thread ceremony and other related gatherings with approval from local authorities. However, for marriage processions, maximum 100 participants including bridegroom, priest, friends, relatives, guests, members of band party, light & sound systems etc. will be allowed. Funerals, last rites and related gatherings are allowed with a ceiling of 250 persons.

## FOOD DELIVERY BOY KIDNAPPED AFTER ARGUMENT OVER EARPHONE LEAD, SIX ARRESTED

**Gurugram:** The Gurugram police have arrested six persons and rescued safely a food delivery boy allegedly kidnapped by them. The victim, identified as Pintu Lal Meena alias JP, was allegedly kidnapped after an argument over earphones on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday from village Nagli Umarpur of Gurugram. He is a resident of Rajasthan. The arrested were identified as Lokesh, Chhotu, Devi Ram, Rinku, Dharmender and Suman Kumar Yogi, all residents of Rajasthan. The police have recovered three motorcycles and a car (Wagon-R) used by the accused in executing the crime. The complainant, Rohit told the police that he, Vikas and Pintu were roommates and were staying in rented accommodation in village Nagli Umarpur of Gurugram. "On the intervening night of Sunday and Monday around four-five persons, having their faces covered with clothes and carrying sticks, barged into our room and forcibly took Pintu with them on a motorcycle," Rohit told the police. Following this, a kidnapping case was registered at the Sector-65 police station.

## Delhi govt discontinues discounts on MRP of liquor



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi government's excise department on Monday announced to discontinue the discount policy on MRP of liquor in

the capital city. "All L7Z licensee shall neither give concession, rebate, or discount on the MRP of liquor and are hereby directed to strictly abide by Rule 54 (3) of the Delhi Excise

Rules 2010," reads the order issued by Delhi government. It added that if any such instance of concession or discount is reported, action will be taken against the defaulting licensee. The liquor shops in Delhi were offering hefty discounts on liquor bottles to exhaust their stock by the end of March when licences will be renewed. The intent of the government with regard to offering discounts was to promote consumer choice and healthy competition and determination of price by market forces. "Due to discounts being offered at liquor stores in Delhi, the shops were thronged by a large number of people, causing law and order problems and inconvenience to the local people," read the notice issued by the Delhi government.

## Man threatens wife he will post her nude photos on social media, FIR registered

Bengaluru | Agencies

The Karnataka police have filed an FIR against a man who threatened his wife that her nude photos would be posted on social media over property issues in Bengaluru, police said on Monday.

Following the complaint of the 25-year-old woman, the Basavanagudi women's police station registered a complaint against her husband Pragath Purushottam (32), an industrialist from Hanumanthnagar locality of Bengaluru.

According to the police, the victim had got married to the accused 7 years ago. At the time of marriage, the victim's family had gifted half a kilogram of gold jewellery and 15 kgs of silver as dowry. Initially, relations were good between the couple.

Later, the accused had started forcing his wife to bring more dowry from her parents. She told the police that her parents had given Rs 40 lakh as dowry to her husband. However, the accused was not happy with her.

The woman told the police that her husband used to come home in an inebriated state and clicked her nude photos forcibly. He threatened her that if she told anyone about it, he would not spare her. He had also given her a life threat. He demanded that she should get half the prop-



erty of her father registered in his name. The accused said that later she should give him a

divorce and threatened her that he would post her nude photos on social media.

## Govt urged to block Chinese app BGMI-PUBG in the interest of security

Team Absolute | New Delhi

**PRAHAR,** an NGO has urged the government to block the Chinese gaming app BGMI-PUBG and add it to the list of 54 Chinese apps banned on February 14, 2022 saying its omission in the list is a "clear lapse in judgement on part of the Government".

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliated Swadeshi Jagran Manch has supported this initiative by Prahar and has called for an investigation into the antecedents and China influence of BGMI-PUBG.

PUBG mobile was banned by the Government of India on September 2, 2020. Within ten months, it was relaunched as Battlegrounds Mobile India (BGMI). BGMI is the biggest among the chinese apps that relaunched and rebranded with the same features and have managed to circumvent scrutiny.

Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch said, "We congratulate the



Government on their decision to ban another 54 Chinese apps in India recently. This is in line with the ongoing demand from people of India to boycott all kinds of Chinese goods. Also, in today's data centric world, maintaining technology integrity is extremely important to protect the sovereignty of India, security of the state and defence of India. We urge the Government to thoroughly investigate the antecedents and China influence of

the BGMI-PUBG app and take immediate action if found in violation". The letter written by Abhay Mishra, National Convenor and President, PRAHAR, said, "Tencent Holdings Limited had launched PUBG in India, and it was one of the most downloaded games at the time of its ban in 2020. In less than a year, PUBG was re-introduced in India by a front company of Tencent - Krafton under the new name BGMI - a move that was clearly meant to

circumvent the Indian policymakers."

It further added "On paper, Tencent is the second largest shareholder of Krafton with 15.5 per cent stocks. However, it is said that Tencent holds additional interests in promoter's various businesses, through private deals hidden from the public, giving them extraordinary control on Krafton. Most global media also refer to Krafton as "Tencent backed Krafton".

The letter concludes: "Since the government does not have a mechanism or the machinery to closely track the movements of companies like Tencent, banning apps like Chinese BGMI PUBG is in the interest of both the country and its people. We therefore request your ministry to include Chinese app BGMI-PUBG among the list of apps in India under Section the the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state, and public order and save millions of unsuspecting players from falling prey into the Chinese trap.

## Man gets 20-year jail term for raping minor in UP

Amroha (UP) | Agencies

A Special POCSCO court has sentenced a man to 20 years in prison for kidnapping and raping a minor from his village in Amroha district.

Basant Singh Saini, special prosecution officer, said: "The judge has awarded a 20-year jail term to the accused, seven years after the incident." The survivor was seven years old at the time of the incident.

The court has also asked the accused to pay Rs 30,000 to the survivor and deposit Rs 13,000 in the court.

The minor was kidnapped by the man and one juvenile on September 4, 2014. At that time, the accused was 19 years old. The case against the juvenile is pending in the court concerned. The local court in Amroha, after seven years of trial,



acquitted the third accused due to lack of proof. Both the survivor and accused belong to the same village. The minor had suddenly gone missing and her father filed a complaint at the local

police station. He named three people as suspects in his complaint. Five days later, police rescued the girl who was being held captive by the accused. All the three accused were arrested.



15 MP STUDENTS STUCK IN UKRAINE RETURN HOME PERFORM DUTIES TOWARDS MOTHERLAND SINCERELY: GOVERNOR

As many as 15 medical students from Madhya Pradesh who were stranded in Ukraine have returned safely home, said the state government in an official statement.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

As many as 15 medical students from Madhya Pradesh who were stranded in Ukraine have returned safely home, said the state government in an official statement.

Those medical students who have returned home are from different districts of Madhya Pradesh. Three students are from Bhopal, three from Indore, while one from districts such as Jabalpur, Satna, Sidhi, Neemach, Khargone, Betul, Gwalior, Datia and Sagar.

So far, 15 medical students of Madhya Pradesh have been brought safely home, the Chief Minister Office said. Over 100 medical students from different parts of Madhya Pradesh who are stranded in Ukraine have contacted the state government or have reg-

istered their complaints with the Chief Minister's helpline. However, it is not known exactly how many students from the state are stranded in the war-hit country.

On Sunday, the Air India (AI)-192 special flight successfully airlifted 250 Indian students from Bucharest, under 'Operation Ganga' at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as saviour of people. "PM Modi has saved everyone during the crisis, be it students in Ukraine or Indians in Afghanistan," Chouhan said while addressing a poll rally in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday. It has been learned that two more flights will be taking off to bring back Indian nationals.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has called upon the youth to fulfil their duties towards the motherland sincerely. Bring laurels to your country through whichever field you choose, whatever work you do. He said that what we are today is due to our motherland and the sacrifice and service of our parents. The meaning of life lies in serving them.

Patel was holding discussion with a group of Kashmiri youths who were on a visit to Raj Bhavan during the 'Watan Ko Jano' programme of the 14th Corps of Sashastra Seema Bal.

Governor Patel told the youth that our country is like a family, whose speciality is unity in diversity which they must have experienced this during their tour. Referring to how one is welcomed in regional languages Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali, he said that even though their language is different, but all mean the same as 'how are you'. He said that in Indian culture 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is considering the whole world as one family. This is the reason that unity in diversity of form, color, shape, food, dress, speech is the speciality of our country. Initially the Commandant of Sashastra Seema Bal,



AS Rathore welcomed the Governor and presented the 14th Corps Coffee Table Book. Assistant Commandant Sukhdev Jharia informed about the visit. He informed that there are total 30 participants in the team including

11 teenagers in the 13-18 age group and 19 youths in the 18-22 age group. Participants Faem Bilal and Yasir Shafi shared their experiences during the visit with the Governor. Shakib Qayyum proposed the vote of thanks

while mementoes were presented by Naveed ul Haq on behalf of the participants. Additional Secretary to the Governor Manoj Khatri, Controller Tiwari and officers of Sashastra Seema Bal were also present.

Grant amount to reach street vendors' accounts soon: Singh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

An MoU was signed between the Urban Development and Housing Department and Indian Bank in the presence of Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh, on Monday, with the objective of transferring the amount of interest subsidy through DBT to the bank accounts of street vendors under PM Swanidhi Yojana. Principal Secretary Urban Development and Housing Manish Singh, Commissioner Urban Administration and Development Nikunj Kumar Srivastava, Additional Commissioner Gajendra Singh Nagesh, Field General Manager of Indian Bank Manoj Kumar Das and other officers were present.

Minister Singh said that this will reduce paperwork and interest subsidy will reach the beneficiary's account fast. In the scheme, 7 percent interest subsidy is given by the central government and the remaining interest amount is paid by the state government in the loan of Rs 10,000 given to street vendors. Singh informed that sufficient amount is available under the scheme. In the first phase of the scheme, the Government of India had



given a target of giving loans to 4 lakh 5 thousand street vendors to Madhya Pradesh. Along with fulfilling this target, loans have been distributed to 4 lakh 90 thousand street vendors in the state so far.

CM Planted Sapling of Almond and Saptaparni

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted almond and saptaparni saplings in Smart Garden on Monday. Vikas Bhaduria of ABP News and Divya Bharthare, Vikram Pratap Suryavanshi, Suraj Vishwakarma and Seema Bharthare of Divyajeewan Foundation were with him.

Divyajeewan Foundation was started in the year 2017 with the aim of helping the socially, mentally-physically and economically backward people. The foundation dedicated to the society has registered its name in the Marvellous Book of Records by planting 10,000 trees together in 36 rural and urban areas of 9 states. The Foundation's mission is to provide a low-cost health-care system to people living below the poverty line and empower people in the fields of clothing, health and food. More than 500 free medical camps have been organised so far. In the form of a box of smiles, the foundation has provided clothes



to more than 1 lakh people in different states, shoes to 5 thousand children, food and raw ration to more than 50 thousand people, as well as tricycles, wheel chairs and prostheses have been made available to 200 Divyangjans. The almond tree has pink and white fragrant flowers. Almond being full of fiber aids in digestion. consumption of almonds is considered useful in high blood pressure, constipation disease and heart disease. It is rich in potassium, magnesium, calcium and vitamin E. aptaparni plant is an evergreen medicinal tree, which has great importance in Ayurveda. It is used in the manufacture of various medicines.

CM Pays Homage to Dr. Rajendra Prasad on His Death Anniversary

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid homage to the first President of India Rajendra Prasad on his death anniversary. Chouhan paid floral tribute by garlanding his picture in the auditorium at his residence office.



Rajendra Prasad was the first President of India and the great Indian freedom fighter. He was one of the prominent leaders of the Indian Independence movement. He also contributed significantly in the making of the Indian Constitution. Often he is mentioned respectfully with the address 'Rajendra

Babu'. Dr. Rajendra Babu was born on 3 December 1884 in Jiradei village of the then Saran district (now Siwan) of Bihar. He earned a doctorate degree in the field of law. Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the country on 26 January 1950. In the year

1957, Rajendra Prasad became the President again. He held this highest post till the year 1962. In the same year, he left his post and went to Patna and started living in Bihar Vidyapeeth by doing public service. He passed away on February 28, 1963 in Patna.

SHOWROOM OWNER-TURNED-VEHICLE THIEF NABBED BY POLICE

Indore: In a shocking incident, the Indore Police have arrested a vehicle thief, who was previously the owner of a two-wheeler showroom by the name Fine Motors. Ajay, the accused, Ajay, was nabbed by police in Hira Nagar. He then made some shocking revelations during the interrogation. Ajay said that he opened a showroom of Honda bikes in 2013 after borrowing a large amount from the bank to finance it. Unfortunately, he fell into the trap of Aara finance company's zero down payment scheme and was unable to repay the loan. According to the accused, he sold 50 vehicles relying on the zero down payment scheme of the firm which then absconded without paying him the price of the vehicles. The accused further informed the police that he was in huge debt owing to this fraud of the finance company and even lodged an FIR in 2017 but to no avail. Eventually, he had to shut his showroom and resort to stealing vehicles to make ends meet. The accused has admitted to the police that his financial situation is dire, and he has to take care of his two daughters and father who is battling cancer for a long time. The man said that his family's debt is growing at an alarming rate and prior to opening the showroom, he worked as a mechanic. It was during this period he learned to make the master keys for Activa and Honda motorcycles. He informed that he left his job as a mechanic in 2013 to become the owner of the showroom, Fine Motors.

Dalit activist beaten up, forced to drink urine in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh police has booked seven people and arrested two persons for allegedly beating up a Dalit activist and forcing him to drink urine in Gwalior district. The victim, who has been identified as Shashikant Jatav, is a Right to Information (RTI) activist.

The Police said the incident occurred on February 23, however, it came to light on Sunday after an FIR was lodged which alleged that seven people beat up a Dalit activist brutally and forced the victim to drink urine.

Local police (Gwalior district) said two persons would have been arrested and there is a hunt to nab other five

accused. According to the police, Jatav is a local RTI activist and had sought information about mismanagement of funds in Gram Panchayat in Gwalior district. This did not go down well with some people associated with panchayat representative and decided to teach him a lesson. With severe injuries, the victim was admitted in a local hospital on February 24 and now has been shifted to AIIMS, Delhi for further treatment, police said. "A case has been registered and a total seven persons have been booked for attempt to murder. They have also been booked under provisions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of atrocities) Act," a senior police official said.

"Ektara" is Fourth Exhibit of the Week at IGRMS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Under the Latest and popular online series of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) entitled 'Exhibit of the Week' the "Ektara" (A folk musical instrument) collected from 2013 is on display. The Community of Folk, Murshidabad, West Bengal. It's Measurement Max. Height- 46 cm, and circumference- 33cm., displayed in the audience as the fourth Exhibit of the month of February, 2022 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS said that Ektara is a

single stringed musical instrument, or a plucking drum used by the Baul singers. Bauls are a group of wandering minstrel of West Bengal who traditionally perform Baul Sangeet. It is a type of folk song sung with the most rhythmic accompaniment of Ektara. Although Bauls use several musical instruments to enhance their compositions, Ektara remain the main instrument. It consists of a resonator made of hollow coconut shell covered with skin, bamboo splits as a neck and string. Many a time hollow gourd and wood is also used as resonator. While playing the singer holds the ektara in upright position, gripping the bamboo neck at the

upper part of the resonator and plucking the string with the index finger of the same hand.

Visitors can see this object from home through the Official site (https://igrms.com/wordpress/?page\_id=8395) and Facebook site (https://www.facebook.com/NationalMuseumMankind). Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS. Change in visiting time of Manav Sangrahalaya from on Tuesday The visiting hours of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya is getting changed from tuesday Sangrahalaya will be open from 11.00 am to 6.30 pm. The Sangrahalaya would remain closed on Mondays and all National Holidays.

Form IV

(Rule 8, The registration of Newspaper(Central) rules, 1956)

Table with 7 rows and 2 columns: Field Name and Value. Fields include Name of Publication, Place of Publication, Periodicity of its Publication, Printer's (Name, Nationality, Address), Publisher's (Name, Nationality, Address), Editor's (Name, Nationality, Address), and Name and address of individual/s who own the Newspaper.

I, Yogendra Chaturvedi hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-

Date: 01.03.2022

Yogendra Chaturvedi

Signature of Printer & Publisher



EDITOR'S SPECS

Where Congress stands?

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot met Rahul Gandhi and took stock of the party's performance in the ongoing assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. General secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal were also present in the meeting. After the meeting Baghel said, "There was a detailed discussion on the party's performance in elections in five states and on strategy regarding results." Baghel is monitoring the UP elections and has been campaigning, giving ample time to the state. Sources said, Rahul Gandhi took feedback about party's performance in UP elections and discussed state organisational polls and also on the issue of Rajya Sabha elections. Baghel has been talking of cow shelter and 'Godhan Nyay Yojna' in UP and wants to push more such schemes in the state. According to Gehlot, There are challenges before the nation as the Constitution and democracy are under threat, but the Congress is the only opposition party which is fighting and people have lot of expectations from it. Both the leaders had in-depth discussion on the assembly elections in five states and the strategy to be adopted by the party after the announcement of results on March 10. They also discussed the Chhattisgarh organisational elections and considered names for vacant seats in the Rajya Sabha. The meeting discussed that the Congress-ruled states would be implementing the people-friendly policies in which Chhattisgarh's flagship scheme 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' would be implemented on priority. It was decided that the process of elections would start from April 1 this year. The election of block committees would be held in May. At the same time, by September 20, Congress will also choose its new state presidents.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE TRANSGRESSION HITS MARKETS BADLY



Markets were badly hit by the Soviet transgression into Ukraine last week. Though they recovered 50 per cent of what they lost because of the transgression, they still closed with substantially higher losses. BSESENSEX lost 1,974.45 points or 3.41 per cent to close at 55,858.52 points while NIFTY lost 617.90 points or 3.58 per cent to close at 16,658.40 points. The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 lose 3.51 per cent, 3.45 per cent and 3.57 per cent respectively. BSEMIDCAP lost 2.56 per cent while BSESMALLCAP lost 4.68 per cent. The Indian Rupee lost 63 paise or 0.84 per cent to close at Rs 75.29 to the US Dollar. Dow Jones lost a mere 20.43 points or 0.06 per cent to close at 34,058.75 points. Coming to the markets, we lost a massive 2,703 points on the BSESENSEX on Thursday when hostilities broke out. Similar loss on NIFTY was 816 points. The next day on Friday approximately half was regained with BSESENSEX gaining 1,328 points and NIFTY 410 points. Significantly, the loss for the week is even more than that and comes from the weakness on the first three days of the week. During the sharp fall on Thursday, markets broke the low made on December 20. This low was 55,132.68 and 16,410 points. The new lows made on Thursday,

Arun Kejriwal

the 24th of February were 54,383.20 points and 16,203.25 points. The last low lasted for a little over two months and was followed by a vicious uptrend which saw BSESENSEX gain over 6,000 points in just under a month. Whether some thing like this will happen yet again is difficult to predict and looks unlikely as of now. Events are completely different this time around. While the cause of the fall was due to hostilities and the recovery could be more of a knee jerk reaction, movement hereafter will be driven by events. While currently no sanctions have been imposed on crude oil and gas, a large number of restrictions have been put on Russia and its central banks and largest banks. This will affect movement of goods globally. While India would be able to continue to trade under the bilateral trade regime which uses the Indian Rupee with Russia, it will have repercussions sooner than later. Assuming the issue does not get resolved in the next few days, the situation will harden on both sides. Ukraine exports sunflower oil, inorganic chemicals, iron and steel and plastics to India. To the world it exports corn, wheat, seed oil, iron ore and semi-finished iron. Russia would ensure that movement of goods from Ukraine's ports are affected. The crux of the dispute is to ensure that Ukraine does not become a member of NATO, and thus NATO does not have access to Russian borders. February futures were badly hit as the skirmish between Russia and Ukraine happened on Thursday which was expiry day. February futures lost 862.20 points or 5.04 per cent to close at 16,247.95 points. NIFTY lost 816 points on NIFTY on Thursday, which effectively means that the series was down by a mere 46 points prior to expiry day. The government has allowed 20 per cent FDI by automatic route in the upcoming LIC IPO. While market rumours talk about the issue likely to get delayed, the FM is on record as stating that the issue would happen and get listed in the current financial year. Suffice to say that we have to go by what the official version is until there is better clarity. There is no news on primary issues tapping the capital markets in the coming week. One does hear of a couple of issues likely to do so in the second week of March, but as of date there is no confirmed news whether it be by way of ROC filing or issue advertisements. Dow futures were up sharply at the time of writing this article along with Singapore NIFTY futures. While this indicates a very strong possibility of a gap-up opening on Monday, it must be borne in mind that the skirmish has just begun. There is no immediate resolution in sight currently. Ukraine is asking for ammunition to defend itself and is unlikely to allow a takeover under any circumstances. While it is not a NATO member, the support required for Ukraine has to come if this skirmish is to be resolved at the earliest. Not being a war expert, let me end it here, cautioning people that markets would need to consolidate before they can get over the setback of this intrusion and unfortunate event. Election results to five states would be available on 10th March when counting begins. The last round of voting is on Monday, the 7th of March. Exit polls would begin on that evening, and if the consensus points to the government of the day faring well in these elections, the markets could see a leg up when they begin to trade on the 8th of March. What should investors do in the markets currently is a key question on everybody's mind. Transgression has happened and is unlikely to end in a day or two. The longer it lasts, the greater would be the ramifications for the two parties involved and the world at large. Global tension, dislocation of goods and services, inflationary pressure on commodities and cost of the war and then the cost of rebuilding will cripple the fragile global economy still struggling from recovering from after effects of Covid-19. The time is to play the markets by buying on sharp dips and selling on rallies as markets will remain extremely choppy. Choose stocks only from large caps as they will be safer and liquid in these difficult times. The fall in Smallcap stocks is much more pronounced and is slightly less in midcap stocks. While FII's have been big sellers in the cash market they have been net buyers in Futures and options, indicating that they are bullish on the Indian markets. Trade cautiously.

(Arun Kejriwal is the founder of Kejriwal Research and Investment Services. The views expressed are personal)

international

Europeans to 'pay a price' for Russia sanctions: Von der Leyen

European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, has acknowledged that the sweeping sanctions the bloc has imposed on Russia in recent days over Moscow's military operation in Ukraine will have a negative impact on Europeans, too, RT reported.



"strong solidarity," RT reported. The EU boss listed the bloc's willingness to take in Ukrainian refugees, the "financial support", as well as the "military equipment support" as proof that the EU is committed to backing Kiev. The European Commission President also opined that Ukraine shares "EU values" and is defending its "principles." On Friday, Paschal Donohoe, the Irish Minister for Finance and President of the Eurogroup - a body that is comprised of Finance Ministers of the Euro area - also stated that "there will be economic costs" for Europe which "will emerge over the coming weeks and months". He added that the "impact will be different for different member states."

Euronews correspondent's remark on Sunday that "of course Europeans and Europe will have to pay a price for these measures", von der Leyen replied in the affirmative, saying that "every war comes at a cost." However, according to the official, Brussels is not daunted by the possible economic blowback from the Russia sanctions, and will continue to prop up Ukraine with a

NEPAL, INDIA SIGN AGREEMENT ON FERTILISER SUPPLIES

Kathmandu: India and Nepal on Monday concluded an MoU for long-term supply of urea and DAP fertilisers from India to Nepal under a government to government arrangement. The MoU was signed by India's Secretary, Chemicals and Fertilisers, Rajesh Kumar Chaturvedi, and Nepal's Secretary, Agriculture and Livestock Development, Dr Govinda Prasad Sharma. The virtual ceremony to sign and exchange the MoU was held on Monday in presence of Nepal's Agriculture and Livestock Development Minister, Mahindra Ray Yadav, and India's Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra, and officials of the ministries and embassies of both India and Nepal. Nepal has been looking for supplies of chemical fertiliser from India since long but this could not materialise so far due to some technical reasons. The life of the agreement is five years, and under it, India will supply 150,00 metric tons of chemical fertiliser by the end of June, out of which 60 per cent would be urea and 40 per cent would be DAP. In his remarks, Chaturvedi highlighted the close and multi-faceted nature of India-Nepal ties and hoped that the MoU will further boost bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector by supporting Nepal's economy and food security, according to the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu. The signing of this MoU is expected to help address the recurring fertiliser shortages in Nepal and enable to improve agricultural productivity for the direct benefit of Nepali farmers, the embassy said. "The MoU is yet another milestone in the bilateral economic cooperation and also an important reflection of the priority attached by India to its partnership with Nepal." As per the agreement, Nepal will procure 150,000 metric tons of chemical fertiliser from India for four years which will fulfil 30 per cent of its fertiliser needs. In the fifth year,

S Korean civic groups hold anti-Russia protests, call for peace in Ukraine

Civic activists and ordinary citizens in South Korea held a rally in front of the Russian Embassy in central Seoul on Monday to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to call for a peaceful resolution of the situation.



Seoul | Agencies Civic activists and ordinary citizens in South Korea held a rally in front of the Russian Embassy in central Seoul on Monday to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to call for a peaceful resolution of the situation. Activists representing about 400 civic groups, including People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, urged Moscow to stop its attack on Ukraine and the international community to swiftly provide humanitarian support to Ukrainians, Yonhap news agency reported. Also in attendance were about 100 Ukrainians and South Korean citizens, including those who used to live in Ukraine. They held up signs reading "Stop War," "Give Peace a Chance" and "Withdraw Russian Troops Now," along with Ukrainian flags. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an act disregarding the international society's years long effort to resolve the conflict between two countries in a peaceful man-

ner," they said. "All conflict of interest related to national security must be peacefully resolved through democracy." The civic groups delivered a statement calling for peace in Kiev, written in Korean, English and Russian, to the Russian Embassy after the news conference. Civic groups in the southwestern city of Gwangju also denounced Russia's invasion and urged the South Korean government to take all possible diplomatic measures to help bring peace to Ukraine.

ACTION TAKEN BY UN SHOULD HELP COOL SITUATION IN UKRAINE: CHINESE ENVOY

United Nations | Agencies Action taken by the UN should help cool the situation in Ukraine and facilitate diplomatic solutions, China's permanent representative to the UN has said. Zhang Jun made the remarks at the UN Security Council (UNSC) after the council adopted Resolution 2623 on Sunday that calls for an "emergency special session" of the UN General Assembly to consider and recommend collective action on the Ukraine crisis. It is the first such resolution that the council has adopted in four decades, according to a Security Council report, Xinhua news agency reported. "We believe the top priority now is for all parties to exercise necessary restraint to prevent the situation in Ukraine from getting worse," Zhang said. He noted that China supports and encourages all diplomatic efforts conducive to a peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis, and welcomes the earliest possible direct dialogue and negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. "China also supports the European side and Russia in conducting equal-footed dialogue on European security issues, and upholding the principle of indivisible securi-



ty, so as to eventually form a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism," he added. "China believes that the Security Council should give priority to regional peace and stability and the universal security of all countries, and play a constructive role in resolving the Ukraine issue," said the ambassador. The draft of the resolution, submitted by Albania and the US, garnered support from 11 members but received a negative vote from Russia. China, India and the UAE all abstained. The vote by the 15-member council was procedural, so Russia could not wield its veto.

Moscow is working to bring back Russian nationals who are stuck in Europe

The Russian government has announced that it is working on a plan to evacuate its citizens from Europe, after an array of European countries closed their airspace to all Russian airlines amid Moscow's military conflict with Kiev, RT reported.



New Delhi | Agencies The Russian government has announced that it is working on a plan to evacuate its citizens from Europe, after an array of European countries closed their airspace to all Russian airlines amid Moscow's military conflict with Kiev, RT reported. Russia's Federal Air Transport Agency and Federal Tourism Agency revealed on Sunday that they were working with the Russian Foreign Ministry to evacuate Russians from European nations as they continue to impose sanctions on Russia, cutting off Russian aircraft from their air-spaces. "The work to organise the evacuation of Russian citizens from the European countries is being carried out by the Federal Air Transport Agency together with the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Federal Tourism Agency. After clarifying the required carrying capacities, a schedule will be formed," the statement said. "Russian airlines are ready to fulfill their obligations to passengers and

deliver them home, subject to flexible approaches and constructive decisions of the aviation authorities of European countries on this issue," it continued. The agencies advised Russians in Europe to register in the Russian Foreign Ministry's Foreign Assistant smartphone app, RT reported. As most European countries currently prohibit Russian aircraft from entering their airspaces, Russians in Europe might be evacuated home through Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt, among other countries still open to Russian aircraft, Dmitry Gorin, the vice president of the Russian Union of Travel Industry (PCT), told RIA Novosti on Sunday. He noted that tour operators were working to transport "400 independent and organised tourists from Budapest, Hungary, 500 organised tourists from Bulgaria and about 200 from Portuguese Madeira" back to Russia.



# FADNAVIS APPLIED 'GUJARAT SNOOPING MODEL' IN MAHARASHTRA: CONGRESS

Maharashtra Congress chief spokesperson Atul Londhe on Monday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis had introduced a 'Gujarat brand' of surveillance tactics in Maharashtra and demanded a through probe into the matter.

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Maharashtra Congress chief spokesperson Atul Londhe on Monday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis had introduced a 'Gujarat brand' of surveillance tactics in Maharashtra and demanded a through probe into the matter. His demand came amid the backdrop of the FIR lodged on

February 26 by the Pune police against former city Police Commissioner Rashmi Shukla in the illegal phone-tapping case. "IPS officer Rashmi Shukla is merely a pawn. The real culprits are those who guided her. Fadnavis was the state chief minister and he implemented the 'Gujarat surveillance model' in Maharashtra," Londhe said here. His comments also endorsed state party president Nana Patole's demand on Sunday that the role of Fadnavis -- who was handling the home portfolio during the relevant period -- must be investigated in the illegal phone tapping case. In a significant development on Saturday, the Bundgarden Police booked Shukla, currently Additional Director-General, CRPF, at Hyderabad, in the unauthorised phone-tapping case that rocked the state polity last year, leading to the resignation and subsequent arrest of former Minister Anil Deshmukh. The FIR against Shukla followed a recommendation by a state government panel headed by ex-DGP Sanjay

Pandey, invoking the Indian Telegraph Act, Section 26 and other laws for tapping phones of prominent opposition leaders between March 2016-July 2018. Speaking to the media here, Londhe charged that the 'Gujarat surveillance model' -- in which the government of the adjoining state allegedly snooped on people and overheard their private conversations -- was introduced in Maharashtra by Fadnavis. "After 2017, the phone numbers of Patole, Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party and Congress leaders, ministers, certain BJP leaders and their ministers, top bureaucrats and others were tapped illegally. The snooping was ostensibly to link them with drug dealers," said Londhe. Patole had raised the issue in the Assembly in the past and it finally culminated in the FIR against Shukla, who was the Additional DGP, Maharashtra State Intelligence Department (SID). Although the case has been lodged against Shukla, what is pertinent is to unravel who ordered the phone-tapping, what was the purpose, whom

did she hand over the records of the phone conversations, how did it reach Fadnavis after the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government came to power in November 2019. "There are many such questions, and the government should extend the probe to cover even Fadnavis which will reveal the real masterminds," Londhe said. Patole said that "Shukla would not have dared to indulge in illegal phone-tapping without the blessings of a senior government functionary" and it was imperative to investigate Fadnavis' role and bring it in the public domain. Referring to how his own phones were tapped and how he was given a fake identity, or having links with the drug mafia, Patole said these were intended to browbeat the opposition leaders and legislators at an opportune time. "Phone-tapping can be done only with special permission to investigate serious matters like terror or narcotics, but our phone conversations were overheard despite us having not a remote connection to such crime," Patole pointed out.

# NCP MP Sule objects to Maharashtra Governor referring to Samarth Ramdas as Shivaji Maharaj's guru

"There is no evidence of there being a guru-shishya relationship between Ramdas and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," the Lok Sabha member from Maharashtra tweeted while referring to the court Order



Team Absolute | Mumbai

NCP MP Supriya Sule on Monday, February 28 took objection to Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's comment that Samarth Ramdas was the guru of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and said there is no evidence of the duo having the teacher-disciple relationship. Sule also cited a July 16, 2018 judgment of the Aurangabad Bench of Bombay High Court,

Shivaji Maharaj and Chandragupta Maurya. "Many chakravartis (emperors), maharajas took birth on this land. But, who would have asked about Chandragupta had there not been Chanakya? he said. "I am not questioning the calibre of Chandragupta and Shivaji Maharaj. Like a mother who plays a key role in shaping her child, similarly, the role of guru (teacher) has a big place in our society," the Governor had said. While objecting to it, Sule also shared an old clip of her father and NCP chief Sharad Pawar commenting that Ramdas was not the guru of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and that some people "who had pens in their hands" created the perception that Ramdas mentored Shivaji Maharaj. Notably, the Maharashtra government, comprising the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress and Koshiyari have engaged in a war of words over various issues in the past.

# ATS busts human trafficking racket; 3 Bangladeshis, 1 Mumbaikar held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Four people have been arrested in connection with a in which Bangladeshi nationals were being brought into India illegally, a Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad official said on Monday. The modus operandi was to get nationals from the neighbouring country into India through the open border or by cutting barbed wire fencing, after which they would obtain Aadhaar Cards from a UIDAI centre in Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, the official said. "These people would then spread out into various cities of India, obtain more documents fraudulently and finally manage to get Indian passports made in their names. We have arrested three Bangladeshi nationals, including a 17-year-old girl. Of these, accused Kajal Sheikh has already managed to get herself an Indian passport," he said. Mumbai resident

Santosh Varne (52), who claims to be a passport agent for the past eight to ten years, has been arrested for supplying these people with forged civic documents, school certificates etc, the official said. "We have seized a booklet having 100 blank School Leaving Certificates, on which the name and seal of schools used to be stamped by the accused. These blank school leaving certificates are in old format when Mumbai was called Bombay, and this has been done to make verification difficult," he added. He said one Sardar Shaikh alias Monjil Mondal, a resident of Sindhvani under Bagdah police station limits in Bongaon in WB's North 24 Parganas, was the kingpin of the racket. He is a history-sheeter, with four cases against his name, including for offences like cutting border fencing and human trafficking, the official said, adding that efforts were on to nab him.

# Submitted 'evidence' to PMO on misuse of power by Central agencies: Raut

"Game has just begun! Today submit evidences to @PMOIndia of hw Centr Agencies r misusing powers selctivly agnst a few. Submitd proofs on hw sm officials r indulgd in extortion& blackmailing thru 'Vasuli agents'. Wll adress a PC vry soon to share more details. Watch this space!" Raut tweeted. The Shiv Sena MP had in the past alleged that the Central agencies were being misused against political opponents of BJP.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday said he had submitted "evidence" to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on how Central agencies are misusing powers "selectively" against few persons and how some officials are engaged in "extortion and blackmailing" through agents. "Game has just begun! Today submit evidences to @PMOIndia of hw Centr Agencies r misusing powers selctivly agnst a few. Submitd proofs on hw sm officials r indulgd in extortion& blackmailing thru 'Vasuli agents'. Wll adress a PC vry soon to share more details. Watch this space!" Raut tweeted. The Shiv Sena MP had in the past alleged that the



Central agencies were being misused against political opponents of BJP. The Rajya Sabha MP had alleged that "certain

people" had asked him to assist in toppling the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra so that the state

could be forced into mid-term elections. He had also claimed that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other central agencies were being used with the "oblique motive" of toppling democratically elected governments. In a press conference, Raut had accused the ED of threatening people who had sold land to him and his family about 17 years ago and in 2012-13, and forcing them (the sellers) into issuing statements against him. The Shiv Sena leader had also said the decorators and other vendors roped in for his daughter's wedding function were also being "intimidated and threatened to extract statements" saying they had received Rs 50 lakh cash from him. Raut had alleged that the decorator was probed "at gunpoint."

# South African held at Mumbai Airport with Rs 56 cr heroin

A South African national was held at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for smuggling 8 kg heroin worth Rs 56 crore.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A South African national was held at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for smuggling 8 kg heroin worth Rs 56 crore. A senior Customs official said that the accused was held on February 26. "On the basis of profiling, we intercepted one South African passenger at CSMI Airport. The passenger was found carrying 8 kg of off-white colour powder which tested positive for heroin worth Rs 56 crore," said the customs official. The official said that it was clear that the said cocaine was meant for smuggling into India. The official said that it was clear that the man had



violated provisions of section 8 of the NDPS Act, and had committed offence punishable under section 21, section 23 and section 29 of the Act. Accordingly, he was placed under arrest under section 43(b) of the Act. The official said that the man was taken to a government hospital. He was later made to undergo a medical test. His Covid report came negative. After this he was produced before the concerned court where the customs official said that he was not required for further interrogation. They requested the court to send him to judicial custody. The court after hearing the contention of the prosecution, allowed their move. The court has remanded him to fourteen days judicial custody.

# "ELECTRICITY NOT FREE:" ENERGY MINISTER THREATENS TO CUT POWER SUPPLY OF DEFAULTERS

Farmers in the state have been protesting the snapping of power supply to agricultural consumers.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra's Energy Minister Nitin Raut on Sunday lashed out at defaulters of power bills and threatened to cut off their power supply. Anguished at accusations of higher electricity bills, he claimed that power department employees put their lives at risk during Covid lockdowns to ensure uninterrupted electricity to people who were at home during the Covid lockdown but many did not pay bills on time.

against electricity bills. Raut, however, has made his intentions clear that power supply will be cut off if bills are not paid on time. "When you were sitting at home in lockdown, people were working here for you day and night. You used refrigerators, coolers, TVs, laptops and provided you 24-hr electricity supply. Our people were on the road day and night and many of them lost their lives," the Minister added. Farmers in the state have been protesting the snapping of power supply to agricultural consumers by the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL). They have also alleged discrepancies in the power bills, which they claim can come down by as much as half if corrected.

# 'PM Modi Won Hearts Of People Through Development Agenda:' Pawar

Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar lauded PM Modi's "development agenda" and said that people give opportunities to those who talk about development



Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a rare event, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development agenda" on Sunday and said that people give opportunities to those who talk about development. The Nationalist Congress Party leader was addressing a press conference ahead of PM Modi's scheduled visit to the state. He said, "PM Modi won the hearts of people through his development agenda when he came to power. People give an opportunity to those who talk of development. There are few people who are interested in controversies." "You keep asking such questions again and again, but there are very few people who are interested in (controversies). People give opportunity to those who talk of development. PM Modi also has won the hearts of people through his development agenda when he came in power," the Minister added.

Ajit Pawar also informed that PM Modi is scheduled to visit Pune on March 6, for which preparation by local administration and authorities is underway. "Being the Guardian Minister of the district I would remain present with him, I am not sure about Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray as how much his health would permit him," he said. PM Modi is likely to inaugurate the first Metro of the Pune City and other Infrastructure projects during his visit to Pune. He is likely to travel on Metro rail between Garware college and the Anand Nagar route, according to mayor Murlidhar Mohol. PM will be inaugurating two routes - Vanaz to Garware and Pimpri to Phugewadi. Both the routes will be open for commercial use. After the Metro ride, the prime minister will address the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers at the nearby ground on March 6, party leaders said.

# MSCB probe: ED attaches lands of Maharashtra minister Prajakt Tanpure

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ED on Monday attached over 94 acres of land belonging to Maharashtra minister Prajakt Tanpure and others in connection with its money laundering probe into the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) scam case. Tanpure is the minister of state for urban development, energy, tribal development, higher and technical education and disaster management in the Maharashtra government. He is an NCP MLA from the Rahuri Assembly seat. The case pertains to allegations that cooperative sugar factories were sold by the then officials and directors of the bank at throw-away prices to their relatives and some people. According to the Enforcement Directorate, 90 acres of land of erstwhile Ram Ganesh Gadhkari Sahkari Sakhar Karkhana (SSK) held in the name of Takshshila Securities Pvt. Ltd, and two parcels of non-agricultural lands of 4.6 acres belonging to Prajakt Tanpure worth Rs 7.6 crore have been attached. "MSCB undertook auction of Ram Ganesh Gadhkari SSK in 2007 at an undervalued price. Without following due process, the said SSK was sold to Prasad Sugar and Allied Agro Products Ltd., a firm of Prajakt Tanpure (son of Prasad Tanpure) for Rs 12.95 crore against the reserve



price of Rs 26.32 crore," the ED said in a statement. The ED case is based on an August 2019 FIR of the Mumbai Police Economic Offences Wing. The police complaint came after the Bombay High Court ordered on August 22, 2019, to probe the allegations of selling sugar factories in the Maharashtra cooperative sector allegedly through fraudulent means. The Enforcement Directorate probe found that Prasad Sugar was the "sole bidder" and to project the bid process competitive, the signature of a 'second bidder' was taken by MSCB officials on the bid documents. "This 'second bidder' did not deposit the required earnest money deposit (EMD) amount and was found to be a proxy of Prasad Sugar. "Though the auction was conducted in 2007,

Prasad Sugar completed payment of sale amount in 2010 against the statutory condition of completing payment within 52 days," the agency alleged. Money trail investigation found, that the fund Prasad Sagar used for payment was majorly received from other parties "without any rationale." It was found that part of funds to purchase SSK also came from Ranjit Deshmukh, the former chairman of Ram Ganesh Gadhkari SSK from 1995 to 2004, it said. "Prasad Sugar is a family-held entity of Shri Prasad Tanpure, who was one of the prominent and influential members of the board of directors of MSCB during the period between August 2004-March 2010," it said. The agency claimed that after taking possession of the entire assets of SSK, the plant and machinery was dismantled, transported and installed at a new location in Vambori, Ahmednagar. "The land and structure were sold to Takshshila Securities in 2011," it said. The ED, last year, had attached a sugar mill worth over Rs 65 crore in this case claiming that a company linked to Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar and his wife were involved. The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing has filed a closure report into the alleged MSCB scam case and it is "pending" before the court.



SAG AWARDS 2022

# Will Smith, Michael Keaton, Jessica Chastain top winners' list

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actors Will Smith, Jessica Chastain and the film 'CODA' took home the highest honours at the 28th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards held this year at the Santa Monica Barker Hangar.

In compliance with California Covid protocols, all attendees of the SAG Awards were required to show proof of vaccination to attend the ceremony.

As a result, "Yellowstone" star Forrie J. Smith, who was nominated along with his cast in the television drama ensemble category, announced last week that he would skip out on the ceremony, reports variety.com.

The television categories were led by 'Succession' and 'Ted Lasso', both of which garnered five nominations in the respective drama and comedy categories, including best ensemble.

Korean hit "Squid Game" made history with its nomination in the ensemble category as the first non-English show to be recognised by the Guild.

On the film side, 'The Power of the Dog' led individual acting categories with three nominations, but the Jane Campion-directed movie didn't crack the ensemble category. The most recognised of the ensemble nominees was 'House of Gucci', which scored individual nominations for Lady Gaga and Jared Leto.

Troy Kotsur, Daniel Durant and Marlee Matlin of 'CODA' are the first deaf actors to be recognised in the motion picture ensemble category, and Kotsur is the first deaf performer to land an individual acting nomination.

During the ceremony, Kate Winslet presented cine-icon Helen Mirren with the SAG Lifetime Achievement Award.

'CODA' took home the Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. It was competing against movies such as 'Belfast', 'Don't Look Up', 'House Of Gucci' and 'King Richard'.



Will Smith and Jessica Chastain were named in the Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role and Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role for 'King Richard' and 'The Eyes Of Tammy Faye' respectively.

For the Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series, actor Michael Keaton's performance for 'Dopesick' was recognised.

While Kate Winslet bagged the Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series for 'Mare of Easttown'.

'Succession' beat 'The Handmaid's Tale', 'The Morning Show', 'Squid Game' and 'Yellowstone' in the Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series category.

'Squid Game' stars Jung Ho-yeon and Lee Jung-Jae were named in the Outstanding Performance by a

Female and Male Actor in a Drama Series section.

Sports comedy drama show 'Ted Lasso' took home the award for best comedy series ensemble at the 2022 SAG Awards on Sunday. It's main lead Jason Sudeikis was named Outstanding Performance By A Male Actor in a Comedy Series

For the Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series, Jean Smart for 'Hacks' took home the honour, beating names such as Elle Fanning, Sandra Oh, Juno Temple and Hannah Waddingham.

Hollywood actress Ariana DeBose took home the award for outstanding performance by a female actor in a supporting role for 'West Side Story' at the 2022 SAG Awards. She was nominated alongside Caitriona Balfe, Ruth Blanchett, Kirsten Dunst and Cate Nelliga. The award marked DeBose's first nomination and win.

'CODA' star Troy Kotsur made history at Sunday's SAG Awards, becoming

the first deaf actor in the history of the award show to be feted with an individual prize.

He prevailed in the category of Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role, besting the likes of Ben Affleck, Bradley Cooper, Jared Leto and Kodi Smit-McPhee, also winning out tonight as part of the film's ensemble, when it scored its own historic prize

Daniel Craig-starrer 'No Time To Die' was feted with the Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture.

It was nominated alongside 'Black Widow', 'Dune', 'The Matrix Resurrections', and 'Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings'.

Contending alongside shows such as 'Cobra Kai', 'The Falcon and the Winter Soldier', 'Loki' and 'Mare of Easttown', Netflix's 'Squid Game' won the Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Television Series.



## 'Indiana Jones 5' finally wraps up filming after multiple delays

Los Angeles | Agencies

The fifth installment of the 'Indiana Jones' franchise has been wrapped up.

After years of false starts and multiple delays, the production on the untitled fifth installment of the action-adventure film series has finally finished, reports aceshowbiz.com.

The film's director James Mangold and producer Frank Marshall took to Twitter on Sunday, February 27 to celebrate it.

Mangold used a still from 1981's 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' to signify the next phase, which is post-production. "And so begins the first day after the storm..." he captioned the picture.

Marshall, meanwhile, posted a picture of a blue cap with the protagonist's signature nickname "Indy", which could be the title of the film.

"That's a wrap!!! #indianajones," he simply declared.

The completion of the production arrives just a little over a week after Marshall tweeted that filming was "in the home stretch," along with an exterior photo of Pinewood Studios, where the movie was filmed.

Ever since 'Indiana Jones 5' kicked off production in the summer of 2021, it faced several setbacks. Just weeks after the filming started, Harrison Ford sustained a shoulder injury while rehearsing for a fight scene.

His injury forced the closure of the production for three months.

In November, a crew member died during the filming of the movie in Morocco. Camera operator Nic Cupac was found dead in his hotel room in the city of Fes in November 2021.

## Andrew Garfield has no plans to star in another 'Spiderman' movie

Los Angeles | Agencies

Looks like Andrew Garfield won't slip into the 'Spiderman' costume again in the near future as the actor has denied he will star in a 'Spiderman' film any-time soon.

Garfield told Variety, "No plans, that's the truth. Everyone's gonna call me a liar for the rest of my life. I'm the boy who cried wolf." Filmmaker Lin-Manuel Miranda, who has worked with Andrew in 'Tick, Tick... Boom!', recalled Garfield crying wolf when Miranda asked him on set in 2020 whether he was going to play Peter Parker.



"To his credit, he never said it to me. He always denied it, but I was there the day it leaked. He was on my set in November when it leaked that he was in talks and I quietly went up to him and said, 'Bro, are you in the new 'Spider-Man'?' and he went, 'Shut up, shut up.'", Miranda told Variety. He added, "It was the worst acting I'd ever seen him do. And I went, 'He's gotta practice that, that denial,' and he got very good at it, but I was there when he first workshoped it. The euphemism became, 'I'm seeing a friend in Atlanta, and I was like, 'Say hi to your friend in Atlanta for me.' His friend is two other Spidermen."



## Helen Mirren dedicates Lifetime Achievement honour to actors with dash of humour

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood screen legend Helen Mirren has been feted with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2022 Screen Actors Guild Awards and she dedicated her honour to all the actors but with a sprinkle of quirk.

As she received the honour, Mirren in her speech said: "Lifetime Achievement sounds so grand. I am still alive so by that measure I am eligible but honestly any achievement that I have succeeded by my mantra which is basically be on time and don't be an a\*\*."

"Thank you SAG so much for this. I hate to say the word 'Sag' at my age its you know."

She added: "I am simultaneously enormously proud yet driven by the understanding that I do not deserve this and there is the conflict that I believe you all understand insecurity vs ego. That cocktail most actors sip in the evening as they contemplate receiving the gift when they become an actor..."

The 76-year-old thespian then spoke about those people who she would like to dedicate her award to.

"I waited for inspiration and it came to me to all those people who I have shared my professional life with, the actors. I will talk about actors 'I like to think inside the box'. I joined our tribe of vagabonds and it is you actors I want to thank for your wit and humour."

She praised the energy and dedication of actors and added that it upsets her when she reads about "actors being maligned."

## SAG AWARDS 2022: 'SQUID GAME' MAKES HISTORY

Los Angeles | Agencies

Popular Korean survival television show "Squid Game" won Outstanding Action Performance as a Stunt Ensemble at the 2022 Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards.

They are also nominated for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series, Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series for Lee Jung-Jae and Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series for Jung Ho-Yeon, reports eonline.com. "Squid Game" has already made history as the first Korean TV show and first foreign language series to be nominated for a SAG award. In a statement, show creator Hwang Dong-hyuk said, "As the director of Squid



Game, today has to be the happiest moment. I am reminded of all the days spent on first

meetings with the cast, the auditions, visiting theatres to see their performances, the script readings, rehearsals and the days on set."

"I want to truly thank not only the cast who have been nominated today but also all of the supporting and the near 300 background talent," he continued. "Squid Game would never have been what it became without the devotion and hard work of every single one of you. You deserve all the glory and credit." The cast, which includes Lee Jung-jae, Park Hae-soo, Jung Ho-yeon, O Yeong-su, Heo Sung-tae and others, has since made the rounds on the award show circuit. At the Golden Globes, O Yeong-su made history as the first Korean actor to win a Golden Globe, earning an award for Best Supporting Actor in the Television category.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Vanessa Hudgens



## LIVERPOOL WIN RECORD NINTH LEAGUE CUP



London | Agencies

Liverpool won a record ninth League Cup in dramatic fashion, as Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga missed the decisive penalty to give Liverpool an 11-10 shootout victory in the final.

On Sunday night, the game ended goal-less after 120 minutes which saw plenty of chances, some great saves from both keepers and three goals (one for Liverpool and two for Chelsea) ruled out for offside. It was cruel on Kepa, who was sent on at

the end of extra-time to replace Edouard Mendy given his reputation as a penalty-saving specialist, but the Spaniard was unable to repel any of Liverpool's kicks before missing the decisive penalty himself, Xinhua reports.

Liverpool remain in contention for an unprecedented quadruple after closing the gap on Premier League leaders Manchester City to six points with a game in hand.

They are also on course for the Champions League quarterfinals after a last-16 first-leg win at Inter Milan and are still in the FA Cup.

## No. 3 only place from where one can pace innings well: Shreyas Iyer

Dharamsala | Agencies

India batter Shreyas Iyer firmly believes that the No.3 spot is the only place in the batting order where one can manage the tempo of the innings well.

Iyer's words come after he won the Player-of-the-Match award in the third T20I against Sri Lanka at Dharamsala for his unbeaten 75 off just 45 balls.

In the three-match series, Iyer made 204 runs at a strike rate of 174 without being dismissed even once, earning him Player-of-the-Series award.

"If you are playing the T20I format, if you bat in the top-3, that is the only place from where you can pace your innings really well.

Otherwise, if you bat down the order, you can't give yourself time and you need to start going from ball one. Considering the plans and preparations we are going through; we are staying positive and want to really enjoy the scenario provided on the field. If I had to say, the best



number to bat for me personally, it's obviously three," said Iyer during

ing the virtual press conference.

With the T20Is done and dusted, India now face Sri Lanka in two Tests, first of which start from March 4 in Mohali.

For now, Iyer wants to soak in the stupendous form he had in T20Is against Sri Lanka.

"Firstly, I want to cherish this moment. I have achieved a really good total in this series. I want to relax a bit, give myself time and not think much beyond because it's something that if I start thinking from right now, I won't be able to focus I am there on the ground right now. I am just staying in the moment now."

With Iyer's showings, the competition for finding a place in India's batting order becomes all the more heated. Virat Kohli had some runs alongside his name against the West Indies while Suryakumar Yadav had a sizzling show in the same series.

In their absence against Sri Lanka, Iyer took his chance and grabbed it with both hands.

## RUSSIAN MEDVEDEV MAKES HISTORY, REACHES NO. 1 IN ATP RANKINGS

London: Russia's Daniil Medvedev has displaced Serbian Novak Djokovic as the world's top-ranked tennis player in the latest ATP Rankings released on Monday.



The 26-year-old Medvedev thus becomes the 27th player to reach No. 1 in the ATP Rankings. Medvedev, who won the US Open last year defeating Djokovic, is now on 8,615 points and passes the Serbian (8,465 points), who has held the top spot in men's tennis for a record 361 total weeks. "Of course I am happy to reach No. 1. It was my goal since I was young and especially my goal in the latest times," Medvedev was quoted as saying by atptour.com. "I got a lot of messages from many people and from other tennis players and I just want to thank everybody for the big support. Medvedev is the first player outside the 'Big Four' -- Djokovic, Swiss master Roger Federer, Spanish stalwart Rafael Nadal and Great Britain's Andy Murray -- to hold the top spot in 18 years, three weeks and six days, since American Andy Roddick on February 1, 2004. The last time there was a new world No. 1 was more than five years ago, when Murray made it there on November 7, 2016. Medvedev is the third Russian to achieve the feat, joining Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin. Kafelnikov spent six weeks atop the ATP Rankings and Safin was in the top spot for nine weeks, according to ATP.

## Smriti Mandhana stable after being struck on the head in warm-up game against South Africa

Ahmedabad | Agencies

Christchurch: India opener Smriti Mandhana is stable after being struck on the head in warm-up game of ICC Women's Cricket World Cup against South Africa, said the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday.

On Sunday, Smriti was assessed by the team doctor after taking a blow on the helmet from a Shabnim Ismail bouncer at the Rangiora Oval. She was originally declared fit to continue, only to retire hurt on 12 off 23 deliveries in an over-and-a-half later after another consultation. "Ms Smriti Mandhana sustained a blow to her left ear and lower temple while batting in the warm-up game against South Africa in Rangiora. Smriti was immediately assessed by the



match-day doctor who expected a delayed concussion. After further assessment, Smriti was diagnosed with a mild soft tissue injury to her left earlobe which caused discomfort while batting and therefore she had to leave the field retired hurt," said the BCCI in a statement.

The BCCI further said, "As a safety precaution, she was rested for the rest of the match and is currently under observation. Presently, the opening batter is doing fine and her condition is stable. Her progress will be monitored by the medical team and a decision on her partici-

pation in the next match will be taken accordingly."

Earlier, an update from the website of the International Cricket Council (ICC) said, "Mandhana is in good spirits and will feature in India's continued preparation for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup."

## LEGENDARY WEST INDIES SPINNER SONNY RAMADHIN PASSES AWAY

Bridgetown (Barbados): Legendary West Indies spinner, Sonny Ramadhin, who was one of the Caribbean sides of the 1950s, has passed away at the age of 92.

A right-hand bowler, who could bowl both off-spin and leg-spin without any major change to his bowling action, became a mystery for opposition batters when in his prime. Ramadhin bowled with his cap on and always had the sleeves of his shirt buttoned all the way down -- another reason for him to stand out as if the tricks with the ball weren't enough.

The small but lethal spinner played 43 Tests, taking 158 wickets at an average of 28.98, with his best being a 7/49 and 10 five-wicket hauls besides 10 wickets in a match. His voracious appetite for wickets saw him account for 758 batters in 184 first-class games at an average of 20.24, with his best being 8/15. He took a mind-boggling 51 five-wicket hauls in an innings and 15 ten-wicket hauls in matches.

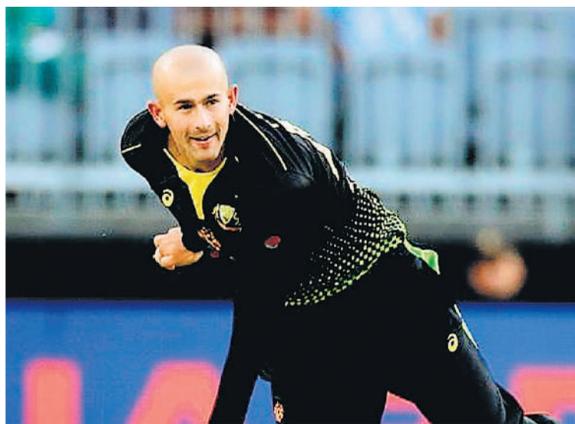


## Australia cricketer gets death threat ahead of Test series against Pakistan: Report

Islamabad | Agencies

Cricket Australia (CA) and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) investigated a death threat sent to all-rounder Ashton Agar on social media, said a report from "The Sydney Morning Herald". It also said that the threat was sent to Agar's wife Madeleine through a direct message on social media, saying that the all-rounder shouldn't go to Pakistan.

"A portion of the message reads: 'This is a warning for your husband Ashton Agar if he comes to tour against Pakistan he won't come [back] alive.' The message also references Agar's children, which he does not have," said the report. It also said that the message came from a fake account on Instagram potentially hailing from India. The message was immediately reported to the two



cricket boards as well as the security agencies. "Cricket Australia is aware

of a social media post, of which the nature and content have been investigated by the PCB, CA and combined Government security processes. There are extensive security plans in place for this type of social media activity, which, in this case, is not considered a risk. No further comment will be made at this time," said a statement from CA.

Pakistan had been forced to host their international matches in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since the 2009 Lahore attack on the Sri Lanka Test side. Last year, New Zealand's white-ball tour of Pakistan was suddenly abandoned hours before the first match in Rawalpindi after a security threat was detected. Soon after, England cancelled their men's and women's tours to Pakistan, citing the 'mental and physical well-being' of players and security concerns.

Mohali | Agencies

Punjab Kings on Monday appointed opener

Mayank Agarwal as the captain of the team ahead of IPL 2022. Agarwal has been the member of Punjab Kings (previously Kings XI Punjab) since 2018 and was the vice-captain to KL Rahul. In 2021 IPL, Agarwal had captained Punjab when Rahul was out due to acute appendicitis and had to undergo surgery. Agarwal was one of the two retained picks by Punjab alongside uncapped left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh ahead of 2022 IPL Mega Auction.

"I have been at Punjab Kings since 2018 and I take a lot of pride in representing



this fantastic unit. I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead the team. I take over this responsibility with utmost sincerity, but at the same time, I believe my job would be made easier with the talent we have at the Punjab Kings squad this season," said Agarwal in a statement. Agarwal stated that the goal of Punjab will be to lift their maiden IPL trophy.

"We have some vastly experienced players in our ranks, along with many talented youngsters who are keen to grab the opportunity and run with it. We have always taken to the field hoping to win the title and as a team we will once again work towards this goal of lifting our maiden IPL trophy.

"I thank the team management for entrusting me with this new role of leading the side. I look forward to the new season and the new challenges it brings with it."

Head coach Anil Kumble expressed happiness over Agarwal's appointment as the captain and hopes to build a team for the future with the 31-year-old at helm.

## Sciver shines as England beat Bangladesh by 109 runs in World Cup warm-up

Lincoln | Agencies

England all-rounder Nat Sciver shone as the defending champions defeated Bangladesh by 109 runs in their first warm-up match of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 at Lincoln Green on Monday. After making a composed 108 to lead England to 310/9, Nat took 2/40 with the ball as Bangladesh were all out for 201. England openers Lauren Winfield-Hill and Tammy Beaumont put on 81 for the first wicket before Tammy had to depart for 38 off 49 balls. Lauren made 55 off 43 before being given out lbw off Ritu Moni with England on 100/2. Her dismissal brought Nat Sciver to the crease and she along with skipper Heather Knight went about



the rebuilding job. Heather made 27 off 36 balls before being bowled by a jubilant Lata Mondal. Danni Wyatt and Sophia Dunkley were dismissed on successive deliveries from Nahida Akter, who was Bangladesh's best bowler with figures of 3/49.

Tuesday's warm-up matches will see New Zealand square off against Australia at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval while India will be up

against the West Indies at the Rangiora Oval.

### Brief scores:

England 310/9 in 50 overs (Nat Sciver 108, Lauren Winfield-Hill 55; Nahida Akter 3/49, Suraya Azmim 2/53) beat Bangladesh 201 all out in 50 overs (Sharmin Akter 81, Shamima Sultana 33; Nat Sciver 2/12, Freya Davis 2/40, Charlie Dean 2/43) by 109 runs.

## Verreynne's unbeaten ton puts South Africa in command vs New Zealand

Christchurch | Agencies

South Africa's wicketkeeper-batter Kyle Verreynne lifted his team from a tricky situation to a position of strength with a maiden unbeaten century (136 off 187 balls) as the tourists took control of the second Test, setting New Zealand a mammoth total of 426, on Day 4 at the Hagley Oval on Monday.

At stumps, the Blackcaps had been reduced to 94/4, still 332 runs in arrears, after South Africa declared their innings at 354/9.

New Zealand had thrashed South Africa by an innings and 276 runs in the opening match of the two-Test series and the tourists would now be fancying their chances of levelling the series on the final day on Tuesday.

South Africa started Day 4 with a lead of 211 runs and they more than doubled that tally in the first two sessions. New Zealand quick Kyle Jamieson broke the overnight partnership thanks to Tom Blundell's superb reflex catch down to his right, dismissing Wiaan Mulder for 35. Will Young then topped that effort with an amazing catch in the deep to get rid of Marco Jansen (9).



Just as the home team bowlers thought they were getting some control in the match, Kagiso Rabada launched a vicious counter-attack, striking four sixes and four boundaries in an enthralling innings of 47 (34).

Verreynne continued to keep his score ticking as he brought up his maiden Test half century, while letting Rabada go after the famed New Zealand pace-bowling attack. The South African wicket-keeper did not have a Test fifty to his name before

this match but he ensured that he batted through the innings. He brought up his first-ever Test ton, much to the delight of his teammates.

Chasing a mammoth 426, the hosts got off to the worst possible start, losing both their openers -- Tom Latham (1) and Will Young (0) -- as Kagiso Rabada picked up the two wickets. Henry Nicholls (7) was the next batsman to be dismissed with Keshav Maharaj picking up his first wicket of the innings. Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell steadied the innings by putting up a healthy partnership of 56, before Maharaj got Mitchell less than half hour before the end of play.

After Mitchell's (24), Conway brought up his third Test fifty and remained not out on 60 to negotiate the final few overs.

### Brief scores:

South Africa 364 and 354/9 decl (Rassie van der Dussen 45, Kyle Verreynne 136 not out, Kagiso Rabada 47; Tim Southee 2/90, Matt Henry 2/81, Kyle Jamieson 2/81, Neil Wagner 2/81) vs New Zealand 293 and 94/4 (Devon Conway 60 not out; Kagiso Rabada 2/17, Keshav Maharaj 2/32). New Zealand need 332 runs.



## Folk is mixing with mainstream music: Sonam Kapoor Ahuja

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Playback singer Sonam Kapoor Ahuja's love for exploring folk music has given music lovers some of the most memorable tracks including hits like 'Ambariariya' and 'Rangabati' (Coke Studio Season 4). Her recently released track titled 'Noor' is an extension of her constant pursuit to bring something new to the table. The track, which boasts elements of Punjabi folk, shayari and dancehall, has been composed by her husband and creative partner Ram Sampath and presents a vivid story that appeals to the heart of the listeners. In a recent conversation with reporter, the playback singer spoke about her latest song, veteran singer Lata Mangeshkar, how folk is mixing

with mainstream music and changing the dynamics of the music consumption patterns, and how the pandemic has

been hard on the folk artiste community. Although she's the face of the song, the singer doesn't hold back from showering praises on her team that has helped her put the song together. "I have an incredible team in place because of whose collaboration we have reached here. The beat used in 'Noor' is a dancehall beat and with Punjabi folk at its heart. Ram Sampath is a kind of music producer who marries cultures from around the world and creates something very unique. 'Noor' is actually my sister song to 'Ambariariya' (another folk track with pop vibes).

She feels lucky to have partnered with the music label Warner Music for the song. "I feel so happy that I found a partner in Warner Music, I feel lucky because the aesthetics of Warner music and the artistes who are present all around the world bring a lot of quality to the table."

Looking at the state of Indian mainstream music currently, one would assume that despite such rich music and culturally diverse landscape of the country folk is unable to cut through the layers of mainstream music but Sonam likes to differ. "It is not that folk music has not mixed into the mainstream culture, it is very well into the mainstream culture."



## Poonam Pandey not scared of showing her bold side in reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the latest promo of the show 'Lock Upp', 'Nasha' actress Poonam Pandey was questioned by Kangana Ranaut about whether she admits to making adult films.

Kangana says: "Do you admit that you make adult films and promote them as well." To this Poonam replies: "Whatever video I have made till now or photos I have clicked, I haven't broken any laws. If people can love the fake one, I am sure they will love the real one."

Well it was quite a shocking reply by Poonam that of course reflects her bold side which she seems like will be revealing on the show.

Poonam is a social media figure and she remained in limelight because of her semi-nude photos and her controversial statements. She debuted in Bollywood with the 2013 film 'Nasha'. 'Lock Upp' will be streaming tonight at 10 pm on ALTBalaji and MX Player.



## WE'VE BEEN TOLD THAT RANBIR AND I HAVE GREAT CHEMISTRY: VAANI KAPOOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Vaani Kapoor, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film 'Shamsher', has talked about her pairing with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the film. She says that the two actors have been told that they share a great on-screen chemistry. Vaani said: "Ranbir Kapoor is a pleasure to work with because he brings so much work ethic to the table. He is also a selfless actor who wants to creatively collaborate in a way that each scene turns out to be the best." "I had so much fun working and exchanging notes with him. I think Ranbir and I have given our best for Shamsher. We are definitely a fresh pairing on screen and I hope people love watching us together." Vaani hopes that her chemistry with Ranbir will be talked about. She added: "We have been told that we have great chemistry but I hope that audiences too feel the same when they see us. It's a film that everyone's waiting for. Have worked really hard to bring something new to the table and as actors, we only want to entertain everyone to

the fullest with Shamsher." The film also stars Sanjay Dutt as Ranbir's arch enemy. Sanjay will play the ruthless, merciless villain and his showdown. Vaani essays the role of a gorgeous, most sought after traveling performer of the country. Yash Raj Films' 'Shamsher' is set to release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu on July 22.

## Vidyut Jammwal to host action reality series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Vidyut Jammwal who is known for action and trained in the oldest martial art form Kalaripayattu - will be hosting his first non-fiction action reality show titled 'India's Ultimate Warrior'. The 'Commando' famed actor along with four mentors, who are experts in the range of combat forms, are all geared up to find the ultimate warrior, who has the right blend of physical and mental attributes like focus, control, determination, balance, discipline, amongst others.

Talking about the show Vidyut said, "It is high time reality shows become real, the job bestowed upon me was to find the ultimate warrior; a warrior in any field! someone who experiences everything with their mind, body and spirit at any given moment and this was the crux of the show where we put the fighters in the toughest situations to bring out their best! The person who got the best out of themselves is India's ultimate warrior". The show will premier on March 4 on the OTT platform discovery+ and on Discovery Channel on March 14.



## YASH BHATIA: I ENJOYED ACTING ON OTT



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Yash Bhatia, who was last seen in 'Damaged 3', feels the web show has been a learning experience for him.

He says: "As an actor I grow and learn something significant from each and every project I act for. But 'Damaged 3' has been a great learning experience. The show has not only bought me in limelight but has also helped me to prove myself as

an actor. My audience loved my acting and appreciated me a lot on social media. Not only this but I got to learn a lot from such an amazing team and talented actors."

Yash, also known for featuring in television shows like 'Bepanaah' and 'Hero: Gayab Mode On', says he doesn't want to limit himself as an actor.

He adds: "I am currently reading a script for a Punjabi film that is set up in Himachal. After TV and OTT,

I wish to do films. In TVC I got the chance to work with many Bollywood celebrities like Pankaj Tripathi, Ranbir Kapoor, Sunil Shetty, Varun Dhawan."

"As an actor who wants to portray different shades of roles, I would love to explore myself in roles like Ranbir essayed in 'Barfi' and 'Rockstar'. Apart from that I enjoy acting on any screen. But I enjoyed acting for digital as the best part of OTT is that has more freedom."

## CONSTANT SCRUTINY OF PRIVATE LIFE 'DOES GET STIFLING': ALIA BHATT

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Actress Alia Bhatt, who is currently riding high on the success of her latest release 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', which minted Rs 39.12 crore in its first weekend, agrees that being a public figure is not easy and that constant vigilance and talks about her private life does get stifling at times. Talking to correspondent about people wanting to know more about the actress's life and if it does get stifling, Alia shared: "It does. But then I am like 'why am I an actor?' If you want to be a public figure then your life will get public. That's why one tries to protect his/her personal life."

The actress, who is reportedly in a relationship with actor Ranbir Kapoor, says she likes to keep her private life guarded. "Like I don't want to give out details of when I am getting married because it is nobody's business or where I am going for lunch as it is nobody's business. But people are speculating and talking about it, now that there is something I can't do much about."

The actress is all set to complete a decade in Hindi cinema in 2022. She made her Bollywood debut with Karan Johar's 'Student Of The Year' in 2012 and was later seen in a string of hits such as 'Highway', 'Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania', 'Uda Punjab', 'Dear Zindagi', 'Raazi' and 'Gully Boy' to name a few.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rakul Preet