

# absolute india

VOL. 5, ISSUE 141, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, APRIL 02, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM NEW DELHI, MUMBAI AND BHOPAL

**NATION** > 02

**PM advises students to celebrate exams as festivals...**



**HOLLYWOOD** > 06

**Cannes Film Festival to pay special tribute to Tom Cruise...**



**SPORTS** > 07

**Swiatek sets up summit clash against Osaka...**



## COMMERCIAL LPG CYLINDER TO COST MORE THAN RS 2,000

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) prices for commercial cylinders were increased by Rs 266 on Monday. In the national capital, 19-kg commercial cylinders will cost Rs 2,000.50 from Rs 1,734 earlier, according to news agency ANI. However, the domestic LPG cylinder rates were kept unchanged.

In Mumbai, a 19-kg commercial gas cylinder will now cost Rs 1,950. In Kolkata, the commercial LPG rate stood at Rs 2,073.50, while in Chennai now a 19-kg cylinder will be available for Rs 2,133.

Earlier, the prices of LPG cooking gas cylinders across all categories including subsidised gas on were hiked by Rs 15 on October 6. Prior to that, the rates of subsidised and non-subsidised LPG rates were increased by Rs 25 on October 1. The government policy provides for the supply of 12 cylinders of 14.2-kg each per household at subsidised or below-market rates. Any



quantity over this had to be bought at market price or non-subsidised rates.

In another set of development, petrol and diesel prices were hiked for the sixth consecutive day across the country. In Delhi, with a hike of 35 paise a litre, the price of petrol rose to Rs 109.69 per litre while the price of diesel surged

to Rs 98.42. In Mumbai, the rates of petrol and diesel increased to Rs 115.50 and Rs 106.62 per litre respectively.

A litre of petrol now costs Rs 110.35 in Kolkata and diesel costs Rs 101.56 per litre. Petrol and diesel cost Rs 106.35 and ₹ 102.59 per litre respectively in Chennai.

## Power tariff hiked by 2.64 % in MP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (MPERC) has cleared a hike of 2.64 per cent in power tariff for the current financial year. The increase comes amid rising prices of fuels such as petrol, diesel and LPG.

The MPERC on Thursday cleared only 2.64 per cent hike even though the discoms had sought 8.71 per cent increase to make up for revenue deficit, as per the approved tariff plan.

Once the hike comes into effect, a consumer who uses up to 30 units of electricity per month will have to pay Rs 3.34 per unit against Rs 3.25 earlier.

Power rates in the consumption slabs of 32 to 50 units, 51 to 150 units and 151 to 300 units have been hiked too. A consumer who uses more than 300 units a month will have to pay Rs 6.74 per unit, against Rs 6.65 earlier.



Be impermeable, independent as political executive will change, CJI to CBI

# BE LEGITIMATE

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana today said the Central Bureau of Investigation, through its "actions and inactions" have often raised "questions on its credibility". Speaking at a function of the Central agency, he also suggested that the need of the hour is to "reclaim social legitimacy and public trust" and the first step to that "is to break nexus with political and executive".

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At a lecture on "Democracy: Role and Responsibilities of Investigative Agencies", Justice Ramana, recounting how the police system in India evolved from the British period, said with passage of time, the CBI has "come under deep public scrutiny".

"The image of police is tarnished by allegations of corruption etc... often police officers approach us saying they are being harassed with change in power... The political executives will change with time. You are permanent," Chief Justice Ramana said. "There is an immediate requirement for the creation of an independent umbrella institution, so as to bring various agencies like the CBI, SFIO, ED, etc. under one roof. This body is required to be created under a statute, clearly defining its powers, functions



and jurisdictions. Such a law will also lead to much needed legislative oversight," he said.

This independent and impartial authority, should be "appointed by a committee akin to the one which appoints the Director of the CBI. The head of the organisation can be assisted

by deputies who are specialists in different domains," he added.

In this context, the Chief Justice admitted that unlike the police, investigative agencies suffer from not having Constitutional backing. "The police system gets its legitimacy from Constitution. Unfortunately investiga-

tion agencies still don't have benefit of being guided by a law," he said.

Enumerating the other challenges investigative agencies face, he said they have a lack of infrastructure, manpower, modern equipment, questionable means of procuring evidence, change in priorities with change in political executive and repeated transfer of officers. "These issues often lead to acquittal of guilty and incarceration of innocent. Courts can't monitor every step," he added. But pointing out that any institution is as good or bad as their leadership, he said just a few officers can bring a change.

Ahead of delivering the reality check, Justice Ramana had jocularly remarked that when the CBI Director came to invite him for the event, "I told him that I will have to make some critical remarks about the police functioning in India". "Hope he hasn't invited trouble by inviting me," he had added.

## Modi meets Lavrov, reiterates call for early cessation of violence

Ahead of meeting Prime Minister Modi, Lavrov has said US pressure would not affect the India-Russia relationship and added if India wants to mediate for resolution to the Ukraine problem, such a process can be supported.

About India playing a bigger role in the Ukraine crisis, Lavrov said: "India is an important and serious country. If India plays that role that provides resolution, India as our common partner... we are for the security guarantee of Ukraine... West has ignored its responsibility... If India is with its position of just and rational approach to international problems... can support such a process."



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday and apprised him about the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, Lavrov briefed the Prime Minister on the situation in Ukraine, including the ongoing peace negotiations. Modi reiterated his call for an early cessation of violence, and conveyed India's readiness to contribute in any way to the peace efforts, the statement said. The meeting lasted for 40 minutes during which Lavrov also informed the Prime Minister about various bilateral initiatives.

Lavrov was on a two-day visit to India where he held deliberations with his Indian counter-

part S. Jaishankar over crude oil offer, rupee-rupee payment, ongoing arms deals, Ukraine crisis, and the situation in Afghanistan and Iran. On India's view on the Ukraine crisis, he said that India's foreign policy is guided by its independent position. India has stayed neutral on seven Ukraine-related resolutions at the United Nations. Lavrov categorically said Russia's aim in Ukraine is to deprive the Kiev regime from building the capacity to present any threat to Russia. In their meeting, Lavrov and Jaishankar assessed the overall state of cooperation and considered the implications of recent developments on trade and economic relations. The two ministers discussed developments pertaining to Ukraine. Lavrov briefed the Indian side on Russia's perspective, including the ongoing talks. Jaishankar emphasised the importance of cessation of violence and ending hostilities. Differences and disputes should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy and by respect for international law, UN Charter, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, he added.

## I HAVE 20 KG RDX, WILL KILL PM: THREAT MAIL SENT TO NIA



Atul Krishan | New Delhi

The Mumbai branch of National Investigation Agency has received an email threatening to harm Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the sender claimed to have "20 kg RDX". The threat mail mentions that he is ready to harm millions of people along with the Prime Minister.

"...I have met with some terrorists, they are going to help with rdx, I am happy that I have got bombs very easily and now I will blast everywhere... I have planned it, 20 sleeper cells will be activated and millions of people will be killed..." The NIA and other intelligence agencies were trying to trace the sender.

Sources close to the development have said that they were tracking the IP address and were gathering other information about the sender. As of now, the NIA has not given any official information in this respect.

## If China breaches LAC, Russia will not help: US Deputy NSA

Team Absolute | New Delhi

US Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh said that there will be consequences to countries that actively attempt to circumvent the sanctions imposed on Russia after it went to war with Ukraine.

While interacting with the media, Singh red-flagged that if China breaches Line of Actual Control, Russia will not help. He said that Moscow and Beijing are now in a



"no limits partnership".

The US does not want to see a rapid acceleration in India's imports from Russia of energy and other commodities prohibited by global sanctions regimes.

Singh is seen as the architect of American sanctions targeting Russian President Vladimir Putin.

## Sitharaman, Jaishankar defend India buying Russian oil

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday defended the purchase of cheap Russian oil even as sanctions have been imposed on Moscow following its military attack on Ukraine. At an event in Mumbai, Sitharaman said, "We have started buying Russian oil and have bought at least 3 to 4 days of supply. I will put my energy security and my country's interest first. If supply is available at a discount, why shouldn't I buy it?"

In the meantime, Jaishankar said that Europe has bought 15 per cent more oil and gas from Russia than it did the



month before. The minister made this statement in the presence of British Foreign Secretary Elizabeth Truss.

## 39 PEOPLE HOSPITALISED DUE TO FOOD POISONING IN J&K'S BUDGAM

Srinagar: Thirty nine people, mostly children, were hospitalised due to food poisoning in J&K's Budgam district on Friday, officials said.

Health Department officials said these people, developed stomach-related complications and had to be hospitalised. "The obvious cause seems to be the traditional rice cooked with turmeric powder called 'Tahaer' which these people had consumed in Zaigipora village in Charar-e-Sharief area of Budgam.

"Of these patients, 15 children were removed to G.B. Panth Hospital in Srinagar, three to S.M.H.S. Hospital (Srinagar) and the rest have been kept under observation at the sub-district hospital in Charar-e-Sharief town," Budgam's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tajamul Khan told reporters. He said additional staff has been rushed to the affected village to meet any exigency that might arise

# Zika, dengue could trigger next pandemic: WHO

GENEVA | Agencies

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that the next pandemic could be triggered by insect-borne pathogens including Zika and dengue.

Arthropod-borne viruses (Arboviruses) such as dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya and Zika viruses are all current public health threats in tropical and sub-tropical areas where approximately 3.9 billion people live. The frequency and magnitude of outbreaks of these arboviruses, particularly those transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, are increasing globally, fuelled by the convergence of ecologic, economic, and social factors. According to the WHO, dengue fever infects 390 million people in 130 countries annually where it is endemic, while Zika virus that caused an outbreak in 2016 when it was found to



cause birth defects such as microcephaly. It has been detected in at least 89 countries. Yellow fever poses a high risk of outbreaks in 40 countries and causes jaundice and severe haemorrhagic fever and death, as dengue. Chikungunya, though less known, is present in 115 countries and causes severe and joint-disabling arthritis. The WHO said signs are mounting that the risk these diseases pose "is increasing". The Telegraph reported. Experts are scrambling to develop strategies to stop the next out-

break escalating into a catastrophe. Targeting arboviruses is top of the list. The experts were speaking at the launch of the WHO's new Global Arbovirus Initiative - an integrated strategic plan to concentrate resources on risk monitoring, pandemic prevention, preparedness, detection and response.

"There is an urgent need to re-evaluate the tools at hand and how these can be used across diseases to ensure efficient response, evidence-based practice, equipped and trained personnel and engagement of communities," said Dr Mike Ryan, head of the World Health Organisation's Emergency Programme. The UN health agency said that international action is essential, given the "frequency and magnitude of outbreaks" of arboviruses. Their reach is growing, too, the WHO warned, fuelled by climate change, population growth and increasing urbanisation.

"We have been through two years of Covid-19 pandemic and we have learned the hard way what [it costs] not to be prepared for high impact events. We had [a] signal with SARS in 2003 and the experience of the influenza 2009 pandemic - but there were still gaps in our preparedness," she added. "The next pandemic could, very likely, be due to a new arbovirus. And we also have some signals that the risk is increasing."

Dr Sylvie Briand, WHO



# PM NARENDRA MODI ADVISES STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE EXAMS AS FESTIVALS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asked students not to get stressed as they have successfully overcome exams earlier as well, and also urged parents and teachers to not force their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations upon children.

Interacting with students appearing for board examinations in the fifth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', PM Modi said technology is not a bane and should be used effectively as he took questions from them as well as teachers on several issues.

Students can use 'online' medium to gain knowledge and execute it offline, he added.

He advised students to celebrate exams as festivals and without any stress.

"You are not giving exams for the first time. In a way, you are exam-proof. Thus, do not be stressed. Remember that you have successfully overcome exams before," he said.

"This is my favourite programme but due to Covid I couldn't meet you. This gives me special happiness as I am meeting you after a long time," PM Modi told the audience at the



Talkatora Stadium here drawing a round of applause.

To a question, he also noted that the National Education Policy announced by his government has been wholeheartedly welcomed by every section of the country, and said consultative process for it was exhausted.

Outdated ideas and policies from the 20th century can't guide India's development trajectory in the 21st century, he said, adding that change has to come with times.

"Outdated ideas and policies from the 20th century can't guide India's

development trajectory in the 21st century. National Education Policy (NEP) must have seen the involvement of so many people. It must be a world record," he said.

"People find ways to criticise what the government does. I am happy that NEP is being welcomed by everyone. This is not made by government but country's citizens, students and teacher for the future of the country," he added.

Asked by a student about how should they prepare keeping in mind the changes in board examination and college admissions, PM Modi

said competition should be considered the biggest gift of life.

"We should invite competition then only we will get tested. You are lucky to have such opportunities. You have more choices," he said.

He also urged parents and teachers to not force their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations upon children.

"Students should not feel they are under pressure from teachers and parents to score good marks. Parents should not inject their dreams into children. They should be allowed to decide their future freely," he said.

Kenny Patel from Gujarat's Vadodara asked how can one complete syllabus along with proper revision and also get proper sleep.

"Why are you scared? It's not the first time you are taking exams. Now you are reaching the last mile. You have crossed the entire ocean why are you scared of sinking on the shore?" the PM responded.

Pariksha Pe Charcha is being organised for the last four years by the Education Ministry's Department of School Education and Literacy.

The first three editions of PPC were held in Delhi in an interactive town-hall format. The fourth edition was held online on April 7 last year.

# Govt to form MSP committee after receiving names from SKM: Tomar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Friday that the government will soon form an expert committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) after it gets the names of nominated persons from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM).

Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Tomar said that the government is committed to form the committee which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised while announcing the repeal of the three farm laws.

"At that time, PM Modi had announced that a committee will be formed to look into the issues related to the farming sector such as making MSP more transparent, organic farming, crop diversification etc. as the government has been working on these issues," the Minister said in the Upper House. He also said that the gov-



ernment is in touch with the SKM, the umbrella body of farmers' unions, and as soon as it nominates names, the committee on MSP will be formed.

## SKM NOT TO NOMINATE MEMBER FOR GOVT COMMITTEE UNLESS MANDATE

New Delhi: Placing in the public domain its latest exchange with the government of India on the formation of a committee to discuss farmers' issues, with a focus on Minimum Support Price (MSP), the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said on Friday that it would not nominate anyone to the committee unless MSP is mandated and the terms of reference (ToR) for the said committee are known in advance. The SKM, a consortium of 40-odd farmers' organisations that had spearheaded the more than a year-long agitation against the now-repealed three farm laws, had suspended its agitation after receiving a letter from the government of India on December 9, 2021 promising the formation of a committee for farm related issues. The SKM had observed a day of betrayal on January 31 to protest non-implementation of the government's assurances.

# Nitish Kumar a clever person who always plays tricky politics: RJD

Patna | Agencies

Even after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar sought to clarify that he has "no personal interest" in going to the Rajya Sabha, the opposition RJD on Friday kept up its attack, saying that he is a "clever person, who always plays tricky politics" and "keeps some scope to manipulate things".

"Nitish Kumar has given a clear statement that he has no personal interest to go to Rajya Sabha. Suppose, his children want him to go to Rajya Sabha then what would happen? How could he refuse the wishes of his children? The fact of the matter is, he has made a safe path for himself where he keeps some scope to manip-



ulate things," RJD Vice President Shivanand Tiwari said.

"I know Nitish Kumar very well. He is having political limitations. He can't do much for himself, especially after the 2020 Assembly election. His party was reduced to 43 seats, though it managed to win two more seats in the by-elections. Still, he is in the role of younger brother in the coalition with the

BJP in Bihar. Despite that he managed to achieve the post of Chief Minister. Ironically, this post belongs to BJP as it has more MLAs in the assembly. Due to his reduced political stature at present, leaders of the level of (BJP MLA) Vinay Bihari are abusing him," he added.

Tiwari said that the statement of Vinay Bihari, who called on the Chief Minister to give up his post, was the "worst and derogatory" for Nitish Kumar, though he is still to react to it.

"People like Vinay Bihari will humiliate him in future and he will tolerate them. Keeping the prestige of Chief Minister's post intact is being very tough for Nitish Kumar. His status is completely destroyed now," he claimed.

# MINOR BLAST IN B'LURU; AMIT SHAH'S ROUTE CHANGED

Hyderabad | Agencies

Bengaluru: A minor blast took place here on Friday near the Mount Carmel College following which the route of Home Minister Amit Shah, who was on his way to Bengaluru from Chikkaballapur after attending a programme, was changed, officials said. An official said the blast took place at a drain -- ahead of the Union Minister's arrival here, creating panic in the Vasanthnagar locality. Shah was supposed to pass through that area. The police said the blast took place at around 4.30 p.m. following which a power chamber that was installed nearby broke into pieces Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant rushed to the spot for an inspection.

After the blast, a thick smoke emerged due to the short circuit in the underground electric cable, the police said. The vehicular movement was blocked until the inspection was done.

Officials said Amit Shah's route was changed following the incident as miscreants issuing threat to Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also come to light. The blast has also led to concerns over the safety and security of the Union Minister.

The police have taken up the incident seriously, and are conducting a probe into it, an official said.



# Hit by high fuel prices, Bihar power dept staff rides a horse to collect bills

Manoj Pathak | Sheohar (Bihar)

A person hailing from Bihar's Sheohar district has come up with a unique protest against the fuel price hike across the country by riding a horse while going to work.

The man, who works with the state electricity department, collected electricity bills from people while riding a horse from one village to another, instead of riding his motorcycle.

With the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG touching record highs, the common man is facing the brunt.

Abhijeet Tiwari, a resident of Bishunpur Kishundeov village in Sheohar district, leaves his village in the morning every day to collect electricity bills from the people and



deposit them with the department. Those who want to pay their electricity bills give them to him and he hands them a receipt in return after

depositing them. Tiwari said that the price of petrol has increased so much that it has become difficult to travel by motor-

cycle. "I owned a horse, so now I go to work riding it," he said.

"The price of petrol is increasing continuously which, creating a hole in the people's pockets. Nearly Rs 200 is spent on petrol everyday in collecting electricity bills from the people," he said. Tiwari said if his daily household budget permits him, he will again travel by his own motorcycle. This unique initiative of Abhijeet to save petrol has been hogging the limelight in his native village. Tiwari is a daily wage employee with the state electricity department. Asked about Tiwari's unique method of collecting bills, Shrawan Kumar, an Executive Engineer in the electricity department, said, "It is the personal choice of an individual. can collect electricity bills riding any vehicle."

# FEMA violation: ED issues 7,272 cr showcase notice to firm

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has issued a Rs 7,272 crore showcase notice to Transcorp International Limited and its promoter-director Ashok Kumar Agarwal, and Managing Director Gopal Krishan Sharma for contravention of provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The company Transcorp International Limited is listed on BSE. It is having Authorised Dealer Category-II License from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and is authorised to undertake various permissible money changing (Forex) transactions, outward remittances activities etc.

It was also an Authorised Person and Indian Agent under Money Transfer Service Scheme License by the RBI and was a major market player of MTSS business with annual pay-outs in the range of Rs 3,000 - Rs 4,500 crore, before sale of the business to Ebixcash World Money India Limited in January 2018.

During the course of ED investigation, it



was learnt that the company had made serious lapses of mandatory requirements as per extant RBI Master Directions and instructions on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms/ Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Standards/ Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) for Indian Agents under MTSS in respect of cross-border inward remittance activities, resulted in the said contravention under the FEMA.

Based on the findings of the investigation, the ED has issued a Rs 7,272 crore showcase notice to the company.

# No interim relief for Rana Ayyub, HC seeks ED's response

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the response of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the plea filed by journalist Rana Ayyub seeking permission to travel abroad after she was restrained by the agency from leaving the country.

However, the bench has not granted any interim relief to her and she is likely to miss a scheduled keynote address at an international conference in London.

Justice Chandra Dhari Singh will hear the matter further on April 4.

The bench also asked the ED to file a status report on its case against her by 2.30 p.m. on April 4.

Rana Ayyub approached the High Court seeking relief on her travel restrictions by the agency as she had to travel abroad on Friday.

She is facing a Prevention of Money Laundering case for allegedly misusing funds collected for charity through the website ketto.com, and the ED in February attached her assets worth Rs 1.77 crore claiming that the money was traced to the proceeds of crime.

The international journalist was stopped at the Mumbai Airport on Tuesday when she



was about to board a flight to the UK to deliver a speech at the International Centre for Journalists. She has accused the ED of summoning her despite making her programme public in advance.

She had alleged that the ED's summons arrived in her inbox after she was stopped at the airport.

The ED claimed that its investigations found that the funds were raised in the name of charity in a completely pre-planned and systematic manner but were not utilised completely for the purpose for which they were raised.

It said Ayyub parked some of the funds by opening a separate current bank account, and also created a fixed deposit of Rs 50 lakh from the funds raised by Ketto and subsequently did not utilise them for relief work.

# Punjab govt's resolution on Chandigarh has no meaning: Khattar

Gurugram | Agencies

Criticising the Punjab government for passing a resolution in the Assembly to transfer Chandigarh to the state, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday said that Chandigarh is and will remain the capital of both states.

Talking to the mediapersons here, Khattar said that apart from the issue of Chandigarh, there are several other differences between Haryana and Punjab.

He said the Central government has decided to implement the Central Service Rules in the interest of the employees of Chandigarh. He alleged that the Punjab government is misleading the public on this issue.

"The Chandigarh employees would be greatly benefited by this decision. Earlier,



the employees had to depend on the Punjab government for every order. If there were orders from the Centre for allowances or other benefits, earlier Punjab used to issue

notifications. After this, it would be applicable in Chandigarh," Khattar said.

Now, the notifications that the Centre will make will be directly applicable to

the employees.

He said that the Punjab government has not yet given the benefit of the 7th Pay Commission to the employees whereas Haryana

had implemented it in 2016. Khattar said Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh came into existence through the Punjab Reorganization Act passed in the year 1966.

"There is a provision in this Act that 60 per cent of employees of Chandigarh will be from Punjab and 40 per cent of employees will be from Haryana. Since that time, Chandigarh is the capital of Haryana and Punjab," he said. The Chief Minister said that not only Punjab and Haryana, but the people of Himachal Pradesh should also ask for their shares in Chandigarh. "In one case, the Supreme Court had also given Himachal Pradesh the right to over 7.19 per cent of Chandigarh's land under the Punjab Reorganization Act. It is a different matter that Himachal Pradesh has made its capital in Shimla," Khattar said.



## VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD BE LINKED MORE AND MORE TO PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES : CM

### Boost to activities of tree plantation, water conservation and women empowerment must. CM conducts review of works of M.P. Jan Abhiyan Parishad

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the voluntary organizations which have done good work during Corona period must be honored. Cooperation of Jan Abhiyan Parishad can also be sought along with the implementation of public welfare schemes, in the social audit of ration shops at the village level.

Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing a review meeting of Madhya Pradesh Jan Abhiyan Parishad at Mantralaya today. Finance Minister Jagdish Deora, Vice-Chairman of the Parishad Vikas Upadhyay and Dr. Jitendra Jamdar, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Principal Secretary Economics and Statistics Mukesh Chandra Gupta, D.G. Jan Abhiyan Parishad B. R. Naidu and Executive Director Dr. Dharendra Pandey were present.

Chief Minister said that voluntary organizations affiliated to Jan



Abhiyan Parishad should cooperate in public welfare schemes, tree plantation, water conservation campaign and in spreading the message of women empowerment up to the village level. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that Jan Abhiyan Parishad should contact all the volun-

tary organizations operating at village, block and district level and connect them with purposeful activities. Among the activities of the institutions, misuse of resources, violation of rules, conduct of work against the provisions and indulgence in activities which are not in national interest

must be monitored.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the Parishad should work in urban areas as well as in rural areas. Chouhan said that the Parishad should support the expansion of Ankur campaign to promote tree plantation. For this, an environment must be created to develop the habit of planting saplings in people.

The progress report of the activities conducted by the Parishad was presented in the meeting. Information about the manifestation committees activated in the state, progress of Chief Minister's community leadership capacity development course, preparation of water security plans of panchayats under Atal Bhujal Yojna, survey work conducted in Alirajpur and Jabua in State Hemoglobinopathy Mission, Kranti Surya Jannayak Tantiya Bhil Gaurav Yatra and Samrasta Sankalp programme being held in each Seva Basti of each development block on the state's foundation day.

## 25 PERCENT HIKE IN THE RATE OF DEARNESS ALLOWANCE PAYABLE IN SIXTH PAY SCALE

Bhopal : Dearness Allowance 196 Percent after Hike, Order Issued

The state government has increased the rate of dearness allowance payable in the sixth pay scale by 25 percent with effect from March 1, 2022. It will be paid from April 2022. The Finance Department has issued orders in this regard. With this increase, the rate of dearness allowance will be 196 percent from March 1, 2022. It is noteworthy that by the Finance Department's circular 26 October 2021, dearness allowance at the rate of 171 percent is being given to government servants receiving salary in the sixth pay scale of the state government from March 2022 (paid April 2022). With the decision to increase the dearness rate by the government, the rate of dearness allowance in the sixth pay scale will increase to 196% from March 2022 (paid April 2022).

## CHANGE IN THE PROVISIONS OF TAXABILITY UNDER GST FOR BRICK DEALERS

### 1% Composition Levy on Turnover Up To Rs. 1.5 Crore for Traders. Notification Issued By the Center under GST Applicable In Madhya Pradesh

Team Absolute | Bhopal

According to the recommendation of the GST Council, the notifications issued by the Central Government under GST have become effective in Madhya Pradesh from April 1, 2022. Accordingly, the composition levy for kilns (for brick makers) has been abolished. This facility will be available to the trader. They will have to pay 1% composition levy on turnover up to Rs 1.5 crore.

The notification issued in this regard has become effective in the state from April 1,

2022. For brick traders in the state, from April 1, 2022, the registration limit has been reduced from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

Brick traders who do not opt for Composition Levy will have to deposit 12% GST with ITC or 6% GST without ITC. Now 12% GST will be payable on bricks instead of at the rate of 5%. Brick makers, who were in Composition Levy till 31st March 22, will have to fill out Opt-out Application (CMP-03), and claim ITC of 30 days stock in ITC-01 (if opting to pay 12% GST after April 1, 2022).

## Chief Minister Chouhan Planted Karanj and Kadamba Saplings



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings of Karanj and Kadamba in Smart City Park. Manish

Tamrakar, Farha Khatoon, Vineet Kahar and Himanshu Bansouda of Ujjwal Bhoomi Social Cultural Awareness Welfare Association also planted saplings. Social worker Dr. Durgesh

Wadhvani was also present.

Works related to cleanliness, environment are being done by the organisation at various places in Madhya Pradesh, which include cleaning of ponds, waste segregation and health related awareness. The organisation is continuously working at the grassroots level to make children aware of personal hygiene, to empower women to make them aware of their rights and to bring about a change in the behaviour of the common people.

Among the plants planted today, Karanj is considered important in Ayurvedic medicine. Karanj is also used in religious works. Kadamba is famous for its medicinal properties in Ayurveda. Its flowers have special significance. The fragrant flowers of Kadamba are mentioned in ancient Vedas and compositions.



Bank of India inaugurated its New Zonal Office in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh. Zonal office to start operations from April 1, Will look after 70 branches with a business of Rs. total Rs 6,810 crore

## CELEBRATIONS ORGANIZED BY IES GROUP ON 23RD FOUNDATION DAY



Celebration on 23rd Foundation Day of IES Group organized at IES Campus, Ratibad Main Road, Bhopal. The students of Bhopal and Sehore were honored by the Governor for their excellent performance in academics, placement and sports. Engineer BS Yadav, Chancellor, IES University and Prof (Dr) Sunita Singh, Pro Chancellor IES University expressed gratitude.

## ANCESTRAL HOUSE OF MAHANT ACCUSED OF RAPE, DEMOLISHED IN REWA

Rewa: The ancestral house of narrator Mahant Sitaram Das Maharaj, accused of raping a minor in the Circuit House of Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh, was demolished by a bulldozer. It is to be known that in the past, Sitaram Das had made a minor a victim of his lust in the Raj Niwas Circuit House here. After that he had absconded. The accused was arrested from Singrauli. At the same time, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had instructed for strict action.

According to the information received, there is an ancestral house of accused Sitaram in Gudhwa, the administration has run a bulldozer on that house. This was Sitaram's ancestral house and he has lived here too.

## Kamal Nath calls senior Congress leaders meeting to form shadow-cabinet

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has called a meeting of senior party leaders, including those who were cabinet ministers during his 18-month-old government, to form a shadow-cabinet.

The meeting will be held at his residence on April 4, sources in the state Congress said.

It would be a shadow-cabinet of the opposition Congress which will scrutinise the policies and actions of the state government. The leaders in the shadow-cabinet will be assigned different ministries or department to scrutinise projects and find out the irregularities and the actual status of the projects announced by the BJP government in the last two years.

"It would be a crucial meeting which all the senior leaders are expected to attend," said a senior Congress spokesperson. Nath has been attacking the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government in the state accusing it of making fake promises. Sources in the party



told IANS that the shadow-cabinet is a part of the preparation ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled in 2023.

In the meeting, the senior party leaders are also likely to discuss organisational polls, which are likely to be held in the next two-three months. This meeting has been called at the time when one after another senior Congress leader, including Ajay Singh (Rahul) and Arun Yadav, recently met with the national Congress president Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi. Therefore, amid

murmur of division among the senior party leaders, this meeting would be crucial to show the unity.

Reacting to Nath's initiative, senior BJP leader and state home minister Narottam Mishra said: "It is not the first time when he (Kamal Nath) is talking about a shadow-cabinet. He had said the same earlier also, but his shadow-cabinet was never seen on the ground. He is a leader who believes in chairing meetings only, not on ground work."

## MP GOVERNMENT TRYING TO MAKE PEOPLE DRINK MORE ALCOHOL : UMA BHARTI

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister and BJP's Fire Brand leader Uma Bharti, who is in favor of prohibition of liquor in Madhya Pradesh, has taken a dig at Shivraj Singh Chouhan's government in the state for the liquor policy. The new liquor policy of the government has been described as making people drink more alcohol.

Before Chaitra Navratri, Uma Bharti tweeted one after the other. He has written, since tomorrow is the Navratri of Chaitra, this is the festival of worship of women power for nine days. Referring to the new liquor policy in the state, Uma Bharti wrote, "Today we have implemented a new liquor policy in Madhya Pradesh, in this, how to make people drink more alcohol, how to serve more liquor in



the courtyards, fixed this system. Is. In Madhya Pradesh, which is being opposed everywhere by women power.

Referring to the voice being raised by the BJP against the liquor policies in other states, he wrote, BJP's state units of Chhattisgarh and Delhi have come out on the road in protest against similar liquor policy. He further said, I am with the women and daughters of Madhya Pradesh, I am also concerned for the sons who have become victims of alcoholism, I am also ashamed that we are earning revenue by playing on their honor and life.

## Hospitals are temples for the suffering humanity: Governor Mangubhai Patel

► OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE SUFFERING HUMANITY IS GOD'S BLESSING. FELICITATION OF MEMBERS, OFFICE BEARERS OF RED CROSS SOCIETY

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that hospitals are like temples for the suffering humanity. To serve such people is to serve God. He said that the opportunity to serve the suffering humanity comes only by the grace of God. All those



who have got this opportunity are fortunate. Governor Patel was addressing the felicitation ceremony of the members and office bearers of the State Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, Madhya Pradesh organized in the Red Cross premises. Governor Mangubhai Patel welcomed the newly elected members and office bearers. He said that the victims should be served with full authenticity and integrity. He said that along with the work of treating the

patients coming to the hospital, it is necessary to have sensitivity and compassion towards them. It is very important to listen to their problems with a patient ear. By doing this, their sorrow and pain is reduced. It also has a positive, psychological effect. This also helps speed up improvement in their health. He called upon all the seniors to the juniors associated with the Red Cross to set the best example of commitment to service to the suffering humanity, so that their work is widely appreciated in the society. Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Prabhuram Choudhary said that the Red Cross is recognized as a future institution for service to the society.

कार्यालय, नगर पालिका परिषद, गुना जिला गुना (म.प्र.)  
क्रमांक/1204/ई निविदा/ 2021-22 गुना दिनांक 31/03/2022

विज्ञप्ति क्रमांक 48/ई-निविदा/ न. पा, गुना/ 2021-22

निविदा विज्ञप्ति सूचना निम्नलिखित इलेक्ट्रिक मैटेरियल सप्लाय कार्य हेतु आयटम रेट ऑन लाइन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत निविदा सूचना व अन्य जानकारी वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है।

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1. GST Registration, PAN Card, Affidavit, Form H and Brochure of the Products  
2. Manufacturer Company Authorization Certificate required.  
3. Work Order shall be issued as per requirement of the items.  
4. CFL Fitting Bajaj, Haveis, Philips Crompton  
5. CFL Fitting ke written minimum Guarantee for Two Years.  
6. Spoiled LED shall be replaced with in a weak time  
7. Rates are applicable for the year 2022-23

Note :-  
1 टेंडर कर करने की अंतिम तिथि 05/05/2022 सार्थ 5.30  
टेंडर झूलने की अंतिम तिथि।  
2 टेंडर खोलने की तिथि 07/05/2022 प्रातः 10.30

मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी, नगर पालिका परिषद, गुना जिला गुना (म.प्र.)



EDITOR'S SPECS

CLIMATE TARGETS OF 2030

A new report from the Forest Declaration Assessment, authored by World Resources Institute and Climate Focus, has found that without protecting and accounting for indigenous and community lands, the 2030 climate targets will be impossible to achieve. The report, focusing on the mitigation potential of indigenous and community lands in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru has found that these lands are a hidden, undervalued, and foundational component of countries' efforts to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts in line with their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Without explicitly recognising the risk to and outlining measures to protect these lands, drastic and realistically impossible, actions in other sectors would have to take place to come close to matching the value of mitigation services provided by these lands. This report comes after the release of the Working Group III contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report and echoes a growing chorus of voices in the scientific community arguing for a greater role for indigenous and local communities and recognition of their rights as a climate solution for addressing global crises linked to the destruction of nature. Across the four countries analysed in this report, indigenous lands sequester more than twice as much carbon as non-indigenous lands. To achieve 2030 global mitigation, medium-term pledges, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), were made by countries under the Paris Agreement. Achieving more ambitious contributions is a key piece of being able to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. These targets under the Paris Agreement will not be achieved without explicit recognition and protection of indigenous peoples and other local communities' restored and protected lands.

CHINA'S OVERARCHING APPROACH TOWARDS NEPAL

Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a three-day visit to Kathmandu last weekend posturing a shift in its diplomacy and strategic preferences. Under the garb of safeguarding Sino-Nepal relations for a shared long-term future, Wang strongly opposed any attempt to undermine Nepal's sovereignty and independence, interfere in its internal affairs and engage in geopolitical games in Nepal. These have raised eyebrows in Nepal as, according to some analysts, this narrative is reflective of China's messaging to the effect that Nepal was part of its 'protectorate' and was dependent on China in as far as protecting its sovereignty is concerned. The visit highlighted three clear areas where the Chinese desire their involvement -- party to party relations to be built in Nepal; assistance in maintaining domestic and foreign affairs independence; and, furthering Nepal's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While China has been adopting aggressive and explicit postures against most nations for its own interests, it may be said that China now sees an opportunity to influence Nepal's political system by using the country's vast communist network. Prominent analysts claim that there is a visible shift in Chinese diplomacy. China has become more aggressive and vocal about its position in international relations and particularly on issues related to India and the US. In addition to this, an emerging trend has also been China's greater involvement in domestic politics, while earlier, it mostly remained compact with economic ties. The overarching interest, in current times, to be involved in South Asian matters is noteworthy. In a recent interview with China's state-media, Wang admitted that his visit to South Asia came at a time of the spreading spillover effect of the Ukraine crisis and threats to world peace. He confirmed that China's neighbourhood holds a top position in Beijing's overall diplomacy, saying it was "better to be a close neighbour than a distant relative" to South Asian countries.



China's strong disapproval to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which is an independent US government agency aiming to reduce global poverty through economic growth, is evident both before and after its parliamentary endorsement in Nepal. China has publicly blamed the US for engaging in 'coercive diplomacy' in Nepal, claiming that the \$500 million grant came with 'political strings attached'. Nepal had signed up with the both MCC and BRI in 2017. Nepal, however, is yet to select specific projects under the latter. It is said that there are increasing concerns in China about India and the US fretting with Chinese investments in Nepal. It is rumoured that in private meetings with Nepali politicians and bureaucrats, the example of Sri Lanka is often quoted by them, cautioning Nepal on 'debt trap'. China sees this as part of a wider pattern in South Asia, all aimed at encircling it. In a recent article in Global Times, Li Tao of the Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University, argues that the US is trying to use the MCC compact to make

Nepal an important part of Washington and New Delhi's anti-China coalition. She also adds that Nepal's decision to endorse MCC will have political, diplomatic, and economic consequences. On February 23, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying termed the MCC compact 'Pandora's Box', while on March 7, a China Daily editorial warned of serious consequences should "any part of the compact be used against neighbouring China". Meanwhile, the Nepali media, interestingly, indicated there was a deliberate delay on the Chinese side in broadcasting Wang's visit. Without timely reporting, Chinese netizens who are dependent on the official press and social media for news had been largely unaware about Wang's 'Journey To the West' until he was already in Nepal on March 25. Similar low-key reporting was observed when Global Times and other state-owned media took more than a day to react to the ratification of the MCC grant by Nepal's Parliament on February 27. Whether this was intentional

or not, it successfully suppressed the hashtag 'Nepal approved US aid deal', which reached the top 11 on Sina Weibo as soon as the state media reported about it. On Wang's visit, while Nepal's own mainstream press focused on the nine agreements inked between China and Nepal along with photo-ops with the Nepalese leadership, Chinese media and cybersphere were fixated on Nepal's reiteration of the One China Policy and commitment towards 'never allowing any forces to use the Nepali territory to engage in any anti-China activities'. The signing of the MCC has no doubt caused serious concerns within the CCP as it was a given that China had enough capabilities to manoeuvre the course of Nepal's relations with India and the US, and would be able to shelve the MCC. The signing of the agreement is a clear indication that the Chinese are yet to stand the dynamics of Nepali politics.

international

FIRST UKRAINIAN AIR STRIKES ON RUSSIAN TERRITORY

Russian authorities have accused Ukraine of carrying out an air attack on an oil depot in Russian territory, the BBC reported. Ukraine is yet to claim responsibility for the attack in Belgorod near the Ukraine border -- it would be the first known time Ukrainian aircraft have flown into Russian airspace to strike a target, bringing the war home to Russia. Ukrainian helicopter pilots have plenty of experience of flying low and fast to avoid being detected by military radar and air defence systems. They have been doing exactly that in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine for years. But if these reports are correct -- flying at night, well into Russian territory, to launch an attack on an enemy fuel depot would have required extraordinary bravery -- as well as finely-honed flying skills. This alleged attack alone will not dramatically alter the battle. But it could show Ukraine has managed to keep its air force functioning, and give a huge boost to the morale of Ukraine's military, the BBC reported.



A video shared on Twitter shows a blaze near apartment blocks in Belgorod, some 40 km (25 miles) from the border with Ukraine. Some clips appear to show rockets hitting the oil depot. Local governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said in a Telegram message "there was a fire at the oil depot because of an air strike carried out by two Ukrainian army helicopters, which entered Russian territory at low altitude". "Nobody was killed," he added. Governor Gladkov's allegation was not confirmed by Ukrainian officials.

Peace talks under threat: Kremlin accuses Ukraine of attacking oil facility inside Russia

Kremlin has threatened to walk out of peace talks after accusing Ukrainian helicopters of attacking an oil facility inside Russia, Daily Mail reported. Regional Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said two of Ukraine's military helicopters flew 25 miles undetected past the Russian border at low altitude to Belgorod where they fired S-8 rockets at a Rosneft depot, causing a huge fireball to break out which firefighters are still tackling. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Of course, this is not something that can be perceived as creating comfortable conditions for the continuation of negotiations." But there have been fears that Russia would stage a false flag attack on itself to justify an escalation of the war or to back out of peace talks. Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said: "I can neither confirm



nor reject the claim that Ukraine was involved in this, simply because I do not possess all the military information." Gladkov, who was

appointed by Vladimir Putin in 2020, said the air strike, which would be the first on Russian soil since WW-II, injured two workers and parts of the city have been evacuated, Daily Mail reported. Video shared on social media appeared to show the attack happening at 5.43 am local time, followed by helicopters flying away from the blaze, although analysts have noted Russia uses the same type of helicopters as Ukraine. The Ukraine government is yet to confirm the incident, but if true, it would be the second time Ukraine has ventured past the border since the invasion following the alleged long-range missile attack on Millerovo airbase last month, in the latest humiliation for Putin in his failing campaign. But last week, an exiled Russian politician claimed that Kremlin is plotting a wave of attacks on its own cities in a false flag operation led by the FSB that it will blame on Ukraine to justify a general mobilisation of troops.

My life is in danger, says Imran Khan

As the threat of the no-confidence motion to oust him from office looms, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that his life is in danger. The Pakistan Premier says that he has been aware of the conspiracy to assassinate him since August 2021, Geo News reported. The country's security agencies had earlier revealed that they have discovered a plot against the Prime Minister, he said, adding that attempts to assassinate him were being planned. Pakistan Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Friday that a plot to assassinate Imran Khan had been reported by security agencies, Dawn reported. "After these reports, the Prime Minister's security



has been beefed up as per the government's decision," he said. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Faisal Vawda had earlier claimed that there is a conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister over his refusal to "sell the country", in addition to the "foreign conspiracy" of which Imran Khan claimed he had proof. I don't know whether you read that part (in the letter) about the consequences. That is life-threatening," Vawda told a TV channel. "There has been a mention of assassinating Imran Khan sahab," Vawda repeated.

GALE-FORCE WINDS, RAIN TO LASH AUSTRALIA'S EAST COAST

Gale-force winds and heavy rain is expected on Friday along the coast of Australia New South Wales (NSW) state, including in the nation's largest city of Sydney. The destructive gusts, which are predicted to exceed more than 100 km per hour, are being caused by an intense low-pressure system moving south, Xinhua news agency quoted weather authorities as saying. The extreme system has already caused flooding, for the second time within a month, throughout the northern regions of NSW, with more than 21,000 people still under evacuation orders. Sydney's predicted blustery conditions followed a turbulent night with powerful winds having torn off the roof



of a three-storey building near the CBD in the early hours of Friday, leading to the evacuation of 10 people. Meanwhile, NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) received 650 calls for help throughout the past 24 hours as trees were toppled, and power lines were felled. "Keep at least eight metres away from fallen power lines or objects that may be energised, such as fences," the NSW SES said in a statement on Friday. Authorities have also issued warnings against swimming, fishing, or boating due to hazardous surf including high tides, huge swells and waves which are expected to exceed five metres in height.

INDIANS TOP AS CANADA ADMITS 108,000 NEW IMMIGRANTS IN 1ST QUARTER

Toronto: Canada, which plans to admit a record 432,000 new immigrants in 2022, is on target to hit this mark as the country welcomed 108,000 newcomers in the first three months of the year. "Canada is proud to be a destination of choice for so many people around the world, and we will continue to work hard to provide the best experience possible for them," said Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, releasing the figures for the first quarter on Thursday. Though there is no country-wise break-up of the numbers, Indians are the top immigrant group to take up residence in Canada this year. In 2021, nearly 100,000 Indians became permanent residents of Canada as the country admitted a record 405,000 new immigrants in its history. During 2021-2022, over 210,000 permanent residents also acquired Canadian citizenship. As per figures released by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), it also issued 450,000 study permit applications. There are over 622,000 foreign students in Canada, with Indians numbering 217,410 as of December 31, 2021.





# NO RIFT WITH HOME MINISTER: CM THACKERAY



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday summarily dismissed reports claiming he was upset with Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil. "I have complete faith in HM Patil and he is doing a good job," Thackeray said in a statement here this afternoon, making the three-party Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance breathe easy. The CM's clarification followed some sections of media speculating of an alleged rift between Thackeray and Walse-Patil and certain Shiv Sena leaders

allegedly seeking the latter's removal, hinting at fresh tremors in the ruling MVA.

Earlier this week, Walse-Patil had also rejected contentions that Thackeray was displeased with his work, especially after his hard-hitting replies in the Assembly last month to the Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis's accusations that the MVA hatching a conspiracy to frame Bharatiya Janata Party leaders.

On the contrary, the usually soft-spoken Walse-Patil said that Thackeray had called him to congratulate him for his pointed reply to Fadnavis's allegations in the house debate during the Budget Session.

He added that there was no such discussion on the issue during his meeting with Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar on Friday, as widely rumoured in some media circles, but they merely discussed some public related matters.

Since the past couple of days, there have been reports quoting unidentified sources about "differences" cropping up between the CM and the Minister, with broad hints at a larger rift among the MVA - comprising the Shiv Sena, NCP, Congress, but now all parties have scotched the rumours.

# IPL 2022 crowd occupancy increased to 50 per cent, says ticketing partner

Team Absolute | Mumbai

BookMyShow, the official ticketing partner of IPL 2022, on Friday announced that the crowd occupancy in stadiums across Mumbai and Pune has been increased to 50 per cent. The announcement by the ticketing partner comes after the state of Maharashtra said it would be lifting all Covid-19 restrictions from April 2.

Currently, the ongoing IPL 2022 is being held in four stadiums across Maharashtra -- Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune, DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai and Brabourne Stadium and Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. All these stadiums were hosting a 25 per cent crowd at present.

"Ticket sales for the next set of matches are live even as the BCCI has announced an increase in stadium occupancy to 50 per cent, which was earlier capped at 25 per cent thereby extend-



ing the opportunity for many more fans across India and beyond to experience the IPL action live in the stadium," said an official release from the ticketing partner.

The ticketing site also announced that the sales for Phase 2 of the IPL 2022 matches were going live on their official website. Fans will now be able to book their tickets for matches

starting with the clash between Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians on April 6 at the MCA Stadium in Pune until the clash between Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings

on April 20 at the same venue.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had said on March 23 that IPL 2022 will welcome the fans back in stadiums starting from the opening match between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders.

"The IPL 2022 resumes with the Chennai Super Kings taking on the Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium on March 26. This match will be a momentous occasion as the 15th edition of the IPL will welcome the fans back to the stadiums after a brief hiatus owing to the pandemic."

"Ardent cricket fans are all set to witness nail-biting matches, cheering for their favourite players at the most anticipated cricket tournament of all time. The matches will be played across stadiums in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune with an audience occupancy rate of 25 per cent as per COVID-19 protocols."

# AAP complains against BJP activist who threatened Arvind Kejriwal

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has lodged a complaint with the Mumbai Police against a Bharatiya Janata Party activist Tajinder Bagga for issuing death threats to the party's National Convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, an official said here on Friday.

During a private TV channel interview on Wednesday, Bagga issued a purported threat to 'kill' Kejriwal, ominously saying "Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha unko jeena nahin dega".

The statement came soon after an attack on the Chief Minister's official residence in Delhi carried out by the BJYM activists like Tejasvi



Surya and others, said AAP's national spokesperson Preeti Sharma-Menon.

Following the developments, AAP Mumbai Working President Ruben

Mascarenhas and AAP Youth leader Aditya Manjrekar submitted a complaint to the Juhu Police Station, demanding immediate action against Bagga.

"Kejriwal is the author of a new revolution in Indian politics based on good governance, and his work in healthcare, education, power and water has won global renown. The BJP is unnerved due to the recent Punjab Assembly election results... As they cannot handle AAP politically, they resort to violent tactics and criminal intimidation," said Mascarenhas.

Labelling the BJP a party that considers itself 'above the law of the land' with its leaders going any distance to deter the AAP, Sharma-Menon said such open life-threats to an elected Chief Minister of a state in the Indian Republic is a serious issue needing urgent intervention.

# NAGPUR LAWYER SATISH UKE, BROTHER SENT TO ED CUSTODY

Mumbai: A Mumbai court on Friday sent Nagpur-based lawyer Satish Uke, who targeted the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and his brother Pradeep Uke to the custody of Enforcement Directorate (ED) till April 6 in an alleged money-laundering case.

The siblings were arrested after the ED raided their homes at Parvati Nagar early on Thursday, seized laptops, documents, mobiles and other material, detained them and then flew them to Mumbai late last night. The brothers were produced before Additional Sessions Judge G.B. Guroo, who remanded them to six days ED custody for further investigations in the case.

The ED has contended that the case concerns a 1.5 acre land deal in Nagpur worth around Rs 11.50 crore which the Uke brothers allegedly bought on the basis of forged documents.

# CGST busts fake input tax credit racket of Rs 19.84cr

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Commissionerate, Navi Mumbai, on Friday said it has busted a fake input tax credit racket of Rs 19.84 crore, and arrested the director of a Vikhroli-based firm in this connection.

The person was arrested on March 30 under Section 69 of the Central Goods and Services Act for committing offences under Section 132 (1) (b) and (c) of the Act and was produced before the first class Judicial Magistrate in Vashi. The Magistrate has sent the accused to a 14-day judicial custody.

The CGST official said the company -- Fortune Global Trade Private Limited, which was engaged in the trade of synthetic rubber, had engaged in availing and utilisation of fake GST input tax credit on the basis of bogus invoices of Rs 110 crore.

"Acting on a tip-off received from Central Intelligence Unit of Principal Chief Commissioner CGST Mumbai Zone, a team of officers of Anti-evasion section of CGST Commissionerate, Navi Mumbai, had con-

ducted an enquiry against the mentioned company. The said company had availed fake input tax credit of Rs 9.92 crore from eight non-existing entities and had passed on the same to various entities, without actual supply of goods or services," the official added.

This case is a part of anti-evasion drive launched by CGST Mumbai Zone against the fraudsters and tax evaders by issuing fake invoices and creating unhealthy competition for compliant taxpayers and defrauding the government exchequer.

As a part of this drive, Navi Mumbai Commissionerate has detected a tax evasion of Rs 500 crore, recovered Rs 20 crore and arrested 14 persons in the financial year 2021-22. In another case, CGST Commissionerate, Thane Rural, arrested a GST practitioner for indulging in fake input tax credit fraud of Rs 176 crore by a Thane-based firm M/s Motec Traders.

The director of Fortune Global Trade Private Limited was later presented at the court. The court has sent the accused to the judicial custody for 14 days. This is the third arrest in this case.

# 'Achhe Din', Rs15 Lakh promises all April Fool Jokes: Sanjay Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Hitting out at the Centre over the rising fuel prices and other issues, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Friday said the promises of 'achhe din' (good days) and depositing Rs 15 lakh into the bank accounts of people were nothing but 'April Fools' Day' jokes. Alleging that the government has fooled the people for the last seven years, he said it should now work for their welfare as it is a 'life and death' situation for the common man.

April 1 is celebrated as April Fools' Day, wherein people play practical jokes on each other.

Talking to reporters in Mumbai, Raut said, "The promises of 'achhe din', depositing Rs15 lakh into the bank accounts of citizens, integrating Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) into India and providing employment are nothing but April fool jokes."

The government should stop lying and be committed to the welfare of people, he said, adding that it is a matter of life and death for the common man. Before coming to power in 2014, the BJP had promised to bring back

black money and deposit ? 15 lakh into every citizen's bank. The promise of 'achhe din' was a top campaign point of the BJP at that time. "Saying that we don't indulge in vendetta politics is also part of the April fool series, which is going on in the country for the last few years," he said, targeting the BJP.

After the results of the Assembly elections in five states recently, petrol and diesel prices were raised, Raut said, adding that rulers always make a fool out of the common man.

"People are being fooled for seven years," he said.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday arrested Nagpur-based lawyer Satish Uke and his brother Pradeep in connection with a money laundering investigation. Referring to the action, the Sena MP said the state police can investigate the charges against Mr Uke in case of any wrongdoing.

"It is shocking that CBI and ED are brought into the states not ruled by the BJP. This is not something where these central agencies can come and raid people to create terror," he said.

# SPEAK OUT LIKE KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW: NCP TO INDIA INC

Hailing the Biocon Ltd. Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw for expressing concerns on the growing religious divide in Karnataka, Maharashtra's ruling ally Nationalist Congress Party urged more Indian Inc. personalities to "speak up boldly" on the issue in the national interest.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

NCP Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said Mazumdar-Shaw has set a glowing example in the corporate world by speaking her mind on the increasing communal divide in Karnataka that had the potential to destroy that state's global leadership in the IT and BT sectors.

"Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai can learn from the Maha Vikas Aghadi government and try to instill faith and confidence among the people, especially minorities, of his state who have been expelled from doing business near temples. Not only the civil society, but the world at large is closely watching Karnataka," Tapase said.

He expressed hope that more Indian corporate leaders, especially

from the country's commercial capital Mumbai, will make a 'conscious choice to speak the truth' to strengthen democracy and uphold Constitutional safeguards.

The NCP leader's comments came in the wake of the backlash Mazumdar-Shaw faced from sections of the Bharatiya Janata Party and other groups for her frank utterances on the communal situation in Karnataka.

On Wednesday, Mazumdar-Shaw set the political and corporate worlds afire with her tweet: "Karnataka has always forged inclusive economic development and we must not allow such communal exclusion. If IT-BT became communal it would destroy our global leadership."

As she was trolled, Mazumdar-Shaw regretted how "vested interests are hijacking the issue to political



parties..." and how she did not want such incidents to detract from economic progress, while urging all political parties to work in this direction.

On Thursday, after Chief Minister Bommai urged for restraint in all sections, Mazumdar-Shaw commended him and wholeheartedly endorsed his suggestion to resolve issues through discussions.

Mazumdar-Shaw became the first major Indian corporate personality to voice her concerns as Karnataka came in the grip of the hijab row, certain Hindutva groups trying to keep away Muslim traders near temples or festivals, and calls for ban on 'hala' meat, etc.

# CM to inaugurate 2 new Mumbai Metro lines ; fares range from Rs 10 to Rs 50

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate sections of two new Mumbai Metro lines on the occasion of Gudi Padwa, the Marathi New Year, on April 2, it was announced on Thursday, nearly eight years after the mass rapid transit system made its entry into the city. Metro services on the first phase of Line 2A and also Line 7, both in western suburbs, will be thrown open for commuter use, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) commissioner SVR Srinivas said. Metro Line 2A is between Dahanukarwadi and Dahisar, while Line 7 is



between Aarey Colony and Dahisar. Addressing a press conference at MMRDA headquarters in Bandra Kurla Complex here, Srinivas said the phase one of the two Metro lines will be opened for public use on the same day or next morning after inauguration of the 20.17-km-long corridors (their combined length), which have 18 stations.

The Metro services will be operated between 6 am and 10 pm. Srinivas said the trains to be deployed on the elevated corridors are designed for driverless operations along with communication-based train control (CBTC) signalling systems. However, during initial phases, the trains will be manned by operators or attendants, including a few female pilots.

"The system will be upgraded to unmanned train operation (UTO) in the future," he said, adding though the sanctioned speed for the corridors is 80 kmph, initially the trains will be operated at 70 kmph.

The senior bureaucrat said that daily 150 services will be operated on these two lines with 11 rakes of six coaches each. Over 2,250 passengers can travel on a train at a time. Srinivas said the minimum ticket for the Metro train ride is Rs 10, while the maximum is Rs 50 (rates will change after every 3km), but monthly pass facility won't be available initially on the new lines.

"Fares are reasonable," the MMRDA commissioner said, adding cycles can be carried

on the Metro trains, but charges for them have not been decided yet.

He said the MMRDA has done multi-modal integration at the Metro stations and the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking buses will be run as feeder services. Highlighting that Line 2A and Line 7 have witnessed "negligible cost escalation", Srinivas said they have targeted to complete phase two of the corridors by August 15.

The financial capital is getting the new Metro corridors nearly eight years after the first line of the mass rapid transit system linking Varsova-Andheri-Ghatkopar was opened for commuters in June 2014.

# India's Q3FY22 current account deficit at \$23 bn

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India's Q3FY22 current account widened to \$23 billion, official data showed on Friday. A wider trade deficit on the back of expensive commodities negatively impacted the current account. The current account was in a deficit of \$9.9 billion in Q2FY22.

On a YoY basis, the country's Balance of Payments was in a deficit of \$2.2 billion in Q3FY21. "The widening of CAD in Q3:2021-22 was mainly on account of higher trade deficit," the RBI said in a statement.

"Net services receipts increased, both sequentially and on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, on the back of robust performance of net exports of computer and business services." Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, amounted to \$23.4 billion, an increase of 13.1 per cent from their level a year ago. "Net outgo from the primary income



account, mainly reflecting net overseas investment income payments, increased sequentially as well as on a y-o-y basis."

In the financial account, net foreign direct investment recorded an inflow of \$5.1 billion, lower than \$17.4 billion a year ago. "Portfolio investment recorded net outflow of \$5.8 billion as against an inflow of \$21.2 billion in Q3:2020-21."



# SECRET DATING

Los Angeles | Agencies

Demi Moore has reportedly been quietly dating Swiss chef and restaurant owner Daniel Humm for a couple of months, according to Page Six.

News of the secret relationship comes just one day after her ex-husband Bruce Willis announced he was retiring from acting after being diagnosed with aphasia.

While the star, 59, has been actively supporting her former spouse through his health struggles, she is believed to have also found happiness with her new man, who is 13 years her junior.

A source told the outlet of the actress' blossoming new romance: "They are really hot and heavy at the moment. Daniel works long, hard hours at his restaurant Eleven Madison Park, but they still often take time to have Demi join him for romantic dinners there," reports dailymail.co.uk.

Moore has previously been romantically linked to Ashton Kutcher, Masha Mandzuka, Sean Friday, Oliver Whitcomb, Leonardo DiCaprio.

Meanwhile, Humm last dated Steve Jobs' billionaire widow Laurene Powell Jobs in 2019.

On Wednesday, Willis and his family released a joint statement about his brain condition, co-signed by Moore, his wife Emma Heming Willis, and five kids.



## Razzie Awards retract Bruce Willis worst performance category

Los Angeles | Agencies

The ever-sarcastic Razzie Awards have retracted their special category for 'Worst Performance' by Bruce Willis, whose retirement due to illness was announced Wednesday.

"After much thought and consideration, the Razzies have made the decision to rescind the Razzie Award given to Bruce Willis, due to his recently disclosed diagnosis," said a statement from Razzie cofounders John Wilson and Mo Murphy.

"If someone's medical condition is a factor in their decision making and/or their performance, we acknowledge that it is not appropriate to give them a Razzie."

Wilson and Murphy added that "extenuating circumstances" also apply to Shelley Duvall in 'The Shining', reports 'Deadline'.

"We have since discovered that Duvall's performance was impacted by Stanley Kubrick's treatment of her throughout the production. We would like to take this opportunity to rescind that nomination as well."

The 42nd annual Razzies were held March 15. Known officially as the Golden Raspberry Awards, the "honours" recognise the worst of cinema.

Initially, the Razzies' Twitter account seemingly took a lighter approach to the Willis announcement.



## Michael Bay: Spielberg told me to stop making 'Transformers' movies, I should've stopped

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Michael Bay recently shared that he should've stopped making the 'Transformers' films at a certain point.

According to 'Variety', he told Unilad UK (via IndieWire). Bay directed 2007's 'Transformers', which grossed \$709 million worldwide, and then returned for four sequels.

Two follow-up films, 'Transformers: Dark of the Moon' and 'Transformers: Age of Extinction', grossed over \$1 billion worldwide. According to Bay, even franchise executive producer Steven Spielberg told him to stop after the third

movie, reports 'Variety'.

"I made too many of them," Bay said.

"Steven Spielberg said, 'Just stop at three'. And I said 'I'd stop. The studio begged me to do a fourth, and then that made a billion too. And then I said 'I'm gonna stop here. And they begged me again. I should have stopped. (But) they were fun to do.'"

Bay's final 'Transformers' outing, the Mark Wahlberg-starring 2017 entry 'Transformers: The Last Knight', bombed with film critics and grossed a franchise low \$605 million worldwide.

Bay told Unilad UK that he still remembers just how "scary" it was taking on the original 'Transformers' movie.

"It was technology we didn't know would work, and then it became very successful," Bay said. "It was the first time digital effects were that highly reflective, so it broke a lot of new ground. It was a fun experience. It made more than (\$709 million), that's a lot of movie tickets and a lot of people that have seen it."

Bay stepped away from directorial duties on the aTransformers' franchise starting with the 2018 spinoff movie 'Bumblebee', which was directed by 'Kubo and the Two Strings' animation director Travis Knight in his live-action debut. The 'Transformers' franchise is returning in 2023 with 'Transformers: Rise of the Beast'.

## KATHRYN BIGELOW TO DIRECT 'AURORA' FOR NETFLIX

Los Angeles: Filmmaker Kathryn Bigelow, who became the first woman to win a directing Oscar in 2010 for 'The Hurt Locker', will direct 'Aurora', based on David Koepp's upcoming thriller novel of the same name, for the streamer Netflix.

Koepp will also write the film's screenplay, which will join his long list of credits including 'Mission: Impossible' and 'Jurassic Park', reports 'Variety'.

The novel 'Aurora', is set to be released on June 7 by Harper Collins.

According to Netflix's announcement of the project on Twitter, the film "follows characters who are coping with the collapse of the social order, set against a catastrophic worldwide power crisis".

The novel's blurb sets the story in Aurora, Illinois, where Aubrey Wheeler and her teenage son are forced to fend for themselves in the wake of a massive power outage. Wheeler's estranged brother, a Silicon Valley CEO, has built a bunker in the desert for such an apocalyptic event, and their reunion leads to reckonings on a global and personal scale.

Bigelow has not directed a feature since her 2017 film 'Detroit', which follows events associated with the 1967 race riots in the city. Since then, she's directed an Apple commercial and a short film, but 'Aurora' is the first confirmation of an upcoming feature from the Academy Award winner. Bigelow also made waves with her 2012 film 'Zero Dark Thirty', which earned a best picture nomination.



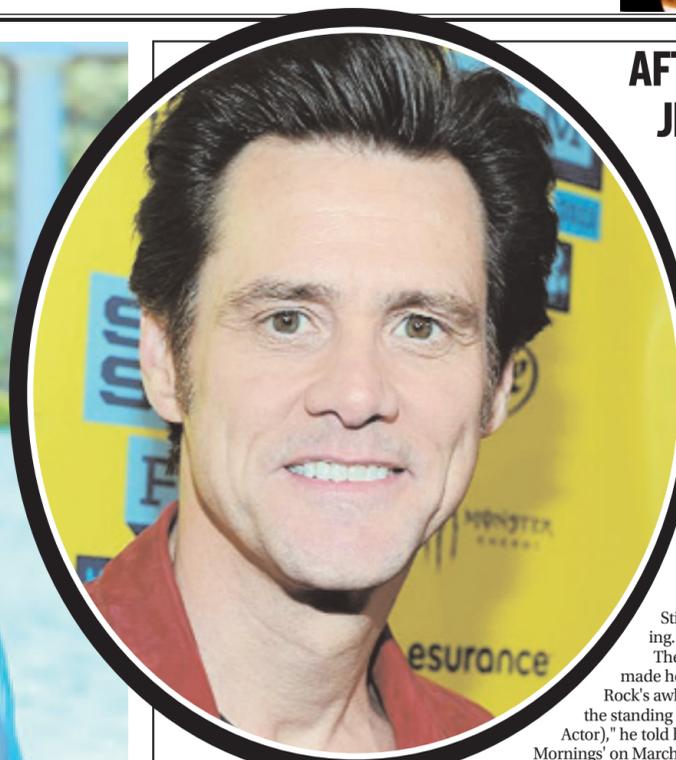
## AFTER BRUCE WILLIS, NOW JIM CARREY ANNOUNCES ACTING RETIREMENT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jim Carrey has announced that he's retiring from acting. When revealing his plan in a new interview, the actor said that he feels he's "done enough" after nearly five decades of his career, reports aceshowbiz.com. During a conversation with Access Hollywood, the 60-year-old actor said, "I am retiring. I am being fairly serious." He went on to explain, "It depends. If the angels bring some sort of script that's written in gold ink, that says to me that it's going to be really important for people to see, I might. I might continue down the road, but I'm taking a break." "I really like my quiet life, and I really love putting paint on canvases, and I really love my spiritual life, and I feel like -- and this is something you might never hear another celebrity say as long as time exists -- I have enough," Jim continued.

He then stressed, "I've done enough. I am enough." Still, it might be an April Fool's joke considering the timing.

The announcement of his retirement came after Jim made headlines as he weighed in on Will Smith and Chris Rock's awkward confrontation at the Oscars. "I was sickened by the standing ovation (when Will later took home the award for Best Actor)," he told host Gayle King during an interview with 'CBS Mornings' on March 29.



## CANNES FILM FESTIVAL TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO TOM CRUISE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Cannes Film Festival has shared details of the 'Top Gun: Maverick' screening and the Tom Cruise special tribute.

This is expected to be the film's international premiere with the global premiere in San Diego, reports 'Deadline'. "Tom Cruise will be in attendance in Cannes on May 18, 2022 for the screening of 'Top Gun: Maverick', scheduled for release on May 25 in France and May 27 in the US. The Festival will also pay a special tribute to Tom Cruise for his career."

"Top Gun hero Maverick" will be back in cinemas all over the world and Tom Cruise will return to the Festival de Cannes where he has made only one appearance before: on May 18, 1992, for Ron Howard's 'Far and Away', the closing film of the 45th Festival.

"That evening, he had awarded the Palme d'Or to director Bille August for his film 'The Best Intentions'. Exactly thirty years later, on May 18, 2022, the Festival de Cannes will pay him an exceptional tribute for his lifetime achievements.

On that special day, Tom Cruise will have an on-stage conversation with journalist Didier Allouch in the afternoon and will walk up the steps of the Palais des Festivals for the evening screening of 'Top Gun: Maverick', directed by Joseph Kosinski."

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Alessandra Ambrosio



## IPL 2022: UMESH YADAV, RUSSELL HELP KKR BEAT PUNJAB KINGS BY SIX WICKETS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Umesh Yadav claimed 4/23 and Andre Russell blasted an unbeaten 70 to help Kolkata Knight Riders thrash Punjab Kings by six wickets with 33 deliveries to spare in their IPL 2022 match at the Wankhede Stadium here on Friday. Yadav set up the Knight Riders for victory with his four for 23 which was instrumental in Punjab Kings being dismissed for a paltry 137 on being asked to bat first. Bhanuka Rajapaksa blasted 31 off nine deliveries but once he got out, PBKS collapsed like nine pins.

Chasing 138, the Knight Riders were in deep trouble at 51/4 with Ajinkya Rahane (12), Venkatesh Iyer (3), skipper Shreyas Iyer (26) and Nitesh Rana (0) were back in the dugout. Russell came to their rescue, hitting sixes at will as he and Sam Billings guided them through to victory.

The bowlers held sway as KKR batters were all at sea. They reached 42/2 in five overs and their 50 came only in 5.5 overs. Russell blasted their first six in the 10th over as KKR crawled to 73/4 at the midway stage.



It was a brilliant display of power-hitting by Russell as the West Indies batter dealt mostly in sixes. He blasted eight sixes and two across in a display of clean hitting to remain unbeaten on 70 runs. He and Billings (24 not out) raised 90 runs for the unfinished fifth-wicket partnership to guide KKR to 141/4 in 14.3 overs. Earlier, Umesh Yadav claimed a wicket in the first over for the third successive match this season to give KKR a superb start.

Umesh Yadav, who last played a T20I match for India in February 2019, served notice of his abilities



ahead of the T20 World Cup later this year as he came up with another brilliant bowling performance.

Having claimed a wicket in his first over in the matches against Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore, Yadav continued his success by sending back Punjab skipper Mayank Agarwal on the last ball of his first over. This was his 50th wicket in the powerplay in the IPL. Punjab never recovered from the early blow and though Bhanuka Rajapaksa blasted a 9-ball 31 and Kagiso Rabada made a late charge with a 16-ball 25, they could

only manage 137 which in the end proved insufficient. PBKS lost skipper Mayank Agarwal on the last ball of the first over as Umesh Yadav made one nip back after pitching on the off-stump.

Shikhar Dhawan struck a six and a four during his 16 but Bhanuka Rajapaksa went on a rampage, hitting Tim Southee for a four off the last ball of his first over and giving the same treatment to Umesh Yadav in the next over. The Sri Lankan batter launched into Shivam Mavi, who was brought in place of Sheldon Jackson, hitting him for a four and followed by three sixes of successive balls -- the first over mid-on, the next over long-on and the third a slog-sweep over square leg boundary. The rest of the batters barring Rabada did not contribute much as Punjab failed to last 20 overs.

### Brief scores :

Punjab Kings 137 all out in 18.2 overs (Bhanuka Rajapaksa 31, Kagiso Rabada 25; Umesh Yadav 4/23, Tim Southee 2/26) lost to Kolkata Knight Riders 141/4 in 14.3 overs (Andre Russell 70 not out, Sam Billings 24 not out, Shreyas Iyer 26; Rahul Chahar 2/13) by six wickets.

## India officially gets Chess Olympiad 2022 hosting rights

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) chief, Arkady Dvorkovich, officially handed over the Chess Olympiad 2022 hosting rights to India at an event here on Friday.

The Olympiad will take place from July 28 to August 14 in Chennai with over 2,000 participants expected to battle it out for the top prize.

Indian chess Grandmaster and five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, who was present on the occasion, said, "I am delighted that the FIDE Chess Olympiad 2022 will take place in Chennai. I would like to thank the Tamil Nadu government and especially Chief Minister MK Stalin and everyone else who has played a part in bringing the competition to India. I would also like to thank FIDE and FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich. And also credit must be given to All India Chess Federation (AICF) for moving very fast, and I am confident that the competition will be a great success."



The competition, which has been organised since 1927, will be held in India for the first time and in Asia after 30 years. Dvorkovich said, "It's an honour and privilege to be here and this is a historic moment as India will host the FIDE Chess Olympiad for the first time. The place which produces more Grandmasters than any other country truly deserves to host the FIDE

Chess Olympiad. I can see a clear interest to host the best-ever FIDE Chess Olympiad in Chennai." Tournament director Bharat Singh Chauhan said, "This is a historic moment for the All India Chess Federation (AICF) and all of us. This is going to be the biggest sporting event hosted by India. We are expecting participants from 160-190 countries."

## Elgar, Bavuma score half-centuries as South Africa make strong start



Durban | Agencies

Keshav Maharaj, anticipating the pitch to be slower than usual. The opening session was delayed owing to a sight-screen malfunction. However, after a 35-minute wait, the session began, and Dean Elgar and Sarel Erwee made sure they got off to a strong start in the first Test of the two-match series. The two batters took advantage of the conditions and scored swiftly, leaving Bangladesh to question their decision to bowl first. South Africa went for lunch on 95/0, with Elgar (60 not out) and Erwee (32 not out) inching closer to their century opening partnership. After the break, the openers continued the steady flow of runs, making the Bangladesh bowlers toil. In the 34th over, the visitors finally broke the opening stand. Khaled Ahmed drew the first blood with Elgar gloving it behind the wickets where Das took a good diving catch. The 113-run opening partnership was ended with Elgar walking back for a solid 67. One brought two for Bangladesh as in the next over Erwee was bowled by Mehidy for 41. All of a sudden, South Africa were two down, with both set batters back to the dugout. The hosts went to tea at 165/3, with Bavuma on 22 not out and debutant Ryan Rickelton keeping him company on an unbeaten 11. Rickelton was the only wicket to fall after tea in a shortened session as bad light stopped play.

### Brief scores :

South Africa 233/4 (Dean Elgar 67, Sarel Erwee 41, Temba Bavuma 53 not out; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 1/57) vs Bangladesh.

South Africa skipper Dean Elgar (67) and Temba Bavuma (53 not out) scored patient half-centuries as the home side reached 233/4 on a curtailed Day 1 against Bangladesh in the first Test at Kingsmead here.

Bangladesh, who will be looking to add to their white-ball series win against the Proteas, struggled with the ball, with Mehidy Hasan Miraz the pick of the bowlers with 1/57 off 26 overs on Thursday. After winning the toss, Bangladesh chose to bowl first on an unusual brown-green Kingsmead pitch. With their key pacer Shoriful Islam out due to niggle, Bangladesh went with a three-seam option and included Mehidy in the eleven as their only spin-bowling option. Opener Tamim Iqbal was missing from the starting eleven due to a stomach ache. The Proteas opted for with two frontline spinners in their squad as they included Simon Harmer to partner

## SWIATEK SETS UP SUMMIT CLASH AGAINST OSAKA

MIAMI OPEN

Miami | Agencies

Polish tennis star Iga Swiatek held off Jessica Pegula of the United States 6-2, 7-5 to win her 16th straight match and make the Miami Open final -- a WTA 1000 event -- on Friday (IST). Swiatek, who will be the new world No. 1 on Monday when the rankings are released, is into her maiden Miami Open final, and her third consecutive WTA 1000 final overall. The 20-year-old Pole needed an hour and 48 minutes to overcome No.16 seed Pegula, the last American remaining in singles at the Miami Open.

Swiatek will now take on former world No.1 Naomi Osaka of Japan in an exciting battle for the title. Osaka defeated Belinda Bencic of Switzerland 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 for the first time at a tour-level event.

"Even though it's the middle of the night, I feel like I'm going to get some time to chill out today, because it was a really intense match and I had to give everything,"



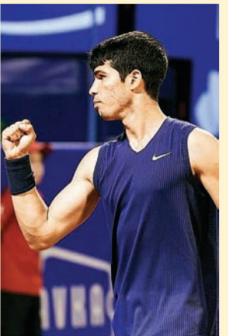
Swiatek told wtatennis.com after the victory. Osaka won their only previous meeting, when she defeated Swiatek 7-6(4), 6-4 in the Round of 16 at 2019 Toronto. If Swiatek can avenge that loss, she will become the fourth player to win titles at both Indian Wells

and Miami in the same season, completing the "Sunshine Double." She would then join Germany's Steffi Graf (1994 and 1996), Belgium's Kim Clijsters (2005) and Belarusian Victoria Azarenka (2016) in that elite group.

## ALCARAZ TO MEET HURKACZ IN SEMIFINAL

Miami: Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz reached back-to-back ATP Masters 1000 semifinals, as the 18-year-old defeated Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia 6-7(5), 6-3, 7-6(5) to enter the last-four at the Miami Open on Friday (IST).

Alcaraz will take on Poland's Hubert Hurkacz for a place in the final. The 25-year-old Pole defeated Russia's world No. 2 Daniil Medvedev 7-6(7), 6-3. Alcaraz did not have a Miami win to his name entering this year's event, but has now won four in a row to improve his record this season to 16-2. Medvedev spent three weeks as the world No. 1 from February 28 to March 21 this year before he relinquished the spot to Serbian Novak Djokovic. Victory over Hurkacz would have moved Medvedev back to the summit on Monday. However, the four-time Masters 1000 champion, who was aiming to reach the semifinals in Miami for the first time, never got into top gear against Hurkacz as he struggled with his baseline game.



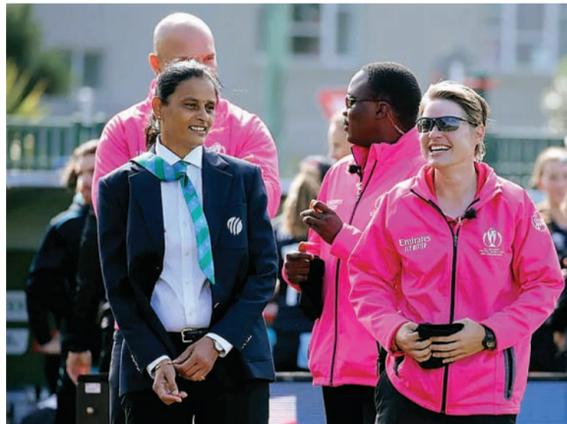
## INDIA'S GS LAKSHMI TO BE MATCH REFEREE IN WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL

Christchurch | Agencies

India's GS Lakshmi on Friday was named as the Match Referee for the final of ICC Women's Cricket World Cup between defending champions England and Australia at Hagley Oval on April 3, said the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Lakshmi, who was the first woman ever in the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees in May 2019, also oversaw the semi-final between England and South Africa at the same venue on Thursday. The final of 2022 ODI World Cup serves as a significant milestone for the 53-year-old, who first officiated as a match referee in India domestic women's cricket in 2008/09.

In December 2019, Lakshmi made history by becoming the first female match referee to oversee a men's ODI with the opening match of the third



series of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 between hosts United

Arab Emirates (UAE) and United States of America (USA). Lauren

Agenbag of South Africa and Kim Cotton of New Zealand will be the two on-field umpires while West Indies' Jacqueline Williams, who in 2020 became the first female to officiate as the Third Umpire in a men's international match, will also take charge as the TV Umpire here. Langton Rusere of Zimbabwe will be the Fourth Umpire. Cotton was the only woman Match Official in the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on March 8. It will be the first time that a global cricket tournament final will have four women Match Officials on duties. As part of its strategic commitment to a gender equitable sport, the ICC has focused on increasing the number of international female match officials, with women comprising eight of the 15 match officials at the ODI World Cup 2022.

## Indian team strong contender for junior women's World Cup gold: Sushila Chanu

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Veteran India halfback Sushila Chanu feels that the junior women's hockey team for the World Cup in Potchefstroom, South Africa, beginning on Friday, has a great chance of doing well, given that it's a "tight-knit group" with an "excellent understanding between each other on the field".

India have been clubbed with Germany, Malaysia and Wales in Pool D of the 15-team tournament and will begin their campaign against Wales on April 2. They will play Germany on April 3. Speaking about India's chances, Chanu, who is in the senior core group, said, "This is a really tight-knit group with excellent understanding between each other on the field, and off the field as well. They have trained together as a group for a really long time, and even played practice matches against the senior women's team in the national camp at SAI Bengaluru and in Bhubaneswar



in which they have contested well." The group also consists of players who have represented the senior team on the big stage, like the Olympics. These reasons lead me to believe that the Indian junior women's team is a strong contender for gold in the upcoming World Cup," said Chanu. Chanu rose to prominence in the national setup following India's bronze-medal finish in the 2013 women's Junior World Cup. In fact, she was the captain during the memorable outing.

## DJ Bravo goes past Malinga, becomes highest wicket-taker in IPL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Adding another feather to his cap, Chennai Super Kings' all-rounder Dwayne Bravo on Thursday became the all-time highest wicket-taker in the Indian Premier League.

The 38-year-old achieved the historic feat during the IPL 2022 match against Lucknow Super Giants at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai.

Bravo, who was tied with Malinga at the top spot with 170 wickets, dismissed Deepak Hooda in the 18th over of Lucknow's chase to break the former Mumbai Indians' bowler's record.

The West Indian cricketer now has 171 wickets to his name in 153 IPL matches. On the other hand, Malinga had taken 170 wickets in 122 matches. Earlier, he picked up 3 for 20 off his 4 overs against Kolkata Knight



Riders in the season opener to draw level with Malinga.

Bravo and Malinga are followed by Amit Mishra (166), Piyush Chawla (157) and Harbhajan Singh (150) in IPL's all-time leading wicket-takers' list in top five.

## 2nd ODI: Babar, Imam star in Pakistan's series levelling win over Australia

Lahore | Agencies

Centuries from Imam-ul-Haq (106) and Babar Azam (114) helped Pakistan beat Australia by six wickets in the second ODI and level the three-match series 1-1, here on Thursday.

It was Pakistan's first win against Australia since 2017 also their highest successful run chase in ODIs.

Pakistan won the toss and opted to bowl. It took just three deliveries for new-ball sensation Afridi to strike, pinning Aussie captain Finch in-front of his stumps for a golden duck. But that lightning start proved the last bright moment for some time for the home side, as Travis Head and McDermott put together a dominant 162-run partnership to set a platform for a huge total. Australia built well on the platform set by McDermott and Head, with



Marnus Labuschagne hitting 59 from 49 and Marcus Stoinis smashing 49 from 33. But the chances of boosting the score up into the high 300s were hurt by the return of Afridi, who took three wickets in the last five overs to restrict the

score to 348/8, with Afridi finishing with stand-out figures of 4/63.

In reply, Pakistan got off to a very solid start as the openers put on 118 for the first wicket in a terrific opening stand. The opener fell six runs after his century, with his 106 coming from 97 deliveries. But Babar ensured the progress towards the target was almost serene. The skipper fell with work still to be done, but his outstanding 114 from 83 balls had given his team a terrific chance, and they got the job done.

### Brief scores :

Australia 348/8 in 50 overs (Travis Head 89, Ben McDermott 104, Marnus Labuschagne 59, Marcus Stoinis 49, Sean Abbott 28; Shaheen Afridi 4-63, Mohammad Wasim Jr 2-56) lost to Pakistan 352/4 in 49 overs (Fakhar Zaman 67, Imam-ul-Haq 106, Babar Azam 114; Adam Zampa 2-71) by 6 wickets



## SOMY ALI ON OSCARS SLAP

## 'Joke was poor but Will Smith first laughed, then went crazy'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Somy Ali talks about the recent incident at the Oscars where Hollywood actor Will Smith slapped comedian Chris Rock since the latter made fun of Smith's wife's health condition. Somy says that she stands divided on the matter.

"I have two opinions on this: The joke was in extremely poor taste given Smith's wife's struggle with alopecia. My second opinion is that violence begets violence and hate begets hate. Therefore, I do not condone violence in any situation as I am a pacifist myself. There could have been many ways to handle this on Smith's end and it shows Rock's class by not filing charges. Again, I am not in any shape or form saying that his joke was not hurtful to Jada, but if you notice Smith first laughed at it and then took action.

"This depicts that he found it funny and then realised his wife's condition and suddenly decided to do something about it with, no rationality whatsoever," says Somy, who runs

an NGO No More Tears in the US which help victims of domestic violence and abuse.

She says that as celebrities, it's important to accept that you will be trolled or joked about. "Once you are a celebrity and you choose to be one, you will forever be trolled, made fun of, bullied and, yes, be the joke of the party or award shows. There is simply no escaping that if you choose the fame game. It's part of the territory and we see it daily on celebrities globally on their social media. I have been away from the industry for 20 years and now when I decide to speak my truth because I am now ready and it's my choice to speak up when I wish to do so. I have been getting the most disgusting messages and sadly the majority of them are from women," she says.

She adds: "Well, here's one of my favourite quotes: 'Laugh loudly, laugh often, and most importantly laugh at yourself.' Chelsea Handler. If you can't laugh at yourself, you are devoid of humility in my opinion."



## GAYATRI BHARADWAJ JOINS RAVI TEJA'S UPCOMING

Hyderabad: The makers of Ravi Teja-starrer 'Tiger Nageswar Rao' have announced details regarding the female leads in the movie. With Nupur Sanon already on board for this upcoming pan-India movie, the makers roped in Gayatri Bhavadwaj to play another important role in the movie.

The makers shared the update via their official handles on social media websites. Welcoming Gayatri on board, the producers wrote, "Welcome to massive hunt".

The producers have locked April 2 for the formal muhurat launch of this highly-anticipated movie. Ravi Teja will be seen in a titular role in this movie, which is billed to be a story based on real-life incidents.

'Tiger Nageswar Rao' will revolve around a notorious place in Andhra Pradesh called 'Stuart Puram'. 'Pushpa' writer Srikanth Vissa is roped in to pen the dialogues in Vamsee's directorial.

Abhishek Agarwal of Abhishek Agarwal Arts who produced the critically acclaimed and commercial blockbuster 'The Kashmir Files', is producing 'Tiger Nageswar Rao'. Tej Narayan Agarwal presents the film.

'Tiger Nageswar Rao' will be made in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi languages.



## Ali Fazal, Tabu jet off to Canada for 'Khufiya' final schedule

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actors Tabu and Ali Fazal have headed to Canada for the final schedule of filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj's upcoming film 'Khufiya'.

Produced and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, it also stars Wamiqa Gabbi and Ashish Vidyarthi besides the two actors.

News is that the film is going to be wrapped up soon as the cast and crew has already started shooting the last schedule of the film in Canada.

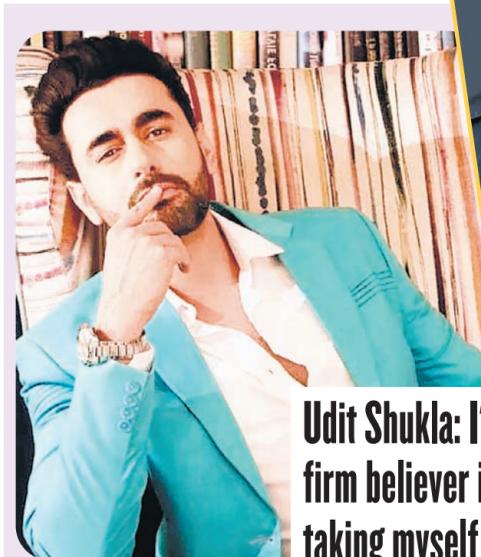
According to a source close to the unit of Khufiya, "The final schedule of the film is set to commence soon. Ali Fazal and Tabu are soon going to leave the country and will start shooting with Vishal sir in Canada. They were meant to do this earlier but due to the Omicron variant wave in January, it was pushed further."

"Joining them will also be Wamiqa Gabbi. As soon as this film shoot wraps up, the film will go into edit and is expected to come out towards end of the year."

'Khufiya' is inspired by true events and based on an espionage novel 'Escape to Nowhere' by Amar Bhushan. The film stars Tabu, Ali Fazal, Wamiqa Gabbi and Ashish Vidyarthi in pivotal roles.

Produced by Vishal Bhardwaj Films and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, 'Khufiya' is a story about Krishna Mehra, a R&AW operative who is assigned to track down the mole selling India's defence secrets.

All along, grappling with her dual identity of a spy and a lover.



## Udit Shukla: I'm a firm believer in taking myself out of my comfort zone

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Udit Shukla, who was seen in 'Dhhai Kilo Prem', 'Rangrasiya', 'Suvreen Guggal' among others feels portraying a character is a truly liberating experience.

He says: "Anyone who has had even a minor, supporting role in a show, or who has debuted in their first ever show, will admit that learning to act and to portray a character is a truly liberating experience. Not only is it time spent forgetting about all of your own worries, be it financial crisis or relationship troubles or can be work stress and other concerns, it is a time to soak up all of the energy and gusto of the person you are playing and transmit that to the stage."

Udit feels his love for art turns out to be his daily inspiration. He continues: "It is often said that some people 'are meant for the stage'. In fact, many parents and grandparents proudly talk of their younger generations being destined for life as a star, because of their wild imagination and don't care attitude." The actor currently seen as Abhishek Pandey in the show 'Rang Jaun Tere Rang Mein' credits acting to bring out the best from him.



## 50TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

## TRAGEDIES OF MEENA KUMARI

Vikas Datta | Mumbai

Gifted actors are expected to perform varied roles onscreen, even those totally contrary to their usual character, but return to their normal lives once the camera is switched off.

The problem begins when the dividing line between their reel and real life begins to blur. Meena Kumari, known for playing star-crossed characters heading for a tragic fate, became a hapless victim of the unfortunate blurring of this line separating the personal and the professional.

Portraying a wide gamut of wronged, silent, long-suffering -- but dignified -- Indian women, from passed-over love interests to neglected wives, in cinematic classics spanning from "Baiju Bawra" (1952) to "Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam" (1962) to "Pakeezah" (1972), she could evoke such a lifetime of melancholy and anguish that it was difficult to believe that she was only in her 20s and 30s

when she played these roles.

Her less than four-decade-long real life was scarcely enviable -- a childhood overshadowed by the need to work to support her family -- with her parents, small-time theatre artists, seeking to achieve their desires vicariously through her, right from when she was just four.

The same year, she would go on to marry filmmaker Kamal Amrohi, 15 years her senior, but after their fairy-tale romance, their marriage soon hit the rocks as he tried to set rules for her film career and even allegedly mistreated her, and they eventually separated.

Her personal life did not improve -- she continued to suffer from a lack of genuine love and support, even as heavy drinking caused and exacerbated a grievous and, eventually, fatal illness.

But even as amid all this, Meena Kumari went on to set milestones in Indian cinema with her roles in "Halaku" (1956), "Yahudi" (1958), "Char

Dil Char Rahen" (1959), "Dil Apna Aur Preet Parayi" (1960), "Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam", "Main Chup Rahungi", "Aarti" (all 1962), "Benazir" (1964), "Bahu Begam" (1967), "Mere Apne", and eventually her swan-song, the long-delayed "Pakeezah", just completed before her death in 1972.

But she was encouraging to newcomers, and some of the earliest successes of Sunil Dutt, Rajendra Kumar, Dharmendra, and even Vinod Khanna ("Mere Apne") were opposite her. Her poetry also is a critical reaction to popular culture, especially the Bollywood version of it.

But there was another side to Meena Kumari too.

Though typecast as a tragedienne, she could do comic roles with aplomb too -- as seen in films such as "Miss Mary" (1957), "Shararat" (1959) and "Kohinoor" (1960) -- but she never got much of a chance.

This was perhaps her biggest tragedy.

## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Urfi Javed

## 'WORKING WITH JOHN ISN'T LIKE DIRECTOR-ACTOR THING'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Debutant director Lakshya Raj Anand has talked about working with actor-producer John Abraham, whom he knows since his first film as assistant director in the movie 'New York'. The filmmaker says working with the action star isn't like a director-actor thing. Sharing about working with actor producer John, Raj Anand said: "I have known John since my first film when I was an AD in the movie 'New York', since then he has seen me grow and he is the most approachable and easiest person to work with. 'What makes it really special with John is he is both actor and Producer on this film, the germ of this idea was created by us together in a room.' The debutant director added, "Working with him isn't like a director actor thing, it's like we are one team.



Our main point was to get amazing action scenes, shoot it at a higher scale and give audiences a new way of storytelling. "Part 1 of 'Attack' is a big-ticket franchise based on a world where future wars will be fought on technology and artificial intelligence (AI). The stellar cast also includes Jacqueline Fernandez, Rakul Preet Singh, Prakash Raj and Ratna Pathak Shah.