

Putin signs electronic military draft system into law

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Online Desk: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday signed a bill to create a digital draft system, greatly facilitating mobilising Russians into the army, more than a year into the Kremlin's Ukraine offensive. The law creates a digital conscription notice system that could bar men from leaving the country and make dodging the draft nearly impossible. It has stirred fresh fears in Russia as Moscow's Ukraine campaign drags on for a second year. Russia rushed it through parliament in just two days earlier this week, AFP reports.

The Kremlin has insisted it does not plan another mobilisation drive and that there is nothing unusual about the bill. Under the legislation, a draftee would be banned from travelling abroad and would have to report to an enlistment office once electronic call-up papers are received.

Until now, a draftee would have to receive the call-up papers in person, and many who did not want to fight in Ukraine simply ignored the call-up or fled the country. Tens of thousands of men fled Russia last autumn after Putin announced a mobilisation to prop up the forces in Ukraine.

Under the new system, a draft notice will be considered received as soon as it is sent out. Those who fail to show up at the enlistment office within the 20 days following receipt of the electronic draft notice will not be able to take out loans, register property or work as individual entrepreneurs.