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BOOSTERS RAISE VAX EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST OMICRON BY 88%: UK STUDIES

LONDON | Agencies

Although the Omicron variant of Covid has been shown to evade vaccines, two new studies led by the UK health agency showed that a third booster dose increases vaccines' effectiveness by 88 per cent.

The studies, led by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), found a substantial reduction in risk of hospitalisation for Omicron cases after three doses of vaccine compared to those who are unvaccinated.

The first study showed that the risk of hospitalisation is 81 per cent lower after three doses compared to unvaccinated Omicron cases.

Previous studies note that vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease continues to be lower for Omicron than for Delta with waning by 10 weeks after the third dose.

In the second study, the researchers linked symptomatic cases to hospitalisation data.

They found that after three doses of vaccine, the risk of hospitalisation for a symptomatic case identified with Omicron through community testing was estimated to be reduced by 68 per cent when compared to similar



individuals with Omicron who were not vaccinated.

However, combined with the protection against becoming a symptomatic case, this gives a vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation of 88 per cent for Omicron after 3 doses of vaccine, the study showed.

"That's a big boost of protection for third dose vaccine vs hospitalisation from Omicron infection," Eric Topol, a physician-scientist and professor of

molecular medicine and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, said in a tweet.

"Vaccine effectiveness increased from 52 per cent (due to 2-dose waning after 6 months) to 88 per cent after the third dose," he added.

Although waning is seen in the effectiveness against symptomatic disease, there is insufficient data to assess the duration of protection against hospitalisation, which is

expected to last longer, the researcher said.

The study also showed that effectiveness of booster doses was lower for Omicron compared to Delta. Among those who had received 2 doses of AstraZeneca, there was no effect against Omicron from 20 weeks after the second dose.

Among those who had received 2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna, effectiveness dropped from around 65 to 70 per cent down to around 10 per cent by 20 weeks after the second dose.

Two to four weeks after a booster dose vaccine effectiveness ranged from around 65 to 75 per cent, dropping to 55 to 70 per cent at 5 to 9 weeks, and 40 to 50 per cent from 10+ weeks after the booster, the studies showed. "These estimates suggest that vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease with the Omicron variant is significantly lower than compared to the Delta variant and wanes rapidly," the UKHSA said.

"Nevertheless, protection against hospitalisation is much greater than that against symptomatic disease, in particular after a booster dose, where vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation is close to 90 per cent," they added.

Local sports talent will go global, says Modi

Meerut | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stone of the first sports university in Meerut and said that it will make local sports talent global.

"Our government set up the first national sports university in Manipur and now the first sports university in Uttar Pradesh will come up in Meerut. The university is named after hockey icon Major Dhyani Chand and the name itself gives us a direction -- to remain focused, to keep 'dhyani'," he said.

The Prime Minister said that earlier, only rich families in urban cities could access sports training and government were apathetic to sports persons.

"Today, things have changed, India has changed. We are in the 21st century and now wherever the youth goes, India will go," he pointed out.

The Prime Minister slammed previous governments and said that till five years ago, girls could not move out of their homes.



"The previous government was busy playing its own games. Criminals and mafia were playing their own games. The tournaments were for land grabbing and people had started migrating from here. The Sotiganj market was an example of this (The market dealt in scrap form stolen vehicles)," he said. He said that the Yogi Adityanath government was promoting real games.

"The new university will be built at a cost of Rs 700 crore. Every year, 1,000 students will graduate from this sports university. Students will get facilities of international standards and they can hone their skills. Youth are now writing new chapters of suc-

cess in the field of sports," he said. The Prime Minister said that sportsmen lacked respect and if one opted for sports, people believed that he was doing it to get a job.

"We must create a new culture for sports, a new thinking and vision and youth should have faith in sports. The government is providing training, facilities, exposure and transparency to sports persons. We will take care of fitness and food and sports infrastructure in the rural interiors is also being developed," he stated.

The Prime Minister said that Meerut for a manufacturing hub for sports goods and there is a need to make this sector Atmanirbar.

HOSTING PLATFORM BLOCKED USER BEHIND BULLI BAI APP: UNION MINISTER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a woman journalist filed a complaint with the Delhi Police over webpage "Bulli Bai" aimed at demeaning Muslim women, Union Minister for Communications, Ashwini Vaishnaw said that hosting platform Github blocked the user behind the app.

"Bulli Bai," created on Github, popped up on January 1, with a number of pictures of women including journalists, social workers, students and famous personalities, accompanied by derogatory content.

Late Saturday night, quoting Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi tweet, Vaishnaw said: "GitHub confirmed blocking the user this morning itself. CERT and Police authorities are coordinating further action."

Citing Vaishnaw's response, Chaturvedi said: "Sir, Thank you. With due respect I had shared with you that besides blocking the platform punishing the offenders creating such sites is important. I hope @HMIndia & @GoI_Meiti will support @MumbaiPolice to find these culprits & make them as well as platforms accountable #BulliDeals." Quoting a woman journalist's tweet, Chaturvedi said earlier on Saturday: "I have repeatedly



asked Hon. IT Minister @AshwiniVaishnaw ji to take stern action against such rampant misogyny and communal targeting of women through #sullideals like platforms. A shame that it continues to be ignored."

"It is very sad that as a Muslim woman you have to start your new year with this sense of fear & disgust. Of course it goes without saying that I am not the only one being targeted in this new version of #sullideals. Screenshot sent by a friend this morning. Happy new year," the journalist had tweeted. "A complaint has been filed by me with the Cyber Cell of Delhi Police for immediate registration of FIR and consequent action against people behind the auctioning of Muslim women on social media."

J&K TO HAVE DISTRICT LEVEL GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX: JITENDRA SINGH

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said that Jammu and Kashmir will soon become the first Union Territory (UT) in the country to have a district level Good Governance Index.

The Minister said this here after receiving an update from the newly appointed Secretary of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Union Ministry of Personnel, V Srinivas.

Dr Singh said, "The Centre will set up the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) in J&K and the DARPG will carry out this task in collaboration with the UT government. The framework of the proposed Index has been finalised with the technical support from the Centre for Good Governance (CGG) Hyderabad."

The Minister pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen that we should replicate in J&K, the same best practices of governance which are followed in other States and UTs of the country. "For a long time, as a result of certain constitutional and administrative constraints,



many of the Central Rules of DoPT and ARPG were not applicable in Jammu & Kashmir, but in the last over two years, there has been a fast-track attempt to change the work culture and to follow the Mantra of 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government', which has been the guiding principle of the Centre and States ever since the Modi government came in 2014," he said.

Singh mentioned that 'Good Governance Index' at the district level will enable each of the 20 districts of J&K to rise to the level of some of the best administered districts of the country, with time bound disposal of office files and other matters, increased trans-

parency, increased accountability and increased citizen participation. "The next step would be to carry forward these Good Governance practices down to tehsil and block level," the minister said.

The DGGI Framework has 58 Indicators drawn from different aspects of development and district administration distributed in all-encompassing 10 sectors such as agriculture and allied sector, Commerce and Industry, Human Resource Development, Public Health, Public Infrastructure & Utilities, Economic Governance, Welfare & Development, Public Safety and Judiciary and Citizen Centric Governance.

ONLY ONE WOMAN IN PARLIAMENTARY PANEL EXAMINING PROPOSAL TO RAISE WOMEN MARRIAGE AGE

New Delhi: The Parliamentary panel which will examine a bill seeking to raise the legal age of marriage of women from 18 to 21 and submit its recommendations has only one woman member. As per the Rajya Sabha website, the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports, headed by BJP's Rajya Sabha member Vinay Sahasrabudhe, has its full complement of 31 members and Trinamool Congress member of the upper house, Sushmita Dev is only woman among them. Of the 31 members, 10 are from the Rajya Sabha and 21 from the Lok Sabha. During the Winter session, the government introduced the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha and it was referred to the standing committee on the opposition's demand. A committee member said that it would be better if a few more women parliamentarians are members of the committee which is going to discuss the law increasing the legal marriage age of women to 21 years from 18. "Currently there is no vacancy to nominate new women MPs in the committee. But the committee Chairman has power to invite any one and we wish he will invite everyone for wider consultation on the proposed law," said the member, who did not want to be identified. The Union Cabinet passed a proposal to increase the minimum legal age of marriage of women to 21 from 18 years on December 15 last year. Currently the legal minimum age of marriage for men is 21 and 18 for women. The proposal was based on the recommendation of NITI Aayog task force headed by Jaya Jaitly. Senior officials of the Health, Women and Child Development, and the Law Ministries were members of a task force set up in June last year to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate), improvement of nutritional levels and related issues.

Inform us if you suspect you are a Pegasus victim: SC probe panel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court appointed committee probing the Pegasus spyware snooping matter has issued a public notice seeking details from people who may have felt their mobile devices may have been infected by Pegasus malware.

The panel has asked the Pegasus victims to send the information before noon of January 7, 2022.

On October 27, the top court said it was compelled to take up the cause to determine the truth, as it appointed an independent expert technical committee supervised by a retired top court judge, Justice R.V. Raveendran, to probe the Pegasus snooping allegations.

The committee asked the citizens who have reasonable cause to suspect

that her/his mobile has been compromised due to specific usage of NSO group Israel's Pegasus software to contact it with reasons, which led them to believe that the device was infected with the malware.

The committee also asked the people to inform it whether they are in a position to allow it to examine the device.

"In case, the committee feels your responses for suspicion of the device being infected with the malware compel a further investigation, then the committee shall request you to allow examination of your device," said the notice, which was issued in Sunday's newspapers.

The committee said the collection point would be in New Delhi and the mobile device will be delivered back on completion of the tests/investigation. The top court has autho-



rising the technical committee to devise its own procedure to effectively implement and answer the terms of reference. The committee can hold an investigation it deems fit and take statements of any person in connection with the inquiry and call for records of any authority or individual.

Justice Raveendran is overseeing the functioning of the technical committee and is assisted by Alok Joshi, a former IPS officer and Dr Sundep Oberoi, Chairman, Sub Committee

in the International Organisation of Standardisation/International Electro-Technical Commission/Joint Technical Committee.

The three members of the technical committee are Dr Naveen Kumar Chaudhary, Professor, Cyber Security and Digital Forensics, and Dean, National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Dr Prabaharan P, Professor, School of Engineering, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri, Kerala, and Dr Ashwin Anil Gumaste, Institute Chair Associate Professor (Computer Science and Engineering), Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

On October 27, the apex court directed the committee to submit its report expeditiously and scheduled the matter for further hearing after eight weeks.

'Factually incorrect': Punjab Governor on CM's allegations

Team Absolute | Chandigarh

Rebutting Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's assertions regarding regularisation of the services of contractual employees, Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Sunday described them as "factually incorrect."

The Governor, in a statement, said the file regarding regularisation of the services of contractual employees was sent back to the office of Chief Minister with six queries which need to be clarified by the state government. The copy of the queries raised on the said file is released to the media. "This file was duly received by CMO on December 31, 2021, and the reply to queries is awaited," said the statement. "I advise the Chief Minister to give reply to the queries raised on the file," said Purohit, adding: "Once the reply comes, the bill will be re-examined at Governor's Secretariat." The bill regarding regularisation of the services of contractual employees was passed in the Assembly on November 11, 2021. After a lapse of nearly 20 days, the said file was sent to Punjab Raj Bhawan on December 1, 2021. In December, the Governor was on tour to various districts of the state. The tour ended on December 21 and



thereafter on December 23, the Chief Minister came and met him at Punjab Raj Bhawan. "The file was duly studied and reverted with observation/queries to the CMO on December 31," added the statement. Blaming Governor Purohit for "deliberate" and "inordinate" delay in clearing the file regarding regularisation of services of contractual employees, Chief Minister Channi on Saturday said categorically that the Governor being the Constitutional head of the state is functioning under the political pressure of the BJP in the wake of the forthcoming

Assembly polls in the state. Addressing the media here, Channi had said the Chief Secretary and even he himself had personally met the Governor to get the file cleared, adding that earlier he thought the Governor might be busy elsewhere, but now "it is crystal clear that he is unnecessarily sitting over the file." "It is the question of the future of several employees who have been anxiously waiting for a day when their services would be regularised, at par with their peers working in the state government," he added.



MANDAVIYA URGES STATES TO BETTER UTILISE FUNDS UNDER ECRP-II

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday urged states/UTs to better utilise the approved funds under Emergency Covid Response Package (ECRP-II) and directed them to expedite the progress in terms of ICU beds, oxygen beds, Paediatric ICU/HDU beds, among others.

He also brought attention of the states and UTs to the fact that collectively, they have only used just over 17 per cent of the available approved funds under Emergency Covid Response Package (ECRP-II).

The states were urged to effectively use IT tools for tele-medicine and tele-consultation, including training and capacity building of human resources, timely availability of ambulances, readiness to operationalise Covid facilities for institutional quarantine, and effective and supervised monitoring of those in home isolation.

In a virtual interaction with State Health Ministers and Principal Secretaries to review the Public Health Preparedness to Covid-19 and progress of National vaccination campaign, Mandaviya urged the states to re-invigorate their teams to work at the ground level and strengthen monitoring and containment mechanisms. The meeting was held in view of rising cases of the Omicron variant and the recent decisions to roll out vaccination for the age group of 15-18 years and



precautionary dose for identified vulnerable categories. The meeting also discussed the critical bottlenecks in medical infrastructure.

The Union Health Minister noted that globally, countries are experiencing 3-4 times the surge in Covid-19 cases in comparison to their earlier peaks. The Omicron variant being highly transmissible, a high surge in case can overwhelm the medical system. He therefore advised the states to leave no stone unturned in ramping up infrastructure to manage a high surge so that India escapes unscathed from this episode of Covid-19.

"We have put up a strong fight against Covid earlier and this learning must be used to re-focus on efforts against the Omicron variant", said Mandaviya in the meeting.

He stressed on the continued need to follow Covid appropriate behaviour along with renewed and stringent focus on containment measures for addressing the present surge.

"We must focus on planning with regard to the 15-18 age group vaccination and precautionary doses for eligible beneficiaries", said Mandaviya while underscoring the critical importance of vaccination drive. He also urged states to ensure that the healthcare workers and frontline workers are fully vaccinated, as they form the vulnerable categories.

Stressing the need to ensure smooth implementation of new vaccination guidelines, the minister asked states to ensure the orientation of team members for vaccination of 15-18 years age-group.

To avoid mixing-up of vaccines during administration, separate CVCs, separate session sites, separate queue (if at same session where adult vaccination is ongoing) and separate vaccination team (if at same session site) are to be strived for. States/UTs were also advised to share their requirement of vaccine doses through district wise estimation of beneficiaries using CoWIN. They were urged to plan for distribution of Covaxin to identified session sites well in advance and publish sessions for at least 15 days to provide sufficient visibility.

Govt terms reports claiming India missed vax targets 'misleading'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The union health ministry on Sunday said that a recently published news article by a reputed international news agency claiming that India has missed its vaccination target is misleading and does not represent the complete picture.

In the fight against pandemic, India's national Covid-19 vaccination programme has been one of the most successful and largest compared with many developed western nations with significantly low population base to vaccinate, said the ministry in a statement.

In the drive, India has achieved several milestones unprecedented in the world, including administering over 100 crore doses in less than 9 months, administering 2.51 crore doses in a single day and administering 1 crore doses per day on several occasions. So far, India has administered over 90 per cent 1st dose and 65 per cent of 2nd dose to its eligible citizens,



said the ministry.

Presenting the vaccination status of other developed nations, the ministry said that in case of 1st dose coverage to the eligible population, the US has covered only 73.2 per cent of the population, the UK has covered 75.9 per cent of its population, France has covered 78.3 per cent of its population, and Spain has covered 84.7 per cent of its population. India has already covered 90 per cent of the eligible population with 1st dose of vaccine against Covid-19. Similarly, for the 2nd dose, the US has covered only 61.5 per cent of its population, the UK has

covered 69.5 per cent, France has covered 73.2 per cent and Spain has covered 81 per cent of its population. While India has covered over 65 per cent of the eligible population with 2nd dose of vaccine against Covid-19. Further strengthening India's fight against Covid pandemic, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has given approval to two additional vaccines in December 2021, taking the number of vaccines given restricted use approval in emergency situation in India to 8, clarified the ministry.

Concerted global efforts needed to save islands: M Venkaiah Naidu

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday urged all countries to put in consolidated efforts to limit global temperature levels, so that smaller islands and their sublime beauty stays intact, and their residents do not get displaced.

Expressing his deep concern on the effect of climate change and global warming on the small islands, he said that it is unfair that small islands, whose percentage of overall emissions is minimal, pay the price for the negligence of big nations.

"Rising sea levels, storm surges, flooding, and coastal erosion pose a great threat to the inhabitants of various islands across the world," he added.

The Vice President, who concluded his two day official tour to the Lakshadweep islands, said: "It is a joy to be surrounded by the vast expanse of turquoise blue water, canopy of palm trees, white sand shores, and the clear blue skies." Describing the Lakshadweep islands as the best kept secrets of India, he also lauded the Lakshadweep administration for their consistent efforts towards protecting the coastal environment while promoting tourism. Naidu urged other tourism destinations to emulate Lakshadweep's approach and adopt ecotourism and also called upon tourists to travel responsibly keeping the well-being of the local people and nature in mind. He appreciated the people of Lakshadweep for their role in keeping the islands clean.

Pointing to the steady growth in fish production in the Lakshadweep region, the Vice



President appreciated the efforts made by the administration for their consistent support to this sector. "To give a boost to the fishing sector, our scientists and researchers must come up with energy efficient fishing systems for responsible fishing," he added.

Drawing attention to the natural diversity of India, Naidu said: "We cannot deny that India has the best of everything when it comes to tourism. Be it the mighty Himalayas, the architectural wonders of Rajasthan, the crystal clear lakes in Himachal Pradesh, the spiritual getaways in Uttarakhand, the incredible beaches of Goa, the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, the wildlife sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh, the tea gardens and breath-taking sights of the hills of the northeast or scenic beauty of the Rann of Kutch."

Urging everyone to travel widely in India to experience the diverse and beautiful aspects of the motherland better, he said: "But remember, when you travel, you must take care to travel without harming any aspect of the environment."

NIA TO INVESTIGATE MULTANI'S ROLE IN SMUGGLING VIA DRONES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which recently lodged a case of unlawful activity prevention act against Germany-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) member Jaswinder Singh Multani, has indicated that they will also investigate his involvement in the use of drones for smuggling across the border.

An NIA source said that for drones have been used for smuggling arms, ammunition, explosives and drugs.

"Pakistan-based terrorists backed by the ISI are involved in this. Jaswinder is in touch with them. He also has an Indian contact who receives smuggled arms, explosive and drugs. By this he is pumping drugs and arms into Indian territory. We are probing this and are collecting evidences in this respect," said the source.

Around 70 drone sightings were reported last year along the border in Punjab and Jammu. These drones were used by Pakistan-based elements to supply arms and narcotic in India. Few drones were shot down by Border Security Forces (BSF).

Another drone was sighted by the BSF and the personnel tried to shoot it down and it flew back to Pakistan after dropping six packets containing narcotics, these were seized by the agencies.

Multani was booked by the NIA for hatching conspiracy against India along with his associates. "The case was registered on December 30, under sections 120B, 121A of IPC and sections 10, 13, 17, 18 & 18B of UA(P) Act, against Multani and his other associates. Multani was detained by German authorities in Berlin following the inputs of Indian Agencies, he was later set free after he gave an affidavit to the German government saying he would assist in the probe," said an NIA official.



The official said that Multani along with several other pro-Khalistani elements located abroad were radicalising, motivating and recruiting youths in Punjab on ground and online through social media platforms to propagate their ideology with the aim to secede Punjab from India.

"They have been involved in raising funds to procure arms, ammunition and explosives by

using smuggling networks in Punjab to revive terrorism in Punjab. Jaswinder Singh Multani has also been in contact with ISI operatives to carry out terror attack in Mumbai and other parts of India," the NIA official said. A team of elite officials was formed to look into the matter.

The NIA official said that they want to bring back Multani to India to prosecute him for his offence.

PARAMILITARY FORCES PREPARE FOR 3RD WAVE, REACTIVATE COVID CARE CENTRES

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid rising number of Covid-19 cases, fuelled by its Omicron variant, the Central Armed Police Forces are stocking required medicines like Remdesivir, as well oxygen supplies and reactivating the dedicated Covid care centres, including the world's largest makeshift Covid hospital in south Delhi.

The move came as the alarm bell rang among the various paramilitary forces after 19 coronavirus cases were detected in them.

According to the latest data, the Border Security Force (BSF) has reported nine cases, followed by five in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), three in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), and two in the Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB).

No new cases have been reported in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the National Security Guard (NSG).

The data also said that 148 active Covid cases have been reported in the CAPFs as of now, com-



prising 46 in the BSF, 44 in the CISF, 42 in the CRPF, eight in the SSB, five in the ITBP, two in the

NSG and one in NDRF and two in NSG.

A total of 88,642 security men in CAPFs have been infected since the advent of pandemic whereas 88,146 personnel have been recovered so far. The death toll has gone to 348 since April 2020. Paramilitary force officials said that amid the rising number of Omicron cases, all the forces have been asked strictly adhere to Covid-19 protocols in all units and field formations.

The MHA has sought data from all medical directorates of each force regarding the number of beds available, including oxygen beds, commissioning of oxygen supply and medicine stocks at dedicated Covid Health Care Centres across India. Meanwhile, the Sardar Patel Covid Centre, in Delhi's Chhattarpur, is also getting ready for the third wave. This centre was operated by the ITBP with help from doctors and paramedics of all paramilitary forces and the Delhi government.

The ITBP has said that there is no patients right now at the centre, which has 650 beds, including 150 for critical care, and 100-150 paramedics and doctors are being arranged in view of impending situation in a short notice.

2 Nigerians held for hacking WhatsApp of Transport Ministry official

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Police has arrested two Nigerian nationals for allegedly hacking the WhatsApp mobile application of a senior official in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, an official said here on Sunday.

The accused, identified as Okoye Simeon, 39, and Ugo Chukwu, 35, both presently residing at Uttam Nagar, Delhi, were arrested under sections 170, 420 and 511 of the Indian Penal Code.

Furnishing details about the case, Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi district) Deepak Yadav said a complaint was

lodged by a senior official of the ministry stating that some unknown people have hacked his WhatsApp account and impersonated him by using his profile photo. The Ministry officer further alleged that hackers also demanded money from many persons from his contact list showing urgent requirement of medicine pursuant to which one of them transferred a sum of Rs 75,000 to the hackers. Based on the complaint, a police team was constituted to nab the offenders.

"With the help of technical surveillance, the location of the hackers was traced to Uttam Nagar area of Delhi. It was also found out that a

group of Nigerians were involved in this type of crime," DCP Yadav said.

Thereafter, a raid was conducted at the traced location and two accused were nabbed.

On sustained interrogation, it was revealed that Okoye Simeon was the kingpin of this racket. Earlier, he used to do frauds using Facebook and recently, he started WhatsApp hacking frauds. He revealed that his friends arranged fake accounts for receiving the cheated amount, the police said. The police recovered four mobile phones, two laptops, one expired passport and sim cards used in the commission of offence.

Delhi Police arrests prime member of interstate drug cartel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested a prime member of an interstate drug cartel responsible for the flow of Heroin consignment from Sasaram, Bihar to other parts of the country by hiding them in secret cavities specifically made for illegal trafficking of drugs.

The accused, identified as Mohd Nadeem Khan, a resident of Seelampur, Jafraabad, North East Delhi, was carrying a bounty of Rs 1 lakh on his head. Furnishing more details about the case, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Rajeev Ranjan Singh said, last year a team of Northern Range and Special Task Force, Special Cell got information that a cartel



headed by Mohd Rafi alias Baboo Khan was running an inter state narcotics trafficking operation out of Bareilly. Two key members namely Shajad and Amir were also identified. Kingpin of the cartel Mohd Rafi, his associates Shahjad and Amir were later identified and arrested. A large consignment of Heroin, over 15 kg valued at Rs 60 crore, was recovered from Shahjad and Amir. Further 520 gm high grade heroin valued at more than Rs 2 crore in the international market had been recovered from Baboo Khan.

During further investigation, prime contact of the cartel in Delhi was identified as Nadeem Khan and efforts were made to nab the accused. On January 1, a tip-off was received that the accused Nadeem would come to supply huge consignment of heroin to his contact at ISBT Kashmiri Gate. Accordingly, a raiding party was set up which laid a trap and arrested the accused from the spot. "The accused was then produced before a concerned court and police custody has been taken for further investigation," the DCP informed. The official said that further investigation in the case is being carried out and efforts are on to establish identity of other suppliers and receivers to unearth complete chain of this drug syndicate.

IT'S TIME TO SPEAK UP, SAYS RAHUL GANDHI OVER BULLI DEALS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi has slammed the government over inaction over Bulli Bai app that targets women of a particular community and said it's time to speak up against the hate and there should be no fear.

Gandhi spoke after profiles of several women of a particular community were posted on Bulli Deals. Gandhi said, "The insult of women and communal hatred will only stop when you stand against it in one voice, and the year has changed, so change your fate and it's time to speak up."

NCP leader Nawab Malik tweeted, "It's beyond anguishing to see vocal Muslim women being auctioned online in #BulliDeals & I've also had a telephonic conversation with 2 victims. I will write to Home Minister @Dwalsepatil Ji & demand a probe. Maharashtra will always stand with



the daughters of the nation!" One of the Congress activists whose profile was posted, has tweeted tagging Delhi police that earlier

complaint was ignored. "Hi @DelhiPolice. This lot already harassed me by hosting an auction of me and making disgusting lewd com-

ments on me. I had filed an FIR in May with you, but you've done absolutely nothing. Now they're back with this. Good job protecting women. Will you do anything now at least?" she said in her twitter post.

After a complaint from a woman journalist was filed with Delhi Police over web page "Bulli Bai" aimed at demeaning Muslim women, Union Minister for Communications, Ashwini Vaishnaw said that hosting platform GitHub has blocked the bulli bai creator. "Bulli Bai", created on GitHub, popped up on January 1, with a number of pictures of women including journalists, social workers, students and famous personalities, accompanied by derogatory content.

Late Saturday night, quoting Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi tweet, Vaishnaw said: "GitHub confirmed blocking the user this morning itself. CERT and Police authorities are coordinating further action."



'FALSEHOOD DOESN'T SEEM TO STOP': NAWAB MALIK TARGETS PROBE BODY

► NAWAB MALIK'S COMMENTS CAME DAYS AFTER THE NCB APPROACHED THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT TO CANCEL THE BAIL GRANTED TO HIS SON-IN-LAW IN A DRUGS CASE.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik on Sunday fired a fresh salvo at the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), alleging that an NCB officer called a 'panch' to sign back-dated panchnama papers in a case.

and termed them as "false and baseless". Addressing reporters, Malik also released two audio clips - one of a conversation purportedly between an NCB officer calling a panch (witness) 'Maddy' to sign back-dated papers related to a case.

Another audio was of a phone call purportedly between the panch and NCB's Mumbai zonal director Sameer Wankhede, whose tenure with the central anti-drugs agency ended on December 31. "The NCB's falsehood doesn't seem to stop...the way officers have made bogus cases by getting signatures from witnesses on blank papers, implicating people in false cases. And now, to set the cases right, they are calling the panchs to sign on back-dated panchnama papers," Malik said.

Nawab Malik said his son-in-law Sameer Khan arrested in a drugs case last year and later released on bail was being singled out to put pressure on him, but he will continue to "expose the falsehood" of NCB officials. "The agency has the right to



appeal in a higher court if they are not satisfied with the order, but appeals are pending in (actor) Rhea and Showik Chakraborty's case (a drugs case linked to death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput). It would have been better had the papers (pertaining to Sameer Khan's case) come (in public domain) from court," he said. "But, the way PR agencies circulate unsigned papers of the NCB reflects mala fide intention behind

this," the minister claimed.

Nawab Malik, without taking any name, also claimed that a "very senior BJP leader" in the state has been lobbying with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs for Wankhede's extension in the central agency in Mumbai.

When contacted, an NCB official said the person 'Maddy', who is talking to an NCB officer (in the audio clip), is one of the witnesses in a case.

"At the time of filing a charge sheet, we call such witnesses. There is nothing like signing (back-dated) papers or any other documents. Whatever allegations the minister is making are false and baseless. We have not threatened anyone for anything," the official added. Malik had earlier targeted the NCB, particularly Wankhede, multiple times after Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan was arrested in a cruise drugs case in October 2021. Aryan Khan was later released on bail.

The minister had dubbed the NCB's raid on the cruise ship as well as the case as "fake."

Priyanka Chaturvedi seeks action against person behind Bulli Bai app

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Months after the derogatory "Sulli Deals" app, another app called "Bulli Bai" has appeared that targets women of a particular religion on code hosting platform - GitHub. Reacting to the development, Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Sunday sought action against those who demean women.

She said, "I had raised the issue of 'Sulli Deals', which was trying to target women of a particular religion. I had raised it in July and then in another letter on September 7 but got a response in November that they will take action and only the sites were blocked then and now the 'Bulli Deals' have surfaced."

She demanded that action should be taken against the perpetrators of the crime so that this would not be repeated, as it leads to mental harassment of women whose names and pictures are used without any authorisation.

"Bulli Bai" popped up on January 1, with a number of



pictures of women including journalists, social workers, students and famous personalities, being used with derogatory content.

"Bulli Bai" was also being promoted by a Twitter handle with the name @bullibai, which displays picture of a self-proclaimed "Khalistani supporter," and saying women can be booked from the app. This handle was also promoting Khalistani content at the same time.

Priyanka Chaturvedi said

that the matter is with Mumbai Police and the culprit should be arrested at the earliest.

Mumbai Police said that they were looking into the matter and were taking legal opinion to lodge the case under relevant section of the IPC.

When "Sulli Deal" appeared, two FIRs were lodged against unknown persons. However, no arrests were made and the culprits are still at large.

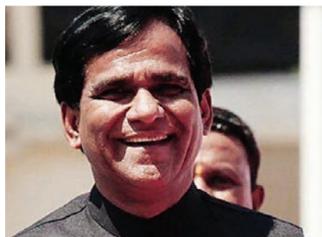
If CM is taking time to recover, then charge should be given to Shinde: Danve

Speaking to reporters at Aurangabad railway station after traveling on board a newly-commissioned Jalna-Pune train service, Danve said Shinde is a capable minister.

Aurangabad | Agencies

The charge of Maharashtra chief minister should be given to state urban development minister and senior Shiv Sainik Eknath Shinde if incumbent Uddhav Thackeray is taking time to recuperate post surgery, Union minister Raosaheb Danve said on Sunday.

The CM had undergone cervical spine surgery on November 12 and was discharged from hospital on December 2, and he had also missed the winter session of the state legislature between December 22 and 28.



Speaking to reporters at Aurangabad railway station after traveling on board a newly-commissioned Jalna-Pune train service, Danve said Shinde is a capable minister. "I am not trying to create trouble in the Sena. I'm just saying if it is taking time for Uddhav Thackeray to recover, then he should hand over the charge of CM to Shinde," the Union minister of state for railways and BJP Lok Sabha MP said.

Two men assault, abuse traffic cop

A detailed probe into the matter revealed that the arrestees Karan Mhatre (30) and Nikhil Mhatre (30), were siblings and were residents of Ghansoli village.

Team Absolute | Navi Mumbai

Two men have been arrested by the APMC police on charges of misbehaving with an on-duty traffic constable who was attached to the APMC traffic unit.

The incident took place on December 31 around 11:45 pm at the Kopri traffic signal in the APMC area on Palm beach road.

As per reports, the duo abused and argued with the cop and his two colleagues, including a woman constable after they had stopped one of the accused for riding scooter without helmet and number plate.

A detailed probe into the matter revealed that the arrestees Karan Mhatre (30) and Nikhil Mhatre (30), were siblings and were residents of Ghansoli village. They were working as supervisors on a contract basis in Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

Traffic constable Subhash Hile (34) who was injured and manhandles lodged an FIR in connection with the case. The siblings have been booked under section (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Commenting further on the case, API Shaikh said that one of the accused who was driving scooter with his wife and child riding pillion was stopped by the woman traffic cop as he was travelling without a helmet and reg-

istration number plate. However, rather than showing the documents, the accused started arguing with the cop and used expletives.

Meanwhile, the brother of the accused who was riding on another scooter joined him and threatened the cop. After hearing the commotion, another traffic constable reached the spot and told the offenders that they were performing their duty. However, the siblings turned violent and hurled abuses at him as well as another cop who tried to pacify the accused. The duo also manhandled constable Hile by holding his uniform button collar. Hile also sustained minor bruises during the scuffle.

However, when the Vashi police patrolling jeep and beat marshal cops passing by saw the chaos, they stopped at the spot. The duo was escorted to APMC police station where an FIR was lodged. On Saturday, the duo was produced before the court and remanded to police custody.

Maha sees no let-up in Covid cases, Omicron spread eases on New Year's Day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra again notched a sharp increase in Covid-19 cases on Saturday though Omicron infections remained in single digits even as the government warned of dark days ahead in the third wave.

For the fourth consecutive day, the state reported a massive spike in Covid-19 cases and suspects whose samples have been sent for genome sequencing.

The state Covid-19 count shot up significantly - from 8,067 on Friday to 9,170 now - though fatalities dropped from 8 to only 7, while the mortality rate remained steady at 2.11 per cent.

After recording only four Omicron infections, the state logged six more cases of the variant, taking up the state tally from 454 to 460, with Mumbai spared of any fresh cases for the second day, health officials said.

All the six cases are from Pune district, which is ranked as the second



hotspot after Mumbai as in the previous two Covid waves.

Intensive surveillance of passengers arriving at the three international airports - Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur - is currently underway since December 1. A total of 30,728 travellers have landed here from the "high risk" countries of which 272 have tested positive and 135 from other countries, with all their reports sent for genomic sequencing to confirm if they are afflicted by Omicron.

Besides, another 1,806 samples from field surveys conducted since November 1 have been sent for genomic sequencing with the results of 102 awaited, the officials said.

Omicron has spread extensively spanning several districts in the state, with Mumbai accounting for the maximum 327 cases, followed by 62 in Pune, 31 in Thane, eight in Raigad, six each in Nagpur and Satara, five in Osmanabad, four in Palghar, three in Nanded, two each in Buldhana and

Aurangabad, and 1 each in Akola, Latur, Ahmednagar, and Kolhapur.

Of the new 9,170 new Covid-19 cases, Mumbai Metropolitan Region alone accounted for 8,077 including 6,180 from the country's commercial capital, followed by Pune circle's 686, Nashik circle's 162, Kolhapur circle's 82, Nagpur circle's 62, Latur circle's 58, Aurangabad circle's 31, and Akola circle's 12. The number of people sent to home quarantine shot up drastically, from 175,592 to 226,001 and another 1,064 have been shunted to institutional quarantine.

Mumbai, Pune and Thane remain at the top with the highest number of active cases currently in the state, with the afflictions shooting up sharply from 24,509 on Friday to 32,225 today, with a recovery rate of 97.35 per cent. The state's cumulative figures of Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic stands at 66,87,991 cases and 141,533 deaths, and another 65,10,541 patients who have fully recovered.

Union minister flags off Kisan Rail service, Nanded-Hadapsar express

He said a survey for track doubling work of the Manmad-Aurangabad route has been taken up, while the doubling of the Aurangabad-Jalna stretch will be looked into in the second phase.

Team Absolute | Aurangabad

Union Minister Raosaheb Danve on Sunday flagged off a Kisan Rail service from Jalna as well as the Nanded-Hadapsar express with new coaches and revised timings. The Kisan Rail service will



help the farming community in Maharashtra's Marathwada region get more markets, the union minister of state for railways said during the event.

He said a survey for track doubling work of the Manmad-Aurangabad route has been taken up, while the doubling of the Aurangabad-Jalna stretch will be looked into in the second phase.

A pit line for maintenance and cleaning of trains in Jalna at a cost of Rs 100 crore is being considered, he added.

South Central Railway additional general manager AK Jain several projects are on the anvil to improve rail infrastructure in Marathwada region, with the focus being on freight and parcel transportation.

MAN HELD FOR POACHING TIGER IN MAHARASHTRA

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: A tribal man from the district was arrested for poaching a tiger through an electric snare he set up neighbouring Maharashtra on December 25. A claw and tiger whiskers were recovered from him. Three more accused are absconding.

District Forest Officer S Shantharam said the accused, Portheti Kantharam, a resident of Digide village in Dahegaon mandal, was arrested on Saturday. Three more persons from this remote village are also suspected to be involved in the poaching of the tiger in Mosam forest beat in Aheri Taluq of Gadchiroli district.

The officer said that foresters from Maharashtra exhumed various parts of the decomposed carcass of the big cat following foul smell emanating from the are on December 30. They launched a probe into the poaching and arrested five persons from Maharashtra. The accused revealed that four persons of Dahegaon mandal too were involved in the offence.

Special teams of forest and police departments of Maharashtra and Telangana launched searches in the house of Kantharam and found the claw and whiskers. A search was launched to nab the remaining suspects. The poachers buried the body of the carnivore at the spot of the crime after removing the claws, whiskers and skull.

BOAT AMBULANCES FERRY COVID JABS TO REMOTE TRIBAL VILLAGES IN MAHARASHTRA

Nandurbar | Agencies

One cool, lazy weekend afternoon, a tribal boy Vijay Tadavi was busy in a hilly forest, collecting fallen tree branches or twigs for firewood at his tiny dwelling, with the mighty Narmada river quietly flowing more than a kilometre below.

Suddenly, he heard the chug of a boat engine and a few minutes later saw the familiar white 'floating ambulance' moving towards his small hamlet, so he picked up his load and headed back home. As the boat moored at a safe spot, several villagers also hurried down to greet and cheer a medical team and quickly queued up to get their life-saver Covid-19 vaccination jabs, fresh out of an iced vaccine pack with 10 vials, each with 10 doses.

This is a cruise with a difference on the Narmada river that helps protect and save the lives of thousands -- living in out-of-bounds villages or tribal hamlets near its banks -- from the scourge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The unique service is carried out by dedicated 'Boat Ambulances' in Nandurbar tribal district through which the Narmada flows around 110 kms, including 35 kms along the Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra boundary.

"This region is very remote, undeveloped owing to thick forests and owing to hilly terrain lacks even basic (kuchcha) roads in most parts. It



can take hours or days for people to reach the nearest Primary Health Centre. So, we decided to deploy the Boat Ambulances for their medicare and now also for vaccination," Nandurbar District Health Officer Dr Mahendra Chavan told. It was nearly four years ago when one boat ambulance and 3 floating ambulances were launched to deliver medicare to the thousands of tribals living in small villages and tiny hamlets on both banks of the river.

However, in early October, the District Health and Education Committee Chairperson Dr Ajit Naik suggested utilising them for an additional purpose -- to send fully equipped medical teams

and conduct Covid-19 vaccination for the people, virtually at their doorsteps, on specific routes. The move was a roaring hit, and in the past nearly 100 days around 10,000 eligible people have got their first jabs, in some 35 villages and 70 hamlets, and more are being covered daily. As the government gradually approves inoculating people below 18 years, besides the due second doses and possibly booster jabs, the 'vaccination cruises' up and down the Narmada river will continue for long, say officials.

"The boat ambulance has a capacity of up to 15 and the floating ambulances can accommodate around 50 persons... There is an OPD, sepa-

rate quarters for the male/female staffers, a kitchen, toilets, etc. on board, with doctors like Dr Shivaji Pawar, Dr Bhagwan Khedkar, Dr Anil Patil, Dr Girish Rathod, guiding their teams," Dr Chavan said. "There are also nurses, drivers, boatmen, helpers and loaders who sail on these expeditions lasting between 12-18 hours depending on the route, but at times, they stop at some location and stay in the boat for 2-3 days due to heavy workload," Nandurbar Zilla Parishad Vice-President and Shiv Sena leader Ram Raghuvanshi, told. Though encountering resistance and reluctance initially, with gentle counselling by the medics and special awareness drives, the deprived people slowly accepted the vaccination process. There were times when a tiny group of villagers brought a couple of senior citizens on cots and hauled them back, grateful and smiling, and on some occasions, the medical team stopped a boat with a few people midway in the river and gave them quick jabs, not missing a single opportunity even in the water!

At times, surprises were in store with the locals bringing food or fruits for the medics, but on some lean days the medical teams kill hours, chit-chat, struggle on their mobiles with poor network, before even a handful of persons step out for their jabs. "Fortunately, the vax drive has passed off very smoothly, without any untoward incidents like crocodile attacks, snake bites or scorpion stings, breakdown of any boats...etc," smiled Chavan.



EDITOR'S SPECS

INDIA'S PREPARATION FOR OMICRON

India is better prepared to face the Omicron wave, if it comes, but people should always wear double face masks as these continue to be the best protection against any variant and take vaccines while regulatory authorities should authorise emergency use of two oral drugs for treatment of Covid-19, said a health systems expert. Most of the vaccines, in general, have demonstrated their effectiveness against new variants including Delta in preventing hospitalisations and deaths. However, their effectiveness seems to be waning rapidly over time (6 to 9 months after 2nd dose), necessitating booster doses to those at high risk and to all adults if sufficient vaccine supplies are available. Whether Omicron evades immunity from existing vaccines is yet to be ascertained as the percentage of people who have been fully vaccinated is still low in Africa. A hint from the CEO of Moderna (that makes mRNA-based vaccines) that they may need to develop a new vaccine to tackle Omicron is a pointer that it may evade immunity from vaccines as well. The leading cardiologist pointed out that parents are the most worried as schools and colleges have just begun to open after nearly two years of studying from home. Government is awaiting expert committee recommendations on vaccinating children and booster doses to adults. Experts believe that India has responded in a balanced way. The country did the right thing by not shutting down its borders but taking standard measures of screening, testing, quarantine, and isolation of incoming people. The government has ramped up its vaccination drive as reluctant people become more than willing to get vaccinated given the scare of the new wave. Face mask and vaccination certificate reintroduced to domestic travellers across state borders.

YEAR 2021: DIFFICULT BUT OPTIMISTIC

Lalit Garg

Saying goodbye to the twenty-first year of the twenty-first century, let us welcome the New Year with the thought and determination that we have to do something new, be new, and set new milestones. In addition to the corona epidemic of last year, we have to take actions against the sufferings, pain and outbreaks of seasonal disasters, economic imbalance, political upheaval, icy storms, oceanic cyclones, floods, forest fire, global warming; this will also be the new resolution of upcoming year. We have to resolve and take an oath that in the coming year we will not do anything that puts a question mark on our objectives, hopes, aspirations and ideals. We have to give a new colour and shape to our lifestyle in the new year amidst the sound of the third wave of the corona epidemic i.e. Omicron.

The corona pandemic has disturbed our way of life. Welcoming the New Year, it was not unusual for us to wish that we would regain the glory of our lost ideal and balanced life and once again the harmony would be established in our lifestyle. But if we take stock of the situation on the passing of the complex phase of Corona and welcome the New Year, then our national, social, family and personal life-values, economic conditions, business, employment and functionalities are visible in fragments. During this, Corona forced the entire humanity to kneel on its knees. So far 270 million, more than 65 lakhs people have been infected all over the world. Of these, about 54 lakhs lost their lives. In India too, this figure has gone up to five lakhs. India is counted among the top five countries to be victims of this tragedy. Not only did people die from Corona, but a large number of people also became victims of misery. However, it was a matter of comfort during this time that the central and state governments did not hesitate to fight the epidemic. Two vaccines made in India gave people the strength to deal with this life-threatening disaster. Due to the resolution of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since January 16, more than one billion, 400 crore doses have been given. Not only this, there were efforts to bring back the economic growth rate, but it will take a long time to heal the wound of the epidemic and defeat Omicron.

In the last year, we have been forced to drink bitter sips of economic imbalance. During this, the gap of economic inequality in India widened further. In India, 57 per cent of the country's total income went into the pockets of the top 10 per cent. Half of the population earned only 13 per cent. Efforts made in the past to eradicate the poverty line, have



again engulfed the blind den of poverty. The poor countries of the world will have to fight for self-reliance very fast. The coming years are sure to be of economic nationalism.

Now, not ignoring the threat of Omicron, both the government and society have geared up to deal with it, but when the results will come, how many will come, no one has any guarantee. It is still unknown how deadly Omicron is going to prove to be. Precaution and vigilance is very important, the government wants to make the life of every person advanced, healthy and prosperous, but progress starts getting blocked the day we stop paying attention to our shortcomings and errors. This situation makes a person do such things, which later on prove to be harmful for him. Our flawed lifestyle makes up for it. If there is an imbalance life then a person cannot think positively. The question to consider is, for what purpose should life be lived? The question that should be in front of every person is why am I living? If we consider the purpose of life, then a new reality will come to the fore and the question of the style of life will also come to the fore. The crisis is not only of the corona epidemic, there are many other crises. China and Pakistan are creating conditions of unrest and war on the borders. Not only did the corona virus that came from China attacked India, its forces also tried to break the limits and cross the borders. Last year, 21 army personnel including a lieutenant colonel were martyred in Galwan. In

the year 2021, blood was not shed again on the border, but the series of unprecedented and dangerous tensions continued. Will China's attempt to cross its borders be curbed next year? Not only this, the return of Taliban to power in Afghanistan is also a crisis for India. Due to the strong intentions of the central government, the conflict between India and Pakistan may not have taken the shape of a major conflict, but in 2021 shells and bullets from across the border have so far swallowed more than 35 soldiers. Drones coming from Pakistan also became a cause for concern this year. Disturbing Kashmir once again and increasing terrorist activities there has become a matter of concern. The Home Ministry of the country and the government of Kashmir together killed about 100 terrorists. In the midst of situations of violence, terror and war, India has also created a unique environment of cultural and religious upliftment; a unique initiative has been taken to restore India's pride. With the beginning of the construction of Shri Ram temple in Ayodhya last year, the inauguration of Vishwanath Dham complex in Varanasi this month can be said to be a special initiative to give a new dimension and vision to the political thinking of India. Our country's religious-cultural traditions and ideal values of life have been rich and strong, but the previous governments have tarnished their pride by giving them political views. But the

new political thinking and power has attracted India to the world with its cultural and religious splendour, which can be called a happy event of the past year. Certainly Kashi and Ayodhya will become the basis of a strong India by becoming a symbol of nationality.

This will not only provide a lot of convenience to the pilgrims going there, but will also give dignity to a symbol of faith and civilization shrinking in narrow circles. Inaugurating the first phase of Kashi complex in a grand and graceful manner, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has made every Indian feel self-faith, self-culture and self-existence. India's cultural splendour has been unmatched in the world, but due to so-called political interests and narrow-mindedness, instead of bringing this glory in front of the world, there have been constant attempts and conspiracies to forget it. It is a happy situation that now the faith has been awakened to give shape to the dreams seen with our waking eyes, so this is giving an atmosphere and intention to protect life values and cultural heritage and to build a new India, which is auspicious for the new year. It is a sign of the emergence of a new and prosperous India.

The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to increase the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years. With the creation of this new system, there will be a new light in the life of women. One destination, one direction and one way, yet there have been many inequalities in the life of man and woman, two forces of society were moving back and forth. To remove such discrepancies and inequalities, there has been a knock on the door of thinking many times, but the door is open for the first time. The past year has also inflicted an unimaginable wound, on December 8, India's first Chief of Defense Staff General Bipin Rawat, along with his wife and 12 associates, were killed in a helicopter crash. He was trying to give a new look to the Indian Army according to the new requirements. His tragic death is a deep blow to this ambitious, but inevitable need. In the midst of these mixed conditions of joy and sadness, only that emotional moment is the meaning of life which we live with full awareness and that is the truth of the waking eyes which we aim to achieve. Only this wealth of truth and compassion can ensure our success in the upcoming New Year.

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international

UK keen to ease immigration rules for Indians in exchange for trade access

Team Absolute | New Delhi

UK Ministers are keen to ease immigration restrictions in a bid to make it easier for thousands of Indian citizens to live and work in the country as part of the forthcoming trade talks, the Guardian reported.

The potential offer will be under discussion when International Trade Secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan travels to Delhi this month, reports the Times UK.

Relaxing immigration rules for Indian citizens is a key demand from Delhi.

Trevelyan is said to have the backing of the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, who is keen to curb China's growing influence in the region. However, they are likely to meet strong resistance from Some Secretary Priti Patel, who opposes the offer.

According to the Times UK, visa relaxation options under consideration include a scheme similar to one agreed with Australia which would allow young



Indians the right to live and work in the UK for up to three years.

Another would be to cut visa fees for students and allow them to stay in Britain for a period of time after they graduate.

Visa fees for work and tourism, which can cost up to 1,400 pounds, could also be reduced as a sweetener.

UK Ministers believe a trade deal with

Delhi would provide British businesses with a head start in what is predicted to be the world's third-largest economy by 2050.

It could also see Britain jump ahead as India does not have bilateral trade deals with either the US or the European Union. Ministers are said to be in agreement that a "generous" offer on visas could be the price for such a deal.

Libyan security arrests foreigner with 32 hand grenades

Tripoli: The Libyan Ministry of Interior has announced the arrest of a foreign national with 32 hand grenades in his possession in Garabulli city, some 50 km east of the capital Tripoli.

The arrested individual faces charges of armed robbery, the Ministry said, adding that machine gun ammunition was also found in his possession upon searching, reports Xinhua news agency.

The arrested individual is part of a criminal group that is still at large, which is responsible for a number of armed robberies in the area, the Ministry said.

Libya has been suffering insecurity and chaos since the fall of the late leader Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011.

West Bank, Gaza witness renewed tensions

Ramallah/Gaza | Agencies

Tensions between Israel and the Palestinians have flared up, causing a spate of injuries among Palestinians in the West Bank and damage in the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said in a statement that 85 Palestinian protesters were injured during clashes late Saturday night in the village of Burqa, north of the West Bank city of Nablus, reports Xinhua news agency.

Palestinian witnesses in the village said that the clashes erupted when a group of Israeli settlers tried to reach the settlement of Homesh, which was evacuated in 2005.

The PRCS statement added that five Palestinian protesters were shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers during clashes near the West Bank city of Qalqilya, while dozens fainted after inhaling tear gas fired by the soldiers.

Similar clashes also took place in two villages near the city of Jenin in the northern tip of the West Bank between dozens of Palestinian protestors and Israeli soldiers, leaving several protesters injured by rubber bullets and tear gas. The Israeli army has made no



immediate comment on the clashes or the Palestinian injuries. In Gaza, Israeli fighter jets and tanks on Saturday night attacked several military posts and facilities that belong to the armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in southern and northern Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian security sources. Several explosions were heard in the two areas, and flames of fire and smoke were seen coming out from the targeted military posts, the sources said, adding that damage was caused but no injuries were reported. The Israeli strikes and bombing came in response to the earlier firing of two rockets from the Gaza Strip on Saturday morning, which landed on the shores of southern Israel, causing no damage or injuries.

Sudanese parties urged to seek common ground for path out of crisis

Khartoum | Agencies

The UN special envoy for Sudan has called for trust among all parties in the country to find a mutually agreed path out of the ongoing crisis.

Volker Perthes, the UN special representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan, made the appeal in a statement on the 66th anniversary of the country's Independence, reports Xinhua news agency.

The UN envoy urged the authorities to respect the right of peaceful assembly and to allow protesters adhering to non-violence to express themselves freely.

Perthes stressed that the UN remained committed to supporting the people of Sudan in realising their aspirations for a democratic and stable Sudan. Sudan has been rocked by regular mass protests demanding civilian rule in recent weeks.

At least 52 people were killed in 11 large-scale street protests since October 25



when the general commander of the Sudanese army Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan declared a state of emergency and dissolved the government, a move which triggered a political crisis in the country. On November 21, Al-Burhan and then removed Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok signed a political declaration, which included reinstating the latter to his post, but the deal has so far failed to calm the street. The protests were also fuelled by sky-rocketing prices of foods, gases and household essentials in the country.

Here's how Musk hired Indian-origin Tesla's autopilot head

San Francisco | Agencies

Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk took to Twitter to reveal how he chose Ashok Elluswamy from India to work as an autopilot team director at his electric vehicle company.

Elluswamy was actually the first employee to be hired for Tesla's Autopilot team, with Musk actually using Twitter to ask people to apply for the role back in 2015.

"I tweeted that Tesla is about to launch an auto pilot team. Through that tweet, Ashok was the first to be selected in the auto pilot team," Musk said in a tweet.

Before joining Tesla, he has worked with WABCO Vehicle Control System and has interned with Volkswagen Electronic Research Lab.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the College of Engineering Guindy, Chennai and a Master's degree in Robotics System Development from Carnegie Mellon University.

As per a LinkedIn endorsement from Elluswamy's professor at CMU, John Dalon, he was one of the top students



and showed initiative in learning a wide variety of topics.

Recently, Musk tweeted that he is hiring Artificial Intelligence (AI) engineers who are passionate about solving day-to-day problems through AI.

"As always, Tesla is looking for hardcore AI engineers who care about solving problems that directly affect people's lives in a major way," Musk tweeted along with a link to apply for the job.

Interested candidates can apply by filling in fields like name, email, excep-

tional work done in software, hardware or AI, dropping their resume in the PDF format and hitting the Apply option.

In a 2014 interview, Musk said he looked for "evidence of exceptional ability" in a potential employee, rather than a degree from a prestigious university.

"There is no need even to have a college degree at all, or even high school," Musk said during an interview with the German automotive publication Auto Bild about his hiring preferences more broadly.

Nigerian police rescue 21 kidnapped children

Lagos | Agencies

Police in Nigeria said that they have rescued 21 children kidnapped by bandits in the northwestern state of Zamfara.

At a press briefing in Gusau, the state capital, Mohammed Shehu, the police spokesperson in Zamfara, said the police received a distress call on Friday night, informing that bandits blocked a highway near the Kucheri village, abducting an unspecified number of commuters from five vehicles, reports Xinhua news agency.

Shehu said police operatives were immediately sent to the area and engaged the bandits in a fierce gun battle, and rescued 21 children who were heading to their school in the neighboring Katsina state when the attack happened.

An unknown number of victims, including the children's teacher and the driver



of the bus they used, are currently held by the bandits, the spokesperson added.

He said the police have sent reinforcements to complement the efforts of the joint security operation currently working to rescue the remaining victims and apprehend the attackers.

The police spokesperson called on local residents to support the police and other security agencies with credible information about the hideouts, movements and other activities of the bandits.

There have been a series of gunmen attacks in northern Nigeria in recent months, leading to deaths and kidnappings.



CM expresses grief over the accident

3 DEAD, 20 INJURED AFTER BUS FALLS INTO RIVER IN ALIRAJPUR

Three people died and 28 others were injured after a bus fell into a river in Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur on Sunday.



Team Absolute | Indore

Three people died and over 20 others were injured after a bus fell into a river from a bridge in Alirajpur district on Sunday. The deceased include a woman and a one-year-old child.

According to Superintendent of Police (SP) Manoj Kumar Singh, the bus was on its way to Alirajpur from Chhota

Udepur in Gujarat when the accident took place.

A one-year-old child was among three passengers who died on the spot.

The bus from Gujarat was heading towards Barwani district when the accident took place in Chandpur area of Khandwa-Baroda highway, Alirajpur police said. The driver of the vehicle lost control causing the bus to fall from a 30 ft height into the Lakhodara river, they

said, adding water in the river was scarce. The casualties and injuries were caused due to the fall.

Three people, identified as one Kailash, his wife Meera Bai - both residents of Jobat and a one-year-old boy died on the spot. The injured passengers were rushed to local hospitals.

Senior police officers rushed to the spot to take stock of the situation. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the accident of the bus falling into Melkhorada river near Chandpur in Alirajpur district. Chouhan has wished peace to the departed souls and speedy recovery of the injured. Chief Minister has directed for proper treatment of the injured and financial assistance of Rs. four lakh each to the kin of the deceased.

"CM Chouhan has prayed for the speedy recovery of the citizens injured in the bus accident and has given instructions for their proper treatment. The Chief Minister has directed the administration to provide financial support of Rs 4 lakh each to the kin of the deceased," said the Chief Minister's Office.

CM RELEASED GOVERNMENT DIARY-CALENDAR



Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan virtually released the Government Digital Diary and Calendar-2022 at his residence on Sunday. Chouhan also launched the notebook. Additional Chief Secretary Health Mohammad Suleman, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Manish Rastogi, Principal Secretary Public Relations Raghendra Singh and Controller Government Printing and Stationery Shriman Shukla were present.

MP logs 151 new Covid cases, vax for 15-18 age group starts Monday

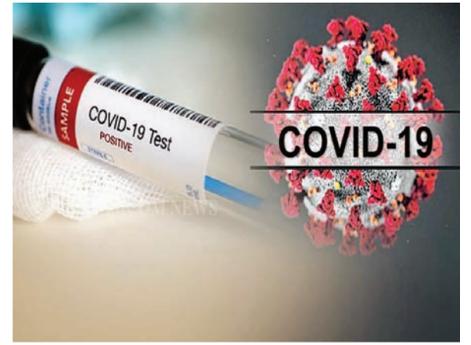
Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has reported 151 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, while total active cases in the state have risen to 647. The state has so far reported as many as 11 cases of Omicron variant of the coronavirus, of which all have recovered, according to the state government's report on Sunday.

Out of the total new Covid cases reported in the last 24 hours, 80 were registered in Indore and 42 in Bhopal, while the rest of the cases were reported from districts. So far, 28 districts of Madhya Pradesh have reported new Covid cases.

During a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, health officer stated that Indore has become hotspot for Covid like previous two waves. The health official also informed that daily sample testing has been increased to 75,000 per day.

In Madhya Pradesh, up to 95 per cent eligible persons have received their first dose of anti-Covid vaccine and up to 91 per cent have received their second dose. "Madhya



Pradesh has administered around 5.21 crore doses of Covid vaccines so far. Vaccination for school children of 5 to 18 age groups will be started from Monday. All these vaccination centers have been set up in government and private schools and people other than school children will not be allowed. District administration has been directed that children of 15 to 18 age groups will be administered Covaxin only," the official said while briefing about Covid preparation to the Chief Minister.

The state government has targeted to complete the first dose of jab to the children in

the next two weeks. "We have set a target to vaccinate up to 15 lakh school children on January 3 onward and for that total 18 lakh doses of vaccines have been provided," the officer added.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has asked district administrations to remain alert as the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic seems more alarming. He said that the number of daily cases is increasing faster than the last two waves and therefore, hospitals, Covid care centres and other preparations should be done as early as possible.

CM plants coffee sapling



Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday planted a coffee sapling at Hotel Taj Gateway Complex in Nashik (Maharashtra). Sadhna Singh and family members were also present. A shady place is suitable for coffee cultivation. 150 to 200 cm of rainfall is

considered sufficient for its cultivation. Coffee plants develop at 18 to 20 degree temperature. It can tolerate a maximum temperature of 30 degrees in summer and a minimum of 15 degrees in winter. Chouhan has tweeted that "Trees are the strong base of the environment and our life. Let us all strengthen this foundation together.

OBC reservation issue escalates; large scale police action scuttles protest

Leaders including Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad detained

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The other backward class (OBC) reservation issue has escalated in the State with dalit and tribal organisations extending support to their OBC counterparts and the state government resorting to large scale police action to scuttle a joint protest planned in capital Bhopal on Sunday.

Around 100 leaders and members of the OBC Mahasabha, Bhim Army and Jay Adivasi Yuva Shakti (JAYS), including Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad were detained by the police on Saturday and Sunday in a bid to prevent the protest.

The protesters were planning to march to the CM House with a main demand of 27 per cent reservation in panchayat polls.

Commissioner of Police (CP), Bhopal, Makrand Deuskar confirmed that 80-90 people including leaders of OBC Mahasabha, the organisers were detained by the police as preventive action. About 1,500 protesters who had reached the city from other places were 'diverted back', he said.



Deuskar also confirmed detention of Azad at Bhopal Airport, adding that the detention was to the extent of preventing him from joining the protest planned at one of the major traffic junctions of the city (where permissions of protests are not granted). The CP said that Azad was still at the airport and was free to leave Bhopal as per his wish. "The planned protests could have caused

major disruptions in the city and therefore preventive action was taken," Deuskar said.

The detention of Azad caused a ripple on social media with a hashtag for his release trending on Twitter. Earlier on Saturday, several prominent leaders of the OBC Mahasabha including founder president Dharmendra Singh Kushwah were detained by the police, according to sources. Posts

emerged on the social media account of Kushwah on Saturday afternoon saying that the protest had been called off in view of COVID-19 pandemic. However, other office bearers of the organisation including national core committee member Mahendra Singh Lodhi took to social media to allege that the posts had not been made by Kushwah and that his cell phone was in possession of police. They urged the protesters to arrive in Bhopal as planned.

However, on Saturday morning, Bhopal police started picking up protesters gathered at different places and released most of them outside city limits.

Some leaders were kept in detention. Heavy barricading was done on all roads leading to the CM House, which continued till the filing of this report.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was meanwhile in Nashik in Maharashtra for a personal religious visit.

Barricading was also done on city limits and buses and other vehicles were searched to prevent protesters from reaching the capital, sources said. JAYS state president Antim Mujalde was detained in Sonkutch of Dewas along with other members of the organisation while they were on way to Bhopal on Sunday morning.

How teachers transformed this govt school in Chhindwara

Team Absolute | Chhindwara

Contrary to the popular perception, a government school in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, has set an example by creating top class infrastructure. And the credit goes to the teachers.

The school, which is situated in a tribal village called Ghoghari in Umrana in Mohkdev development block of Chhindwara, is the talk of the town now.

Three teachers joined hands to change the fate of this government school by donating a fixed amount from their salary every month.

Headmaster Anil Kothekar, along with his two colleagues Raghunath Tawne and Ramu Pawar, started a cam-

paign to change the face of the school and provide modern facilities to the students. For the last five years, these teachers spend 1 per cent of their salary every month on the development of the school infrastructure.

Teachers say that they want to give a better environment to the children to study. The school is now high-tech, equipped with all amenities including smart TV, projector, loudspeaker, laptop and tablet. Teachers from nearby areas visit this school to see how education is imparted to children in a digital mode.

Kothekar, the headmaster of the school, says that the teachers with the help of the students have transformed the school campus. District Education Officer Arvind

Chowragade has said it is due to the efforts of the teachers of Ghoghari's secondary high school that smart classes are held there. Children are now getting better education. Such experiments are being replicated elsewhere also.

The students are also very happy with the transformation and say that they are getting all the modern facilities for studies and also do other work including plantation. They said they get a lot of support from the teachers.

The transformed environment of the school has also increased the urge among the students to study more.

The school is competing with any private school in the district. The only problem is it does not have a bigger playground.

3 lakh 20 thousand students will be made aware about wildlife and conservation in "Anubhuti Programme"

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Students of government and non-government schools of the state will be made aware about wildlife and environmental protection through "Anubhuti Programme". This year the target is to make 3 lakh 20 thousand students aware. The programme was started in December 2021 by organising a camp of 43 students at Unique Higher Secondary Manpur in Indore district.

The CEO of Eco Tourism Development Board Satyanand said that 1 lakh 20 thousand students of government schools would be connected to this program through Anubhuti camps in the month of January in all the forest areas of the state while following the guidelines

of Covid-19. In the remaining period of the year, 2 lakh students of non-government schools will be connected to the "programme". Paid camps will be organised for the students of private schools. CEO Satyanand said that the Forest Department acquaints the students of different schools through eco-tourism about forests, wildlife, environmental protection, biodiversity, bird sightings, butterfly sightings, wildlife sightings along with forest management on the nature trail set in natural places. Students will be sensitized in these camps by trained master trainers and local forest officials. Trained students in the camps play the role of effective conductors towards wildlife and environmental protection.

CM WILL HOLD REGULAR DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW MEETINGS FROM JANUARY 3 TO 7

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that regular review is necessary for the sound implementation of public welfare schemes. Madhya Pradesh has been successful in bringing good results in many schemes as a result of regular review earlier also. Programmes like Samadhan Online are also useful in resolving pending people's problems. All these mediums will be used for good governance. The first week of the new year will be the week of review meetings. The Chief Minister's Office and the General Administration Department have prepared the outline for meetings date wise.

Chouhan will take nine meetings of different departments including general administration, finance, home, prison, commercial, labor, sports and youth welfare, spirituality and forest departments after launching the vaccination campaign for children of 15 to 18 years on Monday, January 3.

After the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, January 4, Chief Minister Chouhan will take nine meetings of the departments of Law and Legislative Affairs, Planning, Economic and Statistics, Cooperatives, Farmers' Welfare and Agricultural Development, Fishermen's Welfare and Fisheries Development, Animal Husbandry, Energy, New and Renewable Energy and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

In the order of review meetings, on Wednesday, January 5, 11 meetings will be held of various departments including Food - Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion, Social Justice and Disabled Welfare, Science and Technology, Public Works, School Education, Aviation, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation, Tourism Culture and Mineral Resources Department.

On Thursday, January 6, Chouhan will review programmes and schemes in total 11 meetings related to Panchayat and Rural Development, Tribal Affairs, Scheduled Castes Welfare, Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare, Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes Welfare, Public Health and Family Welfare, Medical Education, AYUSH, Water Resources, Narmada Valley Development, Urban Development and Housing Department.

On the last day of this series of review meetings on January 7, Chouhan will take 12 meetings related to the departments of Public Health Engineering, Higher Education, Public Service Management, Public Relations, Technical Education and Skill Development, Women-Child Development, Horticulture and Food Processing, Cottage and Village Industries, Transport, Environment, Public Assets Management and Revenue Department. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will also seek information about the decisions given in the last review meetings and the action taken by the departments.

Imprisonment of 6 months and fine of 29 lakhs in case of electricity theft

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the case of electricity theft registered in section 135 and 138 of the Electricity Act in Sausar district Chhindwara of Madhya Pradesh East Zone Electricity Distribution Company, Special Judge Sausar sentenced Shri Basant Bagde to 6 months imprisonment and a fine of Rs 29 lakh 22 thousand 978. Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar has urged the electricity consumers to make proper use of electricity and pay their electricity bills on time, so that they do not have to face such unpleasant situation. The Chief General Manager-Enforcement of the company

Arvind Choubey said that the company's flying squad had raided the premises of Basant Bagde, resident of Barde Road, Sausar, on July 23, 2015, and revealed a big power theft. Illegal use of 57 thousand 115 watts of electricity was found in the premises of the accused in the construction work of marriage lawns using domestic connection and flat rate unmetered pump connection. A provisional assessment of compensation amounting to Rs. 9 lakh 74 thousand 326 was made by the flying squad against the accused under the Electricity Act by preparing a panchnama.

STRAY DOGS MAUL 4-YR-OLD GIRL IN BHOPAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In a horrific incident, a four-year-old girl was attacked by a pack of street dogs, leaving her badly injured in Madhya Pradesh's capital city Bhopal.

The incident took place in Bagh Sewania area of Bhopal on Saturday evening, police said.

CCTV footage showed five dogs attacking the girl while she was trying to run away. The canines were seen pulling her down on the road and biting her.

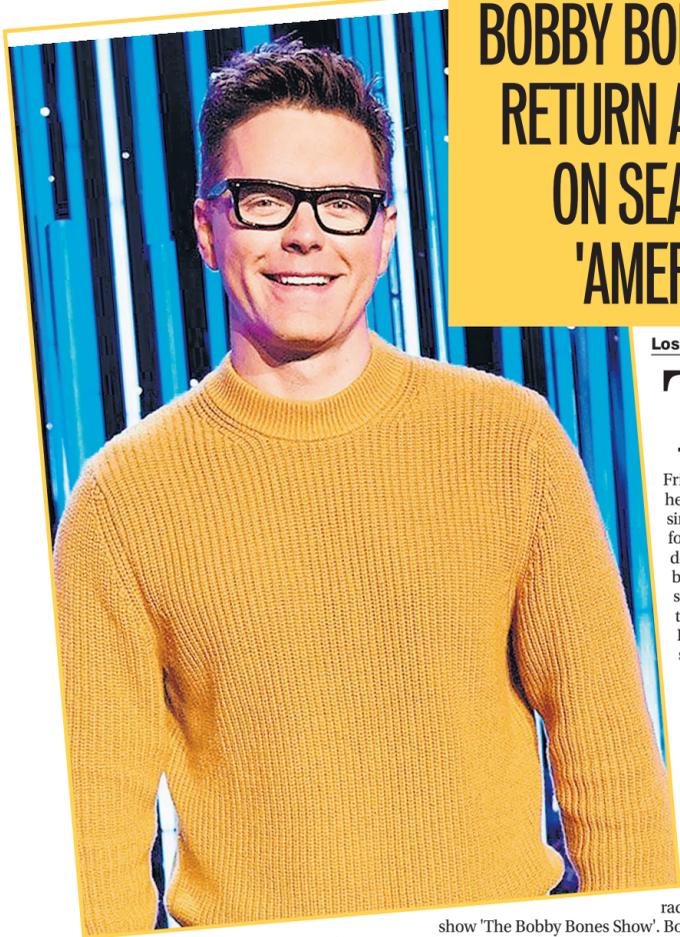
The CCTV footage of the horrific incident went viral on social media. It showed the minor was chased, pulled to the ground and then bitten by dogs.

The dogs surrounded her and bit her on her head, belly and legs as she struggled to escape. She was pulled to the ground by the dogs, which continued to attack her. The helpless girl was rescued by a passer-by who noticed her crying



surrounded by four to five street dogs. He chased them away. The girl received wounds on her head and face and she has been admitted to the government-run Hamidia Hospital, police inspector Sanjeev Chouksey said, adding that they came to know about the incident through social media. Last year, a seven-

year-old girl was attacked by stray dogs in the presence of her mother in the Kohefiza area. In another incident, in 2019, a six-year-old boy was mauled to death by half a dozen stray dogs in front of his mother. The boy's mother faced severe injuries when she tried to save him.



BOBBY BONES WON'T RETURN AS MENTOR ON SEASON 20 OF 'AMERICAN IDOL'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The 20th season of the reality show 'American Idol' will be without Bobby Bones as the in-house mentor. Bones confirmed Friday on Instagram Stories that he'll be ending his run on the ABC singing competition series after four seasons, reports deadline.com. Bones revealed that because of conflict with another show, he won't be on the show this season. "Some of you noticed I'm not in the Idol promos this season," he wrote. "My contract (with) my new network won't let me do another show right now. Love Idol, btw. Was a great 4 years."

Bones has been with the revival since Season 16, serving as a guest mentor for contestants. He became a full-time mentor the following season. Bones is known as host of the nationally syndicated

radio show 'The Bobby Bones Show'. Bones won season 27 of 'Dancing with the Stars' and also served as host and executive producer of Opry, a weekly TV programme which aired on Circle Network. Ryan Seacrest and judges Katy Perry, Luke Bryan, and Lionel Richie will return to American Idol for its 20th season.



'The Umbrella Academy' to return with Season 3 in 2022

Los Angeles | Agencies

Streaming giant Netflix is teasing the upcoming third season of 'The Umbrella Academy', the superhero series based on the comics of Gerard Way and created for Netflix by Steve Blackman and Jeremy Slater.

A series of posters on the main characters was counted down today on Twitter, the first signs of the show's imminent arrival, although Netflix said in November that it would be returning, reports deadline.com.

No exact date has been set for the third season's release, but it is promised for 2022.

The series revolves around a dysfunctional family of adopted sibling superheroes who reunite to solve the mystery of their father's death and the threat of an imminent apocalypse.

Producers include Borderline Entertainment, Dark Horse Entertainment, and Universal Cable

Productions.

The cast includes Elliot Page, Tom Hopper, David Castaneda, Emmy Raver-Lampman, Robert Sheehan, Aidan Gallagher, Cameron Britton, Mary J. Blige, John Magaro, Adam Godley, Colm Feore, Justin H. Min, Ritu Arya, Yusuf Gatewood, Marin Ireland and Kate Walsh.

TOM HOPPER FELT HE WAS IN A GAME WHEN FILMING 'RESIDENT EVIL: WELCOME TO RACCOON CITY'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Tom Hopper felt like he was "walking through a game" when shooting zombies in the face in scenes for 'Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City'. Hopper said: "There's something quite satisfying about (shooting a zombie). There's a real-looking zombie, with the best make-up in the world, walking towards you and you shoot him. He reacts."

"It's quite surreal when you are shooting these things because you do feel like you are walking through a game, even more so because they made the sets feel so nostalgic. Having been a fan of the game, I was like, 'This is gnarly.'"

Hopper is excited that 'Raccoon City' could be the first time of many that he plays Wesker. He told SFX magazine: "I'd be very open to the conversation of what we could do with him. From the first movie we've done, the idea of playing this character and moving on from his origin I find really interesting with the different things we can do with him."

"I also want to keep the idea that he's not an out-and-out villain. That's what has interested me so much about the way Johannes has written this version of Wesker."

Hopper hopes he has been able to "humanise" the villain.

He said: "Wesker in the game is quite two-dimensional in terms of, 'He's the villain'."

Everything is, 'I'm going to screw you all over' and the audience already knows it. You just know this guy is up to no good."

"Whereas, with the Wesker I'm playing, I wanted to humanise him and make sure his motives were driven by personal gain, but there is a soul there. There is a person who is a friend to these people. I wanted to ground him and make him feel like a real person. But, also, almost like you didn't see it coming."



James Blunt 'lied' about planning a career break

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer James Blunt is grateful the coronavirus pandemic forced him to spend more time with his family because he'd spent so long promising his wife he'd take a year off and knowing he wouldn't do it. Blunt said: "I've been on tour for 17 years and I'd been lying to my wife saying I'd take a year out and spend time at home - then the pandemic forced my hand. And it was amazing. I felt very, very fortunate to be able to do that." He shared that keeping his personal life private is "a conundrum", reports femalefirst.co.uk. Blunt said: "I'd rather not even mention I have children but then my job is to write deeply personal things that people connect with because they share the same emotions. I do find it incredibly hard to know where I'm comfortable stopping." The 47-year-old singer doesn't think he's the right person to ask for relationship advice, although he and Sofia have been together for nine years.

Blunt joked: "I'm probably not the person to ask about love because lots of my songs are about lost love, missed chances of love, or broken love. The secret to longlasting love? I have no idea. My father's advice was, 'Be kind to each other, which seems like simple advice for all relationships.' Blunt is "emotionally stunted" so is pleased his music gives him the opportunity to express his feelings. He told Red magazine: "I'm known for soppy, overemotional music, so the notion of me not being able to shed a tear seems silly, but then I'm an ex-military, ex-boarding school English male, with almost no emotion associated with me at all. I'm emotionally stunted. But I capture how I feel through my songs."

NOEL GALLAGHER SHARES HIS WISH LIST, SAYS HE WANTS TO GO WHEN HE'S 75

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oasis legend Noel Gallagher has said he has no desire to live long into old age and he hopes to be dead in 20 years. Speaking on BBC Radio 1, Gallagher said: "Do I want to live another 50 years? No. Just think how s*** the world is now. I would rather not live through it. At 75 I want to go."

However, he does have some important things on his bucket list before he dies, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Gallagher said: "My plan for the next 10 years is to make three great albums. I would like to write a song with Johnny Marr and meet Bob Dylan."

"I would like to write and perform with Neil Young. I would like to score the soundtrack to a Quentin Tarantino box-office smash and play a round of golf with a therapist. There is not a great deal I yearn for."

Gallagher has no plans to follow in ABBA's footsteps with a hologram tour, even if touring remains difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said: "I would not consider gigs with me as a hologram. No, there would have to be an audience involved. You need a crowd in front of you. It's a human interaction, and if you don't have that it is meaningless."



RAPPER KODAK BLACK ARRESTED ON TRESPASSING CHARGE IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kodak Black was arrested by South Florida police on a trespassing charge, authorities said. Black is known for selling over 30 million singles, including several multi-platinum and platinum-certified singles, including 'Zeze', 'No Flockin' and 'Roll in Peace'. The Broward Sheriff's Office said Black was taken into custody in Pompano Beach early Saturday morning, according to the South Florida SunSentinel, reports deadline.com. Investigators did not immediately release details about what prompted the arrest. Pompano Beach is Black's hometown. Black, whose legal name is Bill Kapri, posted bond and was released. Ex-President Donald Trump had commuted Black's three-year federal prison sentence for falsifying documents used to buy weapons at a Miami gun store, on his last day in office in 2020.

At that point, Black had served half of his sentence. In April, Black was sentenced to probation for assaulting a teenage girl in a South Carolina hotel room. He accepted a deal to plea down the original rape charge and pleaded guilty to first-degree assault.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Nicky Hilton



BTS' JUNGKOOK TRENDS AFTER SHARING PICTURES POSING WITH PUPS

ures on Instagram, where he can be seen lying on the floor as his adorable Italian Greyhounds, who are named Song and Paeng, rest on his stomach. He looks dapper dressed in a white T-shirt with a black pants. Moments after he shared the images, he received over 10.5 million

likes. According to reports, Jungkook's first Instagram post of 2022 crossed one million likes in almost two minutes. With this, he has become the fastest person to achieve this. BTS, or Bangtan Sonyeondan, are a septet comprising Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook.

on social media after he posted an adorable picture of him playing with his two pet pups. Jungkook posted the pic-

Seoul | Agencies

Jungkook, of the South Korean super K-pop band BTS, is currently trending



SA v IND: WOULD LOVE TO HAVE MORE BIG SCORES FROM BATTING LINE-UP, SAYS DRAVID

Johannesburg | Agencies

India head coach Rahul Dravid said he would like to have more big scores from the batting line-up in the second Test against South Africa beginning at the Wanderers on Monday.

He also hoped that the second as well as the third Test will give a chance to the batters to step up and convert a good start into a big knock. India, 1-0 up in the three-match series, will be looking to seal the series in the second Test.

"We would love to have more big scores from batting line-up. But you never really are in such conditions and it's not often that you see all batsmen being able to convert. We had Rahul being able to convert for us in the first innings, batted beautifully and really well. All of them batted well and looked really good in the time they had at the crease.

"Hopefully, this Test and the next one will probably be one of their opportunities to step up, play a big knock and convert one of those starts," said Dravid in the pre-match virtual press conference.

Asked about his assessment of India's 113-run win in the first Test at



Centurion, Dravid sounded happy with the efforts of bowlers but batting could have done better. "We had a really good Test match. The bowling was absolutely phenomenal. To get South Africa out twice below 200 is an absolutely great effort. I thought we batted really well on day one. To be

272/3 at end of day one is something which doesn't happen really often. We did really well there.

"Going ahead, we could have got more from 272/3 to being bowled for 327, that's an area we would really like to improve. I thought we could have batted better in the second

innings as well. A good Test match but a few areas in which we can learn, improve and get better because we know we have to do in this game."

Dravid backed captain Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane to convert their starts into big scores after missing out on doing so in Centurion. "It happens due to a variety of factors and happens to people when they play in various stages of their career when you play for a long period of time. There are phases in your career when you feel you are batting well but big scores don't necessarily come. It happens to everyone, just that two-three of them are going through that phase at the same time."

The 48-year-old pointed the positive point after seeing them bat in practice sessions. "The good and heartening point is they seem to be batting well, getting off to starts and they know to convert. It's not like these guys don't know how to get these hundreds or haven't done it before. It's just a matter of time. They are preparing, practising well and in really good space. As a coach, looking at them, watching them train and looking at the space they are in, I just feel that there could be some runs around the corner."

SA v IND: Bavuma to lead Proteas in ODI series, Jansen gets maiden call-up, Nortje still unavailable

Johannesburg | Agencies

South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen has received his maiden call-up to the ODI squad for the three-match series against India, starting from January 19 in Paarl.

Jansen had recently made his Test debut against India in the first Test at SuperSport Park, taking 4/55 in second innings and held some resistance with the bat in the first innings.

Cricket South Africa (CSA), while announcing the 17-man squad on Sunday, also said that pacer Anrich Nortje will not take part in the ODI series as he hasn't recovered from the hip injury which kept him out of the Tests against India and will continue with the rehabilitation.

"This is a very exciting

group and the Selection Panel and I are eager to see what they will produce. For many of our players, it does not get bigger than playing against this powerhouse Indian team and this will be the biggest series of their young lives so far. We are looking forward to seeing what they bring to the table and wish Temba (Bavuma) and Mark (Boucher) all the best for the series," said Victor Mpitsang, CSA Convener of Selectors in a statement. From the ODI series against the Netherlands, which was cut short due to the emergence of Omicron variant of COVID-19, Wayne Parnell, Ryan Rickelton, Sisanda Magala and Zubayr Hamza retain their spots in the squad while all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius makes a

comeback in the ODI scheme of things. The three-match ODI series between South Africa and India is a part of the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League. India are fifth in the standings with 49 points while South Africa are ninth with 39 points. Each team gets ten points for winning a match while five points are awarded for a tie or no result or abandoned match. Squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), Keshav Maharaj (vice-captain), Quinton de Kock (wicket-keeper), Zubayr Hamza, Marco Jansen, Janneman Malan, Sisanda Magala, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen and Kyle Verreynne.

ISL 2021-22: Odisha FC face stern Mumbai City test

Vasco da Gama (Goa): Odisha FC will face a stern test against Mumbai City FC when the two sides meet in their Indian Super League (ISL) match at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Monday. Odisha suffered a heavy defeat to Hyderabad FC in their last outing, underlining their drop in form since the first few games where they looked very good.

The Kiko Ramirez-coached side have been poor defensively, conceding 20 goals in 8 games this season, the worst record so far. In 2020-21 ISL, Odisha ended with the worst defensive record conceding 44 goals in 20 games with just one clean sheet.

Playing against superior sides in South America gives team more confidence, says Manisha Kalyan

Kochi | Agencies

Indian Women's Team midfielder Manisha Kalyan said that playing against technically superior sides in South America has given the team more confidence ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022.

India ranked No. 57 in the world, played against higher-ranked teams like Brazil (No. 7), Chile (37), and 56th-ranked Venezuela in November-December 2021. The competition was part of the Indian women team's preparation for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 to be held in India from January 20.

"Playing against those sides was truly a unique experience for us. These are teams that have players who are technically more superior to us, and just keeping up with the pace of the games was so incredibly difficult," the 20-year-old Manisha said.

"We had to stick together and fight like one unit, and I think we gave a good account of ourselves in those three games. That gave us a



lot of confidence at the end of the day. Now we know that no matter the quality of the opposition that we face, we can all put up a fight together and do well. That spirit of togetherness has really pumped everyone up ahead of the Asian Cup," she said.

It has been five months since the Blue Tigresses have been training under new head coach Thomas Dennerby, and the forward from Hoshiarpur, Punjab,

feels that the attackers in the side have been given a certain level of freedom.

"Yes, we attackers have a good amount of freedom in terms of going forward with the ball. Ours is not a rigid system, as the coach always wants us to think on our feet and make our own decisions in the attacking third. He guides us in training as to what kind of decisions could be better, but he gives us that freedom of decision making," she informed.

TP Cup: Australia shock Italy 2-1 in the first match

John Peers and Luke Saville completed the Australian turnaround on Sunday at the ATP Cup to give the home nation lift-off in Group B here.

Sydney | Agencies

The pair downed Matteo Berrettini and Simone Bolelli 6-3, 7-5 to secure a 2-1 victory for Australia against Italy in front of a lively crowd that was fully engaged following Alex de Minaur's win over Berrettini in the second singles rubber.

Peers and Saville rose to the task throughout against the Italian duo, saving a set point on serve at 4-5 in the second set as they won the last nine points of the match to triumph after 84 minutes.

Australia will next face reigning champion Russia on Tuesday, while Italy plays France, with both ties on Qudos Bank Arena.

Earlier, home favourite De Minaur lifted the roof off Ken Rosewall Arena Sunday when he kept alive Australia's opening tie hopes against Italy at ATP Cup. The 22-year-old earned his fifth Top 10 win of his career as he upset World No. 7 Berrettini 6-3, 7-6(4) in Group B. "This court brings out the best in me," an emotional De Minaur said. Reflecting on a tough 2021, he added, "It's not about how many times you get knocked down. It's about how many times you get knocked down and get back up."

The 22-year-old demonstrated great agility and grit in his first match of the season and recovered from



squandering a 5-3 lead in the second set to triumph after 86 minutes, leveling their ATP Head2Head series at 1-1. "The whole career I have had a couple of setbacks but look, I am back," De Minaur said. "I worked really hard to be here, I am in the best shape of my life and I am ready to have a big year." De Minaur was impressive on return throughout, stepping inside the baseline to make good contact from Berrettini's delivery as he dictated points with his powerful forehand. The World No. 34, who won two tour-level titles in 2021, is making his third ATP Cup appearance, earning victories against

Alexander Zverev and Denis Shapovalov in 2020.

Earlier, Jannik Sinner had produced a comprehensive performance on his ATP Cup debut to give Italy a 1-0 lead against home nation Australia.

The 20-year-old struck his groundstrokes powerfully and dominated the longer rallies to defeat Max Purcell 6-1, 6-3 in 64 minutes on Ken Rosewall Arena to earn his first victory of the year. "It was a great match from my side," Sinner said in his on-court interview. "I am very happy to have the first point for Team Italy and hopefully Matteo can finish it today. I

felt very, very solid. I knew I had to play solid from the baseline because when he comes to the net it is very, very tough to pass him, so I tried to play deep. For the first match of the year, it could not have gone any better." Sinner enjoyed an impressive 2021 season, earning four tour-level titles and cracking the Top 10 in the ATP Rankings. The 2019 Intesa Sanpaolo Next Gen ATP Finals champion, who struck 13 winners and committed just three unforced errors against Purcell, is Italy's No. 2 singles player at the 16-team event and will next play Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech on Tuesday.

PKL 8: Bengal Warriors hope to halt losing streak, Patna aim to maintain winning run

Bengaluru | Agencies

Defending champions Bengal Warriors will be looking to stage a comeback when they take on Jaipur Pink Panthers on Monday in the Pro Kabaddi League. The Warriors have suffered humiliating defeats in their previous two outings despite raiding heroics by captain Maninder Singh.

The match will be followed by Telugu Titans' duel against three-time champions Patna Pirates.

Captain Maninder Singh has been consistently producing Super 10s for the Warriors but 'they've failed to compliment his work in defence.

Dabang Delhi K.C. scored 52 while Patna secured 44 against a defence that has lacked coherence. Warriors' Iranian all-rounder Esmail Nabibakhsh was not part of the squad against Patna due to an injury while Abozar Mighani has looked off-colour in the right corner.

Jaipur Pink Panthers have had a stop-start campaign with two wins and two losses. All the pressure will be once again on Arjun Deshwal to deliver the raid points after a strong start to the season. The former U Mumba raider has four Super 10s in as many matches. But captain Deepak Hooda's form and the lack of a good raider to support Arjun Deshwal will be a concern for coach Sanjeev Kumar Baliyan. The usually reliable Sandeep Dhull has also been out of form in the left corner for the Panthers. Patna Pirates on a



high There were a lot of questions asked about Patna Pirates' playoff possibilities after they lost star raider Pardeep Narwal in the PKL auctions. But the men in green have answered the questions with dominating performances on the mat -- the latest coming against defending champions Bengal Warriors. The likes of Monu Goyat and Sachin have stepped up in the absence of a top raider to give Patna important

wins. Patna seem to have replaced one top athlete with a combination of young stars. Their defenders Mohammadreza Chiyaneh, Sajin C and Sunil have had a great start to the season as well.

Telugu Titans have shown glimpses of their potential in the initial matches of the season which has been hampered by injuries. Their star raider Siddharth Desai is the latest member in the rehabilitation

room but his absence wasn't felt against Bengaluru Bulls on Saturday. The Titans dominated the match through stellar performances from raider Ankit Beniwal and defender Sandeep Kandola. But captain Rohit Kumar's form (1 point in the entire season) will be a big concern especially after he missed a great opportunity to seal the win against their Southern rivals and his former team.

Messi, three other PSG players test positive for COVID-19 ahead of French Cup clash

Paris | Agencies

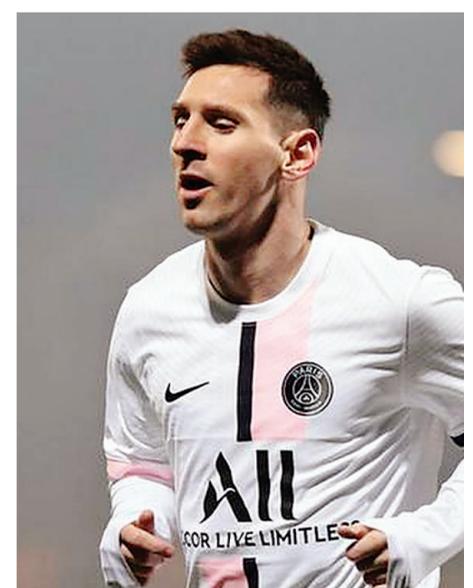
Seven-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi and three other Paris St Germain (PSG) players have tested positive for COVID-19, the French Ligue 1 club confirmed on Sunday.

In a statement on Saturday night, PSG had said that four players and one staff member had tested COVID-19 but none of them was named. However, in a fresh statement on the team's medical news on Sunday, the club named Messi, Juan Bernat, Sergio Rico, and Nathan Bitumazala.

According to PSG, the players are currently in isolation and subject to the appropriate health protocols. "The 4 players that tested positive for Covid-19 are Leo Messi, Juan Bernat, Sergio Rico, and Nathan Bitumazala. They are currently in isolation and are subject to the appropriate health protocol," the PSG said in a statement.

The 34-year-old Messi, along with Bernat, Rico, and Bitumazala, will now miss the French Cup clash with Vannes on Monday but pending a negative test, may be available for their clash with Lyon next Sunday.

The French government has announced that they will relax COVID isolation rules



in the country from Monday. According to the new rules, from Monday, fully vaccinated people in France who test positive will only have to be isolated for seven days regardless of the coronavirus variant they were infected with but can leave quarantine after five days if they show an antigen or negative PCR test.

The Ligue 1 club also

mentioned that Neymar JR will continue his treatment in Brazil until January 9 with members of the Paris Saint-Germain medical and performance staff and his return to training is still expected to be in about three weeks.

PSG are top of the Ligue 1 standings on 46 points after 19 matches, 13 points above second-placed Nice.



WOMEN MAIN REASON FOR HINDI CINEMA'S EVOLUTION: SHRADDHA KAPOOR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shradha Kapoor feels proud that women have been an integral part of our new-age cinematic stories.

According to her, women are a major reason behind the evolution of Hindi cinema. The actress says, "We have seen an absolute evolution in the way we tell stories on the screen, and it warms my heart that women have been a constant part of this process. I have grown up admiring our cinema but one thing that I have personally

noticed is how women have shaped the growth trajectory. They have been an integral part of not just cinema but the overall growth of the nation."

Shradha will soon be seen performing in Zee Cinema and Zee TV's broadcast of the 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). The actress adds, "With my performance 'Shakti: The Power of Indian Women', we are celebrating the strength and achievements of Indian women, their significance in the world of cinema, and overall evolution." The 52nd edition of IFFI is scheduled to be simulcast on Zee Cinema and Zee TV on January 2 at 8 pm.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

TV and film actress Akanksha Puri is quite excited to enter 'Bigg Boss 15' house as a challenger.

She says: "I think this was a very nice and a very different experience. Because you know, when you enter as a challenger, you feel very powerful, you have a lot of powers in your hand, I feel. So, it was really interesting. It was really fun to make the contestants do things."

"But I'm sure we are not going to get very good feedback once they are out. Because we made them do things that we shouldn't have. I think this was much required at this point. I'm very happy with this, because this is how finally they've come out of their shell, they are giving their 100 per cent and we were amazed

to see this."

Akanksha is best known for her role of Goddess Parvati in 'Vighnaharta Ganesha'. She was also seen on 'Bigg Boss 13' as a guest where she went to support Paras Chhabra. This time the actress says that she has been supporting Shamita Shetty throughout the season.

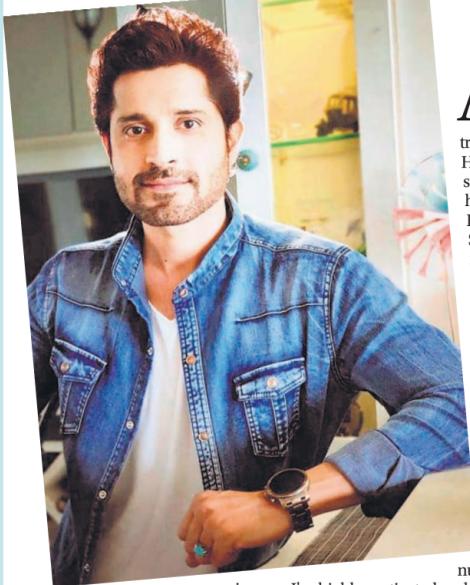
The 'Calendar Girls' actress adds: "Shamita has been my favorite. I've been supporting her from outside throughout. I think the way Rakhi Sawant is doing she should be given one seat in every season. I feel that she is amazing. I think people should be scared of her and they should not take her lightly because if she is there, she can really give everybody a tough time. But definitely I see Shamita very close to the trophy."

Salman Khan inspired to become an actor: Pracheen Chauhan

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Pracheen Chauhan was last seen in the show 'Shaadi Mubarak' in which he portrayed the role of Vishal Agarwal. He revealed how Bollywood superstar Salman Khan inspired him to choose acting as a career. He says: "I'm an actor because of Salman Khan. He actually inspired me to be an actor. I have learned acting after watching his movies time and again. Even today whenever I'm free I switch on to his movies, and keep watching and learning from it. I must say that his great acting on-screen and occasional singing has always been a treat to me. I feel he is the reason I came to Bombay (Mumbai)."

The 'Kasautii Zindagii Kay' actor revealed how he started serving others in need looking at the 'Dabangg' star. He adds: "Salman sir has mentored a number of aspiring actors including me. I'm highly motivated and inspired by this great hero, even to get into perfect shape. He is my fitness inspiration. Apart from that he is very humane and helpful in nature. I have also learned to be kind and social looking to the actor. The actor has been very grounded to earth and possesses many helpful and extraordinary qualities. I'm also looking forward to serving the people and stray animals in need."



KABIR KHAN: GLAD THE STORY OF '83' CHOSE ME AS A FILMMAKER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Filmmaker Kabir Khan feels lucky to have been the vehicle for a story like '83' to reach out to the masses. In his opinion, every story has a destiny and he feels glad that he could be a part of such an inspirational story.

Describing the emotional bouquet of '83', the director said, "A story has to be a human story narrated in the most entertaining and engaging way. '83' had all that in itself. At the end of the day it is an unbelievable story of human triumph. Of course, the backdrop is cricket and the 1983 World Cup, which is larger than life. But if you look at it, it's a very intimate story of a bunch of boys."

He explains, "It's a story of an underdog team that landed up in London when nobody really believed in them. Every newspaper in London was saying that the Indian team should not even be invited because they would bring down the level of game. It's such a dramatic and emotional story that the moment I read the first material at the time when we were considering making it, I was hooked from the start." "I feel privileged to have narrated the story because I have said earlier that sometimes filmmakers don't choose a story, rather a story chooses a filmmaker. I'm so glad, '83' has chosen me as a medium to reach out to the people," the director concludes.



Shashaa Tirupati on her experience of singing 'Rait Zara Si' with Arijit Singh in

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popularly known as 'The Humma Girl', Shashaa Tirupati recently sang a song in the film 'Atrangi Re' starring Akshay Kumar, Sara Ali Khan and Dhanush. The song is called 'Rait Zara Si' and this is her third duet with Arijit Singh.

Award-winning singer Shashaa had previously sung 'Phir Bhi Tumko Chahunga' from 'Half Girlfriend' and 'Khul Ke Jeene ka' from 'Dil Bechara'. This will also be her first ever song for Sara Ali Khan.

Speaking about the song 'Rait Zara Si', she says: "It is my third duet with Arijit Singh. This is a love song and this is the first song that I have sung for Sara Ali Khan. I have sung both the Tamil and the Hindi versions of the track. I feel Arijit and my voice kind of sync beautifully together, I really like how we sang it together. It is also gorgeously composed by A.R. Rahman sir and written by Irshaad ji. The thing is that when you are recording any song for Rahman sir he kind of casts you in that song in his mind and then he calls you for it." "When I was singing this song there was an instant connection even when I was rendering it for the very first time. I recorded the first version in Canada during the lockdown and I think it was love



at first sound for me. I was praying that the song would release in my voice. I am utterly grateful to Rahman sir and Aanand L.

Rai sir apparently who both took the collective call to cast me in the track. The song has so much love, so much vulnerability and so much naivness to my lines in the song and I think it represents me in so many ways," adds the singer.

This is her third song with Arijit and she calls it an overwhelming experience to be cast on a song with one of her favourite singers of all time.

She shares: "Arijit is someone from whom I think I have tried to learn as much as I can, as a learning artist everyday, based upon how he has this unbelievable knack for interpreting melodies, and that is something that I continue to imbibe in my singing by trying to learn from what he does in his songs."

To be featured with him on a track like this is unreal to actually be in that place again. I would love to do a single with Arijit, I would like to write a song for Arijit actually. I am his next level fan and student." Her recent releases also include 'Hututu' from 'Mimi' and 'Chhoddo Mori Baiyyaan' from 'Navarasa'. Shashaa is also all set to release her debut English EP titled 'I'm Sorry Heart'.

Nausheen Ali Sardar reveals being spiritually evolved

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Some characters are not easily forgettable and one among them is the innocent, hardworking girl 'Kkusum' from the eponymous TV show which became a household name. The actress who played the character with perfection - Nausheen Ali Sardar - is still remembered for her role. Nausheen reveals about being spiritually evolved with time.

She says: "After experiencing 2020 as one of the worst years of my life as I'm sure many people did. In fact I also felt that sinking feeling of not knowing what comes next. But to make matters worse my mother was stuck at my cousin's place for a long time and so I was alone at the time of the lockdown."

"It was terrible. I almost felt like being in a solitary jail until my mom came back. 2021 was a year of healing for me to get out of the depression of 2020. It was not only what 'I felt' but also what the world went through. I feel I have spiritually evolved and have come out stronger. Now I take each day as a new day." She has earlier also featured in shows like 'Aladdin - Naam Toh Suna Hoga', 'Gangaa', 'The Adventures of Hatim' among others and says she is open to both digital and television shows. Nausheen says: "I made my OTT debut last year. And now 2022 looks promising work wise. I have never limited myself to one platform. I have done theatre, modelling, music videos, movies, stage shows and television. And have no favourites. To me my work is my passion. And I'm learning something new everyday."



Ranveer Singh welcomes New Year with sun and sand

Team Absolute | Mumbai

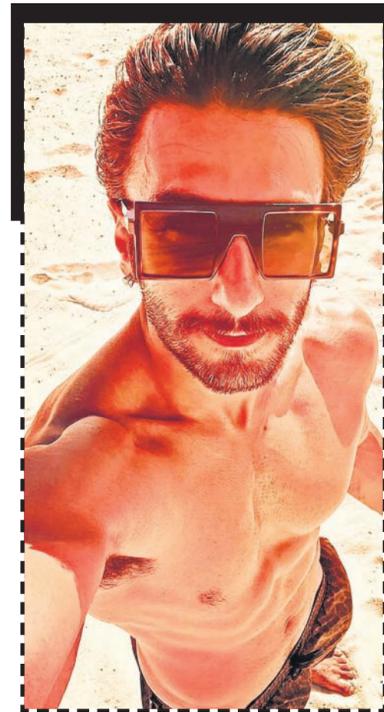
Bollywood star Ranveer Singh rung in the New Year with a vacation away from the hullabaloo of urban life. The actor took to his Instagram and uploaded several pictures from his beach holiday, one which shows the actor raising a toast to the coming year.

He wrote in the caption, "First day of the rest of my life". The actor even credited his wife Deepika Padukone for some of the clicks in the set of pictures.

The pictures shared by Ranveer from the Maldives show him basking in the sun and sands.

The actor had a recent release in the form of '83' where he played Kapil Dev along with an ensemble cast.

The coming year will see Ranveer headlining two films 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' and 'Cirkus' where he will yet again collaborate with his 'Simmba' director Rohit Shetty.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tara Sutaria