

WINTER AT ITS BEST



(Photo: Nisar Malik)

Tourists enjoying next to a frozen waterfall in Drung village of Baramulla district on Saturday.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS CAN BENEFIT PRODUCTIVITY, WORK-LIFE BALANCE: ILO

Inclusive short-time work schemes with the highest possible allowances not only maintain employment but also sustain purchasing power and create the possibility of cushioning the effects of economic crises, the report emphasized, adding that public policy responses are needed to promote reductions in hours of work in many countries to promote both a healthy work-life balance and improved productivity.

Geneva | Agencies

Reduced working hours and more flexible working time arrangements, such as those used during the Covid-19 crisis, can bring benefits for economies, businesses and workers, such as greater productivity and improved work-life balance, a new report released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) released.

The report, titled 'Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World', is the first of its kind. It provides a comprehensive review of both main aspects of working time -- working hours and working time arrangements -- and their effects on workers' work-life balance, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the report, a substantial portion of the



global workforce is now working either long or short hours when compared to a standard eight-hour day or 40-hour working week.

More than one-third of all workers are regularly working more than 48 hours per week, while a fifth of the global workforce is working

short hours of less than 35 hours per week. The Covid-19 crisis measures yielded powerful new evidence that giving workers more flexibility in how, where and when they work can be positive both for them and for business, for example by improving productivity, the report said.

NATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL LOGO AND MASCOT RELEASED IN K'TAKA

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai released a logo and mascot of the National Youth Festival to be held in Hubballi-Dharwad from January 12.

In a function held virtually on Saturday, Bommai thanked the Government of India for allowing Karnataka to host this year's National Youth Festival and Khelo India University Sports meet. The state has made all arrangements to host the Youth Festival on a grand scale. On the occasion, a discussion on the arrangements for the event was held, and it was decided to hold a meeting of young legislators, MPs and other elected representatives. The Railway Board agreed to attach special coaches for the youths coming to Hubballi-Dharwad from different parts of the country.



TERM DEPOSIT INTEREST RATES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS CLIMBING UP

Chennai | Agencies

With credit disbursements picking up and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increasing its lending rates to the banks (repo rate) banks and others are now offering higher interest rates on fixed deposits.

In the case of senior citizens, the fixed deposit rates touch 8 per cent in certain cases.

During the Covid-19 period, the interest on fixed deposits were in the 5% band and one year deposit and now it has climbed up to 7 per cent band.

The State Bank of India (SBI) offers 7.25 per cent for senior citizens on fixed deposits for a period 1 year to less than 2 years and also for 5-10 years tenure.

The interest rates go down to 6.75 per cent for senior citizens on fixed deposits for three years to less than five years.

On its part, the HDFC Bank offers senior citizens 7% on deposits for 1 year to 15 months and 7.75 per cent on term deposits for five years one day to 10 years.

If a fixed deposit is broken prematurely, then the banks will offer the interest rate applicable for the actual term.

The government has revised upwards the interest rates on Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS) to 8 per cent for the fourth quarter of FY23. The SCSS interest rate is reviewed quarterly and is subject to periodic change. Interest is also calculated and credited quarterly.



FPIs sold for 11 consecutive days to the tune of Rs 14,300 cr

New Delhi: FPIs have turned sustained sellers in the Indian market and sold for 11 consecutive days taking the cumulative selling to Rs 14,300 crore, says V.K. Vijayakumar, the Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

FPIs will sell stocks in which they are sitting on profits, like the banking segment. And this segment continues to be strong. Last year, too, selling by FPIs in banks turned out to be opportunities for domestic investors. Globally, the phenomenon of good economic news becoming bad news for markets might continue in the near term. The latest data from the US show increasing job creation and declining jobless claims, he added.

Share of Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) (which includes domestic Mutual Funds, Insurance Companies, Banks, Financial Institutions, Pension Funds etc. as a whole) along with retail and High Net-worth Individual (HNI) investors reached an all time high of 24.03 per cent as on September 30, 2022 from 23.54 per cent as on June 30, 2022, on the back of net inflows from DIIs of Rs 17,597 crore during the quarter, as per Prime info base, an initiative of Prime Database Group.

RBI: OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GROWTH

New Delhi: The fundamentals of the Indian economy, according to the RBI, are sound and resilient and it is confronting strong global headwinds. These are the views of the central bank's Financial Stability Report, which expressed optimism over economic growth.

"The global economy is facing formidable headwinds with recessionary risks looming large. The interplay of multiple shocks has resulted in tightened financial conditions and heightened volatility in financial markets. "The Indian economy is confronting strong global headwinds. Yet, sound macroeconomic fundamentals and healthy financial and non-financial sector balance sheets are providing strength and resilience and engendering financial system stability," the RBI noted.

It said that buoyant demand for bank credit and early signs of a revival in the investment cycle are benefiting from improved asset quality, return to profitability and strong capital and liquidity buffers of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs). The gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks fell to a seven-year low of 5.0 per cent and net non-performing assets (NNPA) have dropped to a ten-year low of 1.3 per cent in September 2022, said the report.

'RRR', 'All That Breathes' find a place each on BAFTA Film Awards

London | Agencies

After landing two Golden Globe nominations, making it to the Oscars long list and winning a handful of the early awards season trophies, 'RRR' is now one of the 10 films in the race for the prestigious BAFTA award in the 'Film Not in the English Language' category. And it is not the only Indian contender to figure on the long lists, which were released on Friday night by the British Academy for Film and Television Arts (BAFTA).

Delhi-based Shaanak Sen's documentary, 'All That Breathes', is also on the long list in its category. 'RRR' is in competition with 'All Quiet on the Western Front', 'Argentina, 1985', 'Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths', Cannes 2022 Grand Prix winner 'Close', 'Corsage', 'Decision To Leave' (which won Best Director for its helmer, Park Chan-wook), 'EO', 'Holy Spider', 'The Quiet Girl' and 'RRR'.

The BAFTA Film Awards unveiled this year's longlists for 24 categories, according to 'Variety', and in the lead are 'All Quiet on the Western Front', Netflix's World War I drama, with 15 nods and 'The Banshees of Inisherin' (Searchlight; starring Brendan Gleeson and Colin Farrell), which follows with



14. The final BAFTA nominations will be announced on January 19 at a live event and global livestream hosted by actors Hayley Atwell and Toheeb Jimoh. The awards ceremony will take place on Sunday, February 19, at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall -- a shift from the awards' usual home of Royal Albert Hall, notes 'Variety'.

IAF, JAPAN'S AIR SDF SET TO EXERCISE JOINTLY IN JAPAN

New Delhi: To promote bilateral air defence cooperation, the Indian Air Force and Japan's Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) are all set to hold joint exercise, 'Veer Guardian-2023' at Japan's Hyakuri Air Base from January 12 to 26, a defence statement said.

The Indian contingent participating in the air exercise will include four Su-30 MKI fighters, and two C-17s and an IL-78 transport aircraft while the JASDF will be participating with four F-2 and four F-15 fighter aircraft. During the second Foreign and Defence Ministerial meeting held in Tokyo on September 8, India and Japan agreed to step up bilateral defence cooperation and engage in more military exercises, including holding the first joint fighter jet drills, reflecting the growing security cooperation between the two sides.

This exercise will thus be another step in deepening strategic ties and closer defence cooperation between the two countries.

For Indian techies, is it the end of the great American dream?

As thousands of techies continue to lose jobs at Big Tech companies amid recession fears, most of them are finding it difficult to get jobs, as there is a freeze on new hirings at nearly every top firms, amid global macroeconomic conditions and recession fears.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amazon, Salesforce, Meta, Twitter, Uber and other tech companies have laid off employees as well as put a total freeze on new hirings.

In some cheer for those who have lost jobs in the ongoing funding winter and global macro-economic conditions, most laid-off tech employees landed new

jobs within three months of starting their search for a new opening. A ZipRecruiter survey revealed that nearly 79 per cent of terminated staff in the tech industry landed a new job within three months.

Nearly four in 10 previously laid off tech workers found jobs less than a month after they began searching, the survey found. However, 2023 is set to become the worst year for tech layoffs and there may not be jobs available for those on H-1B visa anymore.

Several Indian-origin workers were left in the lurch in late 2022. Now, with the latest layoffs announced by Amazon and Salesforce, and Google soon joining the list, several of H-1B visa holders will be left in a precarious situation. They will again have 60 days to find a new job or leave the US, ending their American Dream.

Although an increase from \$10 to \$215 may appear dramatic at first glance, the \$10 fee was established simply to cover a small portion of the costs of the program, as opposed to no fee at all," the USCIS said in a statement. LinkedIn in late 2022 was flooded with stories of laid-off H-1B workers. It was an anxious time for tens of thousands of newly laid-off workers amid inflation pressures and recession concerns. Some people who were in earlier rounds of layoffs got jobs but even they were pessimistic about the current market.

CAC RETAINS CHETAN SHARMA AS CHAIRMAN OF INDIA SENIOR MEN'S SELECTION COMMITTEE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) comprising Sulakshana Naik, Ashok Malhotra, and Jatin Paranjape on Saturday recommended Chetan Sharma as chairman of the India senior men's selection committee.

Sharma, who has 23 Test caps, had been holding the post in the previous selection committee since December 2020, when he replaced Sunil Joshi in the role.

He had re-applied for a role in the selection committee when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) made an announcement for new appointments for a fresh five-member panel on November 18, 2022.

In an official statement, the BCCI informed that the CAC had shortlisted 11 individuals for personal interviews after receiving 600 applications for the five posts. Based on the

interviews, the CAC has recommended Sharma, Shiv Sundar Das, Subroto Banerjee, Salil Ankola and Sridharan Sharath for being part of the selection committee.

Das, the former India men's Test opener, was previously the batting coach of the Indian women's cricket team while Ankola, the ex-India fast bowler, is the current chief selector of the Mumbai men's team in domestic cricket.

Banerjee is a former India pacer who has also been the coach of fast bowler Umesh Yadav. Sharath, hailing from Tamil Nadu, is the current chairman of the Junior Men's Selection Committee and under his panel, India won U19 Men's World Cup in West Indies in 2022.

The task of the new selection committee will be to pick the squads for India's white-ball series against New Zealand, set to happen later in the month.







# DELHI SHIVERS AT 2 DEGREES, FOG DELAYS FLIGHTS AT IGI AIRPORT

❑ The minimum temperatures are in the range of 1-5 degree Celsius in many parts of northwest India and in isolated pockets of Madhya Pradesh.

❑ The lowest minimum temperature of 0 degree Celsius was observed at Bikaner in Rajasthan, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday.

❑ "Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions prevailed in many parts of east Madhya Pradesh; in some areas of East Rajasthan; isolated pockets of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, West Rajasthan and Cold Wave conditions in many parts of West Madhya Pradesh; isolated pockets over Punjab, West Uttar Pradesh," the IMD said.

❑ The Department predicted that the due to continuation of prevailing light winds and high moisture near surface over the Indo-Gangetic plains, dense to very dense fog very likely to continue in some/much parts during night & morning hours over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh during next 24 hours and over Uttar Pradesh during next 48 hours; in isolated pockets thereafter for subsequent 3-4 days over the region.

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Residents of Delhi woke up to cold morning on Saturday with the minimum temperature plunging to 2 degrees Celsius, while dense fog delayed flights at the



Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport.

The weather stations at Safdarjung, Lodhi Road and Ridge recorded the minimum temperatures at 2.2 degrees Celsius, 2 degrees and 1.5 degrees, respectively.

These are the lowest temperatures in these respective areas this season. However, the Ayanagar weather station recorded a minimum temperature of 3.5 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning.

Some 34 domestic flights were delayed due to fog and other weather related issues. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that cold day to severe cold day conditions prevailed in many parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Madhya Pradesh; in some areas of East Rajasthan; isolated pockets of West Rajasthan, Bihar and cold Day conditions in iso-

lated pockets over Uttarakhnad.

The IMD said that due to approaching of two Western Disturbances in quick succession, minimum temperatures are very likely to rise gradually by 3-5 degree Celsius over many parts of Northwest India during next three days and no significant change during subsequent three days.

As a result of this, IMD said, cold wave to severe cold wave conditions in isolated pockets are very likely to prevail over Rajasthan and cold wave conditions in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during the next 24 hours.

## 36 TRAINS DELAYED DUE TO FOG

New Delhi: Railways spokesperson said 36 trains were delayed by one to seven hours due to the foggy weather. According to officials of Northern Railway, Prayagraj-New Delhi Humsafar Express, Saharsa- New Delhi Vaishali Superfast Express, Rewa - Anand Vihar Terminal Superfast Express, Kathgodam-Jaisalmer Ranikhet Express, MGR Chennai Central -New Delhi Tamil Nadu Express, and Hyderabad Deccan Nampally - New Delhi Telangana Express were running late by up to 1:30 hours.

The officials added that Puri- New Delhi Purushottam Express, Gaya- New Delhi Mahabodhi Express, and Barauni-New Delhi Clone Special, were late by 3:30 hours. Malda Town -Delhi Farakka Express, Gorakhpur-Bathinda Gorakhdham Superfast Express, Amzangarh-Delhi Kaifiyaat Superfast Express, Pratapgarh-Delhi Padmavat Express, Lucknow Charbagh- New Delhi AC Superfast Express, Vasco-da-Gama-Hazrat Nizamuddin Goa Express, and Rani Kamalapati- Hazrat Nizamuddin Shaan-E-Bhopal Superfast Express were running late by 1:00 hours.

While Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus- Amritsar Express, Kamakhya-Delhi Brahmaputra Mail, and MGR Chennai Central -New Delhi Grand Trunk Express are late by 3:00 hours. Cold wave conditions and the dense fog is being witnessed all over North India and according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), similar conditions will continue in the first half of the next week as well.

# Evacuation ordered from Joshimath, Choppers ready

► THE CENTRE HAS FORMED AN EXPERT PANEL TO CONDUCT A "RAPID STUDY" OF LAND SUBSIDENCE. A COMMITTEE WILL STUDY THE EFFECTS OF THE SINKING OF LAND ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, BUILDINGS, HIGHWAYS, INFRA-STRUCTURE, AND RIVERINE SYSTEMS, OFFICIALS SAID.

► MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON THE GROUND AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR AIRLIFTING PEOPLE SHOULD ALSO BE MADE, THE CHIEF MINISTER FURTHER SAID, WHILE ORDERING TO EXPEDITE WORK ON THE TREATMENT OF DANGER ZONES, SEWER, AND DRAINAGE.

Chamoli | Agencies

Panic heightened among the residents of Uttarakhand's Joshimath as cracks developed in hundreds of houses and other structures due to the soil shifting in the holy town. Many houses have reached the verge of collapse while a temple here collapsed on Friday. The only good thing is that there was no loss of life in the temple collapse. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami held a high-level meeting at the Secretariat on Friday to set up a rehabilitation centre where the people of Joshimath can be shifted immediately. Terrified and scared, many people have left their homes. At the same time, people are being shifted to municipal buildings, gurudwaras and schools by the administration.

Big cracks have appeared in many houses of Joshimath's Sunil Ward, Manohar Bagh Ward,



and Gandhi Ward. Along with this, the residential colony of Jaypee Group located in Marwari has also come under threat. Water is seeping from the wall of some structures in Jaypee premises. If it rains even a little, water filling the big cracks in the ground can cause havoc.

Chief Minister Dhami held a high-level meeting at the Secretariat on Friday to review the current situation in Joshimath. In the meeting, Dhami directed the officials to set up a large temporary rehabilitation centre at a safe place with immediate effect where the people of Joshimath can be shifted. SDRF IG Riddhim Agarwal said that the SDRF has also been deployed in the town. About 50 SDRF personnel are deployed in Joshimath as the first team. Along with this, the surrounding four posts of SDRF have been asked to remain on alert. Within an hour, all the jawans will get involved in relief and rescue work.

## DEEPLY DISTURBED: RAHUL GANDHI

“ The pictures coming from Joshimath in Uttarakhand are horrifying... I am deeply disturbed. Going against nature by continuous digging and unplanned construction on the mountains has led to the people of Joshimath facing a terrible crisis today.”

# Maha govt 'on ventilator', may not see February: Sanjay Raut

Nashik | Agencies

Mounting another blistering attack on Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde government, Shiv Sena-UBT MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday claimed here that it is "on a ventilator" and would not even survive to see February.

Raut told media persons that after the Supreme Court verdict, 16 MLAs of the Balasahebchandra Shiv Sena (BSS) will be disqualified and the government will collapse as it is illegal and unconstitutional.

"There will be a change very soon... They are only extending the date of their death. Entire Maharashtra is with the Shiv Sena-UBT which is like a giant tree and only the rubbish has gone over to the BSS," Raut said, referring to the spate of defections from his party to the Shinde side in recent weeks.

Hitting out at Shinde's "puppet regime", the Sena-UBT chief spokesperson said that everyday corruption cases against various ministers are coming to the fore, but the government is unaffected and "like a thick-skinned rhinoceros".

"In the past, if there were any corruption allegations against ministers or the CM, or they faced court strictures, they would immediately resign, like A.R. Antulay or Shrivajirao Patil-Nilangekar had done. Now, even when half a dozen ministers have graft cases against them, they are sitting tight like buffaloes in the



water," Raut said.

Referring to the statements made by Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane and BSS Minister Deepak Kesarkar that Raut is laying the ground for going back to jail, he hit back, warning them against making such threats.

"Don't threaten us. The central probe agencies are being misused against the Opposition parties. Simply because you are in government doesn't mean you are the law," warned Raut.

"As far as I know, Rane will cease to be a minister soon... his performance is a big zero and he is a scared ('darrpok') person, that's why he is creating this ruckus. I have never met him after he left (Shiv Sena, in 2005) the party," Raut declared dismissively.



## PUNJAB MINISTER DROPPED FROM CABINET, 2ND IN NINE-MONTH GOVT

Chandigarh: Punjab Horticulture Minister Fauja Singh Sarari on Saturday resigned from the Cabinet, the second one to be dropped in the just nine-month old Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Bhagwant Mann.

Sarari's name had surfaced in a case of devising an extortion plan. After his resignation, the state government decided to go in for a Cabinet expansion.

Sources in the government said a time has already been sought from the Governor for its expansion. Earlier, Vijay Singla was dropped from the Cabinet on corruption charges.

Sarari was inducted into the Cabinet in July 2022.

## AIR INDIA 'PEE-GATE'

# Shankar Mishra arrested, sent to 14-day judicial custody

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Patiala House court on Saturday sent Shankar Mishra, who's accused of urinating on an elderly female co-passenger in a drunken state on a New York-New Delhi flight in November last year, to 14-day judicial custody. He has been arrested from Bengaluru by Delhi Police.

The police had moved the court seeking three-day remand of Mishra. However, the court sent the accused to 14-day judicial custody.

The court noted that prime facie, it seems that the accused was deliberately avoiding joining the investigation.

Metropolitan Magistrate Anamika said that physical presence of the accused is not required to question other witnesses and statements under Section 164 CrPC can be recorded without taking him into police



custody.

"Just because there is public pressure, don't do this. Go by the law. Perusal of records shows that the accused was deliberately avoiding joining the investigation. In order to make further investigation, physical presence of the accused is not required during

the recording of statements of the flight's crew members," the court observed. During the arguments, the court asked the police as to why Mishra's police custody is required. The public prosecutor submitted that Mishra was not cooperating with the probe.

# EX-NEPAL PM OLI AGAIN VENTS HIS IRE AGAINST INDIA

Kathmandu: Chairman of Nepal's ruling party UML and former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli once again vented his ire against India on Saturday, saying that the neighbouring countries are taking unnecessary interest in the formation of the government in the Himalayan country. At a programme organised here, Oli said that some neighbours are still trying to cross the wall and interfere with the internal affairs of the country. "This is a government formed by Nepalis. There were some attempts not to allow Nepalis to form the government," Oli said, without naming India.

This is not the first time that Oli had vented his ire against India.

Nepal had issued a new map in May 2020, when Oli was the Prime Minister, incorporating a disputed territory which falls in India, leading to a territorial dispute between the two neighbouring countries.

# BIND scheme: FM coverage to be expanded to over 80% of population

Development of high-quality content for both domestic and international audiences, availability of diverse content by upgrading the capacity of the DTH platform to accommodate more channels will expand the choice available to the audience. The plan also aims at expansion of the FM network primarily in tier II and tier-III cities with focus on LWE and aspirational districts.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Expansion of FM coverage to over 80 per cent of population and face-life of DD and AIR Channels by installing latest broadcasting and studio equipment comprise the Centre's Broadcast Infrastructure Network Development (BIND) Scheme.

The Cabinet this week approved the BIND Scheme with an outlay of Rs 2,539.61 crore for modernisation, upgradation and expansion of All India Radio and Doordarshan for the five-year period ending 2025-26.

The plan includes priority projects of AIR and Doordarshan with focus on expansion and strengthening of the FM radio Network and Mobile TV



Production facilities amounting to Rs 950 crore which are to be completed

on fast-track mode. Officials said that the plan aims at

major upgradation to create better infrastructure and widen the public broadcaster's reach in LWE, border and strategic areas.

For All India Radio, the plan includes increasing the FM coverage in the country to 66.29 per cent by geographical area and 80.23 per cent by population up from 58.83 per cent and 68 per cent respectively. It also includes increasing the coverage of AIR FM to 63.02 per cent from the existing 48.27 per cent at the India-Nepal border and increasing the AIR FM coverage from 62 per cent to 76 per cent along the border areas in Jammu and Kashmir. For Doordarshan, it includes facelift of DD and AIR Channels by installing latest broadcasting and studio equip-

ment at Prasar Bharati facilities, upgradation of Earth Stations at DDK Vijayawada and Leh to 24 hours channel, rolling out of Fly away units for covering the prestigious National Ceremony/ events and VIP coverages and 28 Regional Doordarshan channels to be migrated as High-Definition program production capable 'Kendras'.

It also includes expansion of DD Free Dish capacity from existing 116 channels to about 250 channels for providing a rich and diverse bouquet of channels free of cost. Besides, free distribution of over 8 lakh DD DTH Receiver sets is planned for Remote, Tribal, LWE and border areas to enable the audience in these areas to access television and radio services.

# MHA declares LeT operative Arbaz Ahmad Mir a terrorist



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Union Home Ministry has declared Arbaz Ahmad Mir, who has been working for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) from across the border in Pakistan, as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in a notification released

on Friday, said that Mir was involved in promoting terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Ministry stated that the government had declared Mir as a terrorist, exercising the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section 1) of section 35 of the UAPA, 1967.

Mir belongs to Kulgam district of J&K and currently resides in Pakistan.



Trouble for Pragya Thakur

# EX BUREAUCRATS SLAM BHOPAL'S MP OVER "HINDUS, KEEP KNIVES" SPEECH

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

A group of 103 former bureaucrats has slammed BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur for an alleged hate speech in Karnataka in which she urged Hindus to "keep weapons". The group has demanded action from the Lok Sabha's Speaker and Committee of Ethics.

Pragya Thakur, MP from Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, was reportedly named in a police case - charges unclear - after she allegedly made incendiary remarks against Muslims while speaking at a Hindu group's convention in Shivamogga.

"They have a tradition of jihad, if nothing they do Love Jihad," she had said, referring to the right-wing's conspiracy theory that Muslims have an organised attempt at "luring" Hindu girls. "Answer those involved in Love Jihad... Protect your girls, teach them the right values."

She had further said, "Keep weapons in your homes, if nothing else, at least knives used to cut vegetables, sharp... Don't know what situation will arise when... Everyone has the right to self protection."

The former officers' letter says she appears to have "cleverly chosen her words to avoid criminal charges being made against her" as her speech may be seen as calling only



for "self-defence".

It alleges that she was "clearly telling her Hindu audience that they had to be afraid of attacks from non-Hindus", though the word 'Muslim' was not used.

Signatories include Anita Agnihotri, former secretary in the central government's department of social justice; Salahuddin Ahmad, a former chief secretary, Rajasthan; and SP Ambrose, who served as additional secretary in the union ministry of transport.

"By her incendiary words, Pragya Thakur has not only committed sev-

eral offences under the Indian Penal Code, she has also violated the oath taken by her as Member of Parliament to uphold the Constitution of India, which is premised upon the rights to life and liberty, secularism, equality and fraternity," it adds.

It also mentions a petition by some civil society organisations asking the Speaker of the Lok Sabha to disqualify her as MP. "We, in the Constitutional Conduct Group, also strongly believe that stern action should be taken against her as per the rules of the Lok Sabha," it adds.

It goes on to observe that society seems to have become "inured to hate speech" against minorities.

"A daily dose of venom is spewed, in the print, visual and social media against different non-Hindu communities, primarily against Muslims, and more lately against Christians as well. Often, these verbal attacks are accompanied by physical violence, assaults on their places of worship, anti-conversion legislation, hurdles placed in the way of inter-faith marriages, denial of livelihoods and [...] other actions to lower their status in society. A compliant media and systematic distortion of history by people in positions of authority feed this frenzy of communal hate," the letter alleges.

It quotes from recent Supreme Court judgments that stress that India is a secular country as per its Constitution.

Arguing that Pragya Thakur be charged with particular sections of the law, it says, "It is commendable that the police in Shivamogga have not been taken in by [her] attempt to disguise her speech as being about self-defence and have registered one or more FIRs against her under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. We hope they will speedily move to file a chargesheet in the court."

## Prime Minister will inaugurate 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Indore

Will be concluded by President Smt. Droupadi Murmu . Overseas Indians of the world will present in the three-day conference

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 17th Pravasi

Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Indore on January 9 and President Droupadi Murmu will conclude it. The PBD will involve thousands of overseas Indians living around the world. The three-day convention will be held from January 8 to 10. In the PBD conference, overseas Indians from all over the world will discuss various topics. Overseas Indians will be introduced to the achievements and capabilities of the country and the state. There will be cultural activities as well. President Droupadi Murmu will honour non-resident Indians at the conclusion of the three-day convention.

The President of Guyana Mohammad Irfaan Ali, the President of Suriname Chandrika Prasad Santokhi and the Member of Parliament of Australia Zaneta Mascarenhas will participate in the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 8 on the first day of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas



Convention. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and ministers of the Union and state governments will participate in the PBD.

On the first day, in the plenary session under the chairmanship of Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur there will be discussions on the role of migrant youths in innovations and new technology.

After this, there will be 3 sessions on sectors related to industrial capabilities of the state, Textile and Garments: Weaving the Growth Story of M.P., Stories of Changes Taking Place in Madhya

Pradesh in Information Technology and Allied Sectors, Health Care and Pharmaceuticals Investment: Reshaping the Global Health Value Chain. After this, there will be important discussions in three important sessions on Invest in Madhya Pradesh - The Food Basket, Startup Eco System - Unleashing the Entrepreneurial Strength of Madhya Pradesh and Tourism Opportunity in the Heart of Incredible India. In the evening there will be cultural conferences based on the unique cultural features of Madhya Pradesh.

## M.P. State Crime Records Bureaus e-Vivechan App recieves Platinum Award from President

Team Absolute | Bhopal

President Draupadi Murmu presented the Platinum Award for Digital Initiatives at the grassroots level to e-Vivechna App of State Crime Records Bureau of Madhya Pradesh at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. The President gave this award at the Digital India Awards 2022 function. Chanchal Shekhar, Additional Director General of Police, State Crime Records Bureau along with his team received the award. Union Minister for Electronics, Information Technology, Communications and Railways Ashwini Vaishnav was also present at the function.

Madhya Pradesh is pioneering in the country by



successfully operating the e-Vivechna app with more than 80,000 case diaries. This app offers transparency in police investigations. The App facilitates the Investigating Officer to collect evidence and statements from the crime scene itself and link it to the rele-

vant FIR. The evidence and statements collected are geo-tagged and time-stamped, so they cannot be tampered with later. This has also increased the confidence of the courts in the police investigation.



Security personals doing rehearsal for the parade ceremony of Republic Day.

## CM Chouhan plants saplings

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Along with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, members of CPHD Health Care Foundation and Ram Sena Samaj Sevi Sanstha planted saplings of Khirni, Gulab and Pithoria at Water Vision Park. The members of the Foundation, dedicated to providing health facilities and services to the needy people and vaccination of cows, dedicated the lines of the song "Kisi Ki Muskurahaton Pe Ho Nisar-Kisi Ka Dard Mil Sake To Le Udhar" to Chief Minister Chouhan by singing in chorus.

Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, Shubham Shiv Chourasia of Ram Sena Samaj Sevi Sanstha planted a sapling on the occasion of his birthday. The organisation is active in the field of providing free food to the poor, cow service and tree plantation. Ajay Naveria and Mayank Srivastava of the organisation also participated in the plantation.



### TEEN GIRL RAPED, BLACKMAILED BY BOY SHE MET ONLINE IN HARDA

Harda: A 17-year-old girl in Harda in Madhya Pradesh was raped allegedly by a boy she had befriended on a photo-video sharing social networking service, a police official said on Saturday.

The girl, who is a Class XI student, and the boy, who turned 18 during the day, came in contact through social media around a year ago and had met each other several times, Harda woman police station in charge Gajiwati Pusham said.

"The girl was raped repeatedly after the accused said he had obscene videos of her which he threatened to circulate. The ordeal came to light after her parents noticed changes in behaviour and she confided in them," she said.

## M.P. Will make Kerala a hub for flower production: Minister of State

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Will make Madhya Pradesh the hub of flower production. This was stated by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Horticulture and Food Processing Bharat Singh Kushwaha at the 42nd All India Rose Exhibition. The exhibition took place at Gulab Garden in Bhopal on Saturday. More than 600 varieties of roses were displayed in the exhibition.

Minister of State Kushwaha said that Madhya Pradesh ranks second in the country in the production of flowers. Those cultivating flowers will be promoted in the state. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, several programs are being conducted for those cultivating horticulture. Flower Dome is being constructed in Bhopal to preserve the flow-



ers. In this, flowers can be kept safe for a long time. Flori-culture garden will be made in the state to develop different types of flowers and to increase new species of flowers. Minister of State Kushwaha welcomed the participants of the exhibition.

Minister of State Kushwaha also distributed prizes to the participants of the exhibition. Kushwaha also visited the exhibition. In the beginning, Director Horticulture Nidhi Nivedita gave information about organizing the exhibition and programs to promote flower cultivation in the state.

## 40th Indian Dental Association conference started in AIIMS Bhopal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three days IDA MP state conference started with pre conference courses. The live surgical demonstration of third molar surgeries and the hands on Inter-maxillary fixation was completed at AIIMS Bhopal in which 52 participants from all the dental colleges of MP were participated and learn the tricks and tips of third molar surgeries. 25 surgeries were demonstrated live on the patients.

Director and CEO Dr Ajai singh address the gathering and shower his blessings for the success of the conference



and also advised the budding dentist to involve in research activities and live demonstration in the future. Dr Pankaj

Goel congratulates all the participants and wishes to perform these types of events in the future on a bigger

scale. From IDA Dr Pratima Vajpayee, Dr Atul Verma, Dr Benaiffer Agarwal, Dr Manish Verma and Dr Anup Vyas were present.

Live surgical demonstration and lectures were performed by Dr Anshul Rai, Dr Ankita Vastani, Dr Rishi Thukral and Dr Jitendra kumar.

Health Education Minister Vishwas sarang awarded Dr Anshul Rai with the Dr R.S Verma memorial Best Academician of the year 2022 award for his hard work put towards the contribution in the field of dental academics in the 40th MP STATE IDA Conference.





# TIGERS & LEOPARDS BEHIND MOST OF 105 DEATHS CAUSED BY WILD ANIMALS IN MAHA

- State forest officials said that there are Primary Response Teams to warn people against entering forests during wildlife movements, or after dark, when the big cats are always on the prowl.
- In case of any tragedies, there are the Rapid Rescue Teams whose clear objective is "to save both humans and animals", though it is not always possible, said a forest officer from Yavatmal.
- Experts regularly appeal for an all-round long-term strategy to reduce man-creature skirmishes, with the onus on humans to respond to the needs of animals and avoid confrontations in each other's territories.
- Hoping to give more 'breathing space' and 'elbow room' to the big and small wild animals, till 2022 Maharashtra has declared 52 wildlife sanctuaries/reserves across the state with plans to add seven more soon.

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Since the past couple of decades, Maharashtra's urban centres, notably Mumbai, Pune and Nashik, and semi-urban areas like Satara and parts of Vidarbha, have had to contend with the threats of wild animals straying out of their cramped habitats into residential neighbourhoods, leading to inevitable 'man-animal conflicts'.

In recent times, the state has witnessed a surge in man-animal conflicts, with



increasing human casualties, especially leopard attacks, in and around the concrete towny settlements.

From January to December 2022, there were a shocking 105 human deaths due to attacks by wild creatures, chiefly tigers and leopards, and the rest by other jungle residents.

In 2022, tigers burned bright to kill 77 people and leopards snuffed out 17 humans -- with the maximum eight deaths in Nashik, six in Chandrapur, plus one each in Nagpur, Kolhapur and Thane, said Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Mahip Gupta.

Recently, Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar had revealed the figures of such conflicts with the graph inching north in the past three years in the state -- in 2019-20, 47 people were killed in attacks by wild animals, 80 in 2020-21, 86 in 2021-22, and 105 in 2022, the worst year for human deaths cause by wild animals.

In Mumbai, the forests of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, the adjoining Aarey Colony, and the sprawling Film City and IIT-B campuses are the main leopard hotspots,

though they have strayed far outside including on highways, in vehicles, buildings, bungalows or posh housing complexes. There were around half a dozen conflicts with leopards, including at least two fatal involving kids, as the region is populated by an estimated 60-plus leopards, one of the largest urban concentrations of these spotted big cats in the country.

Presently, the highest risk from leopards is witnessed in the lush forested Satara region, and the adjoining sugarcane fields, besides adjoining Pune, according to Rohan Bhate, BNHS Governing Council Member and a Honorary Wildlife Warden.

Wildlife expert and former PCCF Sunil Limaye said humans continually stray into or encroach on wildlife territories though there are clear do's and don'ts in place, particularly in the regions adjoining animal sanctuaries/reserves dotting the state.

Though terming the man-animal conflict as 'not so good but not so bad either', he said it is more for the humans to beware of the dangers lurking in the wild than to expect appropriate behaviour from the animals. "Conflicts occur as humans

trespass into their territories or the animals stray outside the jungles in search of food... For the past few years, there is concern about the growing menace of elephants romping here from Karnataka or Odisha, causing huge havoc on fertile farmlands and crops," said Rithe.

"Besides, humans keep grabbing more and more space from wildlife, hinder wild animals on using their regular forest corridors or even chase them off when they are seen, leading to avoidable conflicts, often with casualties or fatalities," Limaye explained.

Bhate recalled that over two decades ago, following a big leopard hazard, around 110 were trapped from the infested Nashik, tagged with tracking devices, and released in different forest regions of the state.

"Surprisingly, it was found that after some time, around a dozen had returned to Nashik, their original habitat! Leopards seem to have the 'homing instinct' and go back to their place of birth, including the cubs born in the sugarcane fields, which keep returning there frequently as they find it cozier with lot of big and small prey around, compared with the jungles," said Bhate. It has also been found that the survival rate of the cubs is increasing from around 40 per cent to 50 per cent or higher, female leopards which earlier used to give birth to 2-3 cubs are now delivering three-four cubs, adding to the population, he said. This has taken the physical area of protected regions up to 13,000 sq. km to secure the flora and fauna, especially in the territories adjacent to national parks/sanctuaries/reserves or the critical 'jungle corridors' linking them, said Mungantiwar.

In a laudatory move last year, the Maharashtra government hiked the compensations given to victims of all wildlife attacks, humans as well as their cattle or fowl and farm animals which are a source of livelihood.

## STABBING OF 2 DOCS:

# Maha medicos want central law, action against culprits

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Outraged by the stabbing of two resident surgeons by an unruly patient in a Yavatmal hospital, the Association of Medical Consultants (AMC) Mumbai shot off a letter to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde seeking his immediate intervention in the matter, here on Saturday.

In the memo, AMC President Nilima Vaidya-Bhamare referred to the incident of January 5, when a mentally unstable patient pounced on two first year on-duty resident surgeons and stabbed them brutally. The patient, identified as one Suraj Thakur, was arrested soon afterwards on Thursday night.

The incident sparked a furore in medical circles across Maharashtra and the resident doctors carried out protests on Thursday night and Friday outside the hospital.

On Friday, after the Vasantrao Naik Government Medical College and Hospital authorities refused to open the gates for the agitating resident doctors, a scuffle broke out in which one security personnel was injured.

The 50-year-old AMC - with over 13,000 members - said that resident doctors are the backbone of the healthcare delivery system, and the state must take responsibility for their security.

"They cannot be expected to give service and study to be qualified health personnel under such a dangerous environment... We shall take up the matter at the Central level to put up a Central law in place,"



pointed out Vaidya-Bhamare in the AMC plea.

She added that for two years, the AMC has been pursuing the need to set up SOPs for police personnel in case of such violent acts in healthcare facilities.

The AMC Secretary Hemant Dugad also demanded a 'black register' of truant or violent patients and their relatives in each area to enable the healthcare authorities to "red-flag" such miscreants in future, akin to the list of habitual criminals in their jurisdiction compiled by all local police stations.

Vaidya-Bhamare sought official posters from the Police Commissioners to be prominently displayed in all hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and dispensaries warning the patients of the consequences of indulging in any violence against the medicos.

Dugad said a WhatsApp group should be created by all police stations with the details of all the medicos in different medicare facilities serving their localities for quicker assistance in case of such ruckus.

Both the AMC office-bearers said the culprits indulging in attacks on medicos must be booked immediately under the provisions of the Maharashtra Medicare Act.

# Rishabh Pant operated for ligament tear on right knee in Mumbai: Report

Team Absolute | Mumbai

India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who miraculously survived a horrific car accident on December 30, was operated for a ligament tear on his right knee.

A report by mid-day newspaper states that Pant was operated by Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala, the head of the Centre for Sports Medicine, and Director of Arthroscopy & Shoulder Service at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital in Andheri West, here on Friday.

"On Friday morning at around 10.30 am Dr Pardiwala and his team conducted ligament tear surgery on his right knee, the surgery was performed for around 2 to 3 hours. The surgery went smoothly," said the report.

The report added that the hospital didn't confirm the development, saying they would not comment on the matter due to the privacy of



the patient and that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) would release the statement.

It also said after Pant was airlifted to Mumbai from Dehradun on Wednesday, doctors have been evaluating his health condition and did some basic health checks on him before the surgery happened on Friday, while adding that it will take some

months for the left-handed batter to recover completely.

On December 30, around 5:30am, Pant, 25, suffered multiple injuries when his car collided with a road divider and caught fire on the Delhi-Dehradun highway. The horrific car accident happened between Manglaur and Narsan in the Haridwar district in the state of Uttarakhand.



## 69 PERSONS, INCLUDING 44 CUSTOMERS, ARRESTED IN RAID ON BAR

Mumbai: Sixty-nine persons have been arrested following a raid on a bar in Santacruz in Mumbai in the early hours of Saturday, a police official said.

Those held comprise 44 customers, 21 staffers and four artistes, the official said.

"Fourteen women were rescued from the establishment, and Rs 3.5 lakh cash was seized. The raid was carried out by the police's Social Service Branch after it received a video clip of a dance performance there," he said.

A case was registered under Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotel, Restaurants and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (working herein) Act 2016 as well as the Indian Penal Code, he added.

# Vandal runs riot in 489-year-old Portuguese-built Mumbai church cemetery

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocking incident, an unknown person sneaked inside the historic St Michael's Church premises around dawn and vandalised 18 crosses in the graveyard of the 489-year-old church, near the Mahim station, officials of the Archdiocese of Bombay said here on Saturday. According to the church's Parish Priest, Fr. Bernard Lancy Pinto, the incident occurred around 6 a.m. when the unidentified miscreant entered the church premises and embarked on a damage-spree in the cemetery, sparking furious reactions among the Mumbai's Catholic community. He said the police have promised appropriate legal action against the vandal and they will also conduct a probe to check for any security lapses.

The St. Michael's Church is the oldest Portuguese-built church in 1534 in its former colony of isles and the then sea-trading centre known as 'Bom Bahia' (later Bombay).

127 years later in May 1661, when Britain's King Charles II married Princess Catherine of Braganza, the



daughter of Portugal's King John IV, 'Bom Bahia' was transferred to her husband as part of her wedding dowry. The Mahim Church is famed for its Wednesday 'novenas' where people from all religions flock to attend and pray for miracles that are believed to take place.

The Catholic community in Mumbai and elsewhere has reacted sharply to the vandalism in Mahim Church and urged the police and government to take prompt action in the matter, besides ensuring security for the 125-odd churches in the city.

Many Christians - who number around 500,000 (or 3.30 per cent) of

the city's population - penned their sense of agony and outrage on social media posts, and recalled similar but smaller incidents of vandalism, theft of valuable church properties, etc, that have occurred in the past few years in different parts of Mumbai against the peace-loving community. Saturday's development came barely a day after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation revoked a move to acquire a part of the cemetery besides the St Peter's Church in Bandra west, for a road widening project, after Catholics from Mumbai raised an outcry and intervention of some local political leaders.

# 4 LAKH CIGARETTES SEIZED AT MUMBAI AIRPORT



Mumbai: The Customs Officials at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport seized 4 lakh cigarettes worth Rs 30 lakh which were being supplied illegally.

According to the information, the seizure was made by Mumbai Customs Department on January 5.

"Total 2,000 undeclared cigarette cartons were found mixed in export shipments destined for London. We have seized it," said an official.

"Acting on intelligence that cigarettes were being attempted to be smuggled by way of mis-declaration and concealment in export shipments, we identified and tracked it," the official said.

The official said that they seized 4 lakh cigarettes packed in 2,000 cartons under section 110 of the Customs Act.

"It is an offence punishable under various sections of Customs Act. Further investigation in the matter is under progress to trace the carrier of the said narcotic substance," said the official.

## ANGARKI SANKASHTI CHATURTHI:

# Roads around Siddhivinayak temple to be closed for traffic on Jan 10

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Traffic Police on Friday said that there would be traffic restrictions on some roads around Siddhivinayak temple in Prabhadevi on January 10 for Angarki Sankashti Chaturthi.

A traffic notification issued by the police said that on account of Angarki Sankashti Chaturthi there will be a huge congregation of devotees at Siddhivinayak temple and it will affect traffic on the roads in the vicinity of Siddhivinayak temple. Hence it is necessary to make an order for traffic management on the said road. The notification issued by Raj Tilak Roushan, DCP, Traffic, Mumbai said, in order to prevent danger, obstructions and inconvenience to the public, traffic on the following roads will be affected.

In order to minimize pressure of traffic on the aforesaid roads following traffic restrictions have been imposed temporarily on January 10 from 06.00 hrs. to 24.00 hrs. In case of necessity for the safety of devotees the restrictions may be increased, the notification further said.



▶ THERE SHALL BE NO ENTRY TO ALL TYPES OF VEHICLES ON S.K. BOLE ROAD FROM GOKHALE ROAD

ROADS TO BE CLOSED

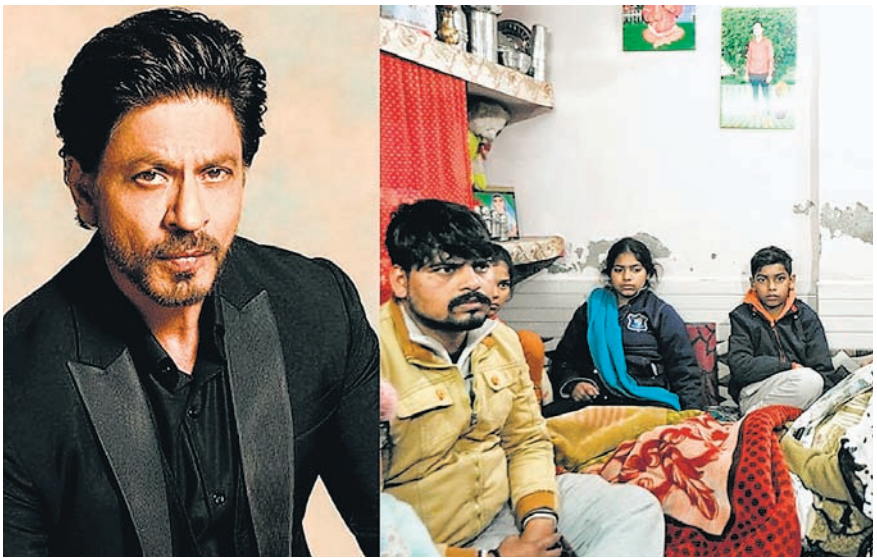
▶ THERE SHALL BE NO ENTRY TO ALL TYPES OF VEHICLES ON DATTA RAUL ROAD AND N. M. KALE ROAD FROM GOKHALE ROAD

▶ THERE SHALL BE NO ENTRY TO ALL TYPES OF VEHICLES ON S. K. BOLE ROAD FROM AGAR BAZAAR JUNCTION.

▶ ENTRY ON S. K. BOLE ROAD SHALL BE ALLOWED FROM SIDDHIVINAYAK JUNCTION ONLY.

▶ THERE SHALL BE NO ENTRY TO ALL TYPES OF VEHICLES ON SHANKAR GHANEKAR ROAD FROM LENINGRAD JUNCTION.

# SRK's NGO donates undisclosed amount to Anjali's family



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's philanthropic NGO Meer Foundation has come forward and supported the Delhi accident victim Anjali Singh's family by donating an undisclosed amount.

A statement read: "Shah Rukh Khan's Meer Foundation donates an undisclosed amount to the family of Anjali Singh.

Anjali, a 20-year-old, lost her life in a brutal hit and run that took place in Delhi's Kanjhawala. The aid by Meer foundation aims to help the family, especially the mother with her health issues while providing adequate relief to Anjali's siblings."

Meer Foundation is a philanthropic foundation named after Shah Rukh's father Meer Taj Mohammed Khan which aims to effect change at

ground level and works to build a world that empowers women.

In the past, Meer Foundation has supported and contributed to various causes that provide support to disadvantaged women and children.

Anjali Singh, a 20-year-old woman, died a painful death after being dragged by a car for about 12 km in the national capital in the early hours of January 1.













## RAKUL ROOTS FOR SEX EDUCATION, AWARENESS IN HER UPCOMING MOVIE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The makers of the upcoming film 'Chhatriwali' have unveiled the trailer, which focuses on safe sex and sex education among the youngsters, led by Rakul Preet Singh's character.

The over two-minute long trailer begins with the stereotypes in the society surrounding sex and how women have to suffer because of a lack of education.

The trailer then focuses on a professor played by Rajesh Tailang thinking how it is not really important and is a taboo to teach children about sex and 'copulation'.

Then enters Rakul, who gets married to Sumeet Vyas who doesn't believe in using condoms. Rakul said: "In today's patriarchal society, every household needs a Sanya who holds the courage to single-handedly fight against all

odds, traditions, social norms, and barriers. I hope this character inspires others to find their voice and speak up against unsafe sex and the many health implications of not using protection." She added: "India's youth make up for majority of the population and educating them on safe sex is the need of the hour, so I am glad that Chhatriwali is catering to them and everyone else in a progressive and entertaining manner. I have respect and only respect for the incredible team behind this extraordinary project." Sumeet said: "Raincoat pehenke baarish mein bheegne ka kya mazaa." Later, Rakul is seen making a decision to teach sex education to school children.

dren.

Sumeet said: "Chhatriwali breaks the wall of awkward silence around sex between Indian parents and children, husbands and wives, teachers and students. Today's generation is curious about the words sex and intimacy because there is always a sense of hush-hush around such topics."

Director Tejas Prabha Vijay Deoskar said: "While researching for Chhatriwali, I happened to visit few rural parts in India and spoke to students and villagers over there. I saw a taboo around the word sex and the judgemental attitude of society as well as the pharmacists."

"But what was more interesting and alarming was that even the urban population had the same issue barring some pockets in metros. The dire need to normalise this conversation were the driving forces behind the making of this film."

## 'The experience was glamorous'



## Nargis Fakhri starts 2023 with her new music video

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Nargis Fakhri starts 2023 with her new music video titled 'Pyaase'. She said that working on it was "glamorous". The actress also shared the big reveal on her social media with the caption: "Tune in now to get hooked. It was a blast shooting this one with iambohemia and preetinderofficial."

Sharing her experience shooting the music video she said: "The experience was glamorous, fun and a memorable one. I'm so excited to see fans double tapping our efforts on all social media platforms. I was waiting eagerly to share this 'Pyaase' with everyone."

'Pyaase' is sung by Bohemia and preetinder, Music by Rajat Nagpal and lyrics are written by Param.

Nargis made her Bollywood debut in 2011 with the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Rockstar'. She subsequently played a war correspondent in the political thriller 'Madras Cafe' and starred in the commercially successful comedies 'Main Tera Hero', 'Spy' and 'Housefull 3'.

The actress was last seen in 'Torbaaz', an action thriller film directed by Girish Malik. Sanjay Dutt plays the role of a medical professional that lost his wife and son while he was placed in the Indian Embassy in Kabul, while Nargis Fakhri and Rahul Dev play other prominent characters.

## 'I have always loved water so much'

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Kannada actress Samyukta Hegde is in celebration mode and travelling solo. And she is sharing her best moments in Thailand's Phi Phi islands, off Phuket, on her social media handles and her pictures in a two-piece bikini are going viral. "Travelling solo, missing flights, boats and buses, making new friends and so many happy memories," one of her captions reads.

Talking about her deep-sea diving experience, Hegde described how amazing it was to go 100 feet deep into the ocean, in the day and at night.

"I have always loved water so much. I am just happy I took this solo trip, having all this time to myself have been really good for me! Not just the fact that I had a lot of fun but also I'm gonna have some great stories to tell when I'm old," she said.

The 'Kirik Party' star is eagerly looking forward to her projects in the new year. She is very much in the league of Rishab Shetty and Rakshit Shetty. Samyukta was seen with the core group from the coastal belt of the state that made it big in the industry.

## Samyukta Hegde is in celebration mode while travelling solo



## I was initially reluctant to play the mother: Manasi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In actress and debutante producer Manasi Parekh's recent release 'Kutch Express', she plays a teenage mother. However, she had inhibitions taking on the role at first. 'Kutch Express' also stars Ratna Pathak Shah, Viraf Patel and "Taare Zameen Par" fame Darsheel Safary. Manasi Parekh donned the producer's hat along with singer husband Parthiv Gohil. Manasi, plays a teenage mom to actor Darsheel Safary on camera for the first time. Talking about her role, she said: "I was initially reluctant to play the mother of a teenager in the film because I feared that I would be typecast. But in an age where a Vidya Balan plays a mother to an Amitabh Bachchan, I realised that the audience ultimately connects to the story and the performance and nothing else. So I immediately jumped onto the role & took it up as a challenge." Manasi talks about her role: "The movie definitely revolves around the mother son relationship but with a twist. In this case, the mother is learning new things from the son and is getting awakened because of the son. So that was a beautiful relation to convey."



## Salman loses cool, says it is Archana who has come as 'khairaat'

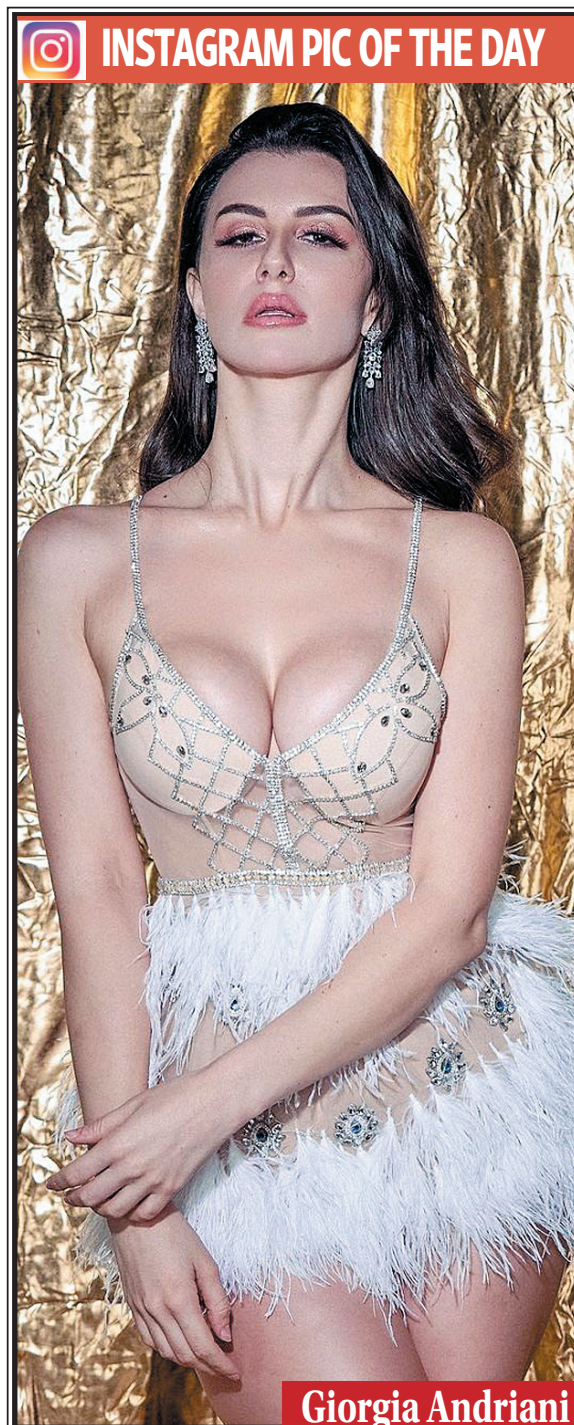
Team Absolute | Mumbai

In the upcoming episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', show's host Salman Khan will be seen addressing issues between Archana Gautam and MC Stan, who recently engaged in a war of words.

A promo shared by the channel on Instagram, shows Salman talking to Stan. He is heard saying: "Maa-Baap ke upar jaane ka matlab kya hai yaar (Why talk about parents?)."

He asks Stan to judge himself and tell him if he was right or wrong in the case. The rapper apologised. Salman then spoke to Archana and told: "Archana aapne kaha na khairaat me aya hai. Agar iss ghar me koi khairaat me aya hai na toh woh Archana hai (You said he has come as charity. If there is any-

one here that has come as charity, it is you.)" Not agreeing with Salman, Archana said: "Sir, main sahi hun." An angry Salman then said: "Agar yeh aapka attitude hai toh abhi ke abhi darwaza kholta hun, jaiyie aap." Archana and Stan got into a fight over house duties. She had said: "Kab tak janta ki khayraat mein rahenga yaha pe? Janta aese ghatiya logo ko pasand nahi karti. Iske saare fans ko main bolna chahti hun isne jharu nahi lagayi (For how long will you stay on people's charity? People don't like such terrible people. I want to tell all his fans that he did bot sweep.)" Stan replied: "Tere baap ka naukhar hai kya?" and Archana replied, "Mera baap Bigg Boss hai, uska toh naukhar hai na." After which, an ugly verbal exchange took place leading to both talking about their parents.



Giorgia Andriani