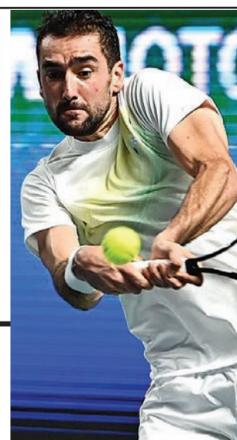


absolute india



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Rajouri killings: Muslims stand with Hindus, condemn Pak & terrorists; join protests



► After August 5, 2019 -- when the Centre announced its decision to abrogate J&K's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories -- terrorists have made multiple attempts to divide Hindus and Muslims by carrying out selective killings.

► In Kashmir terrorists carried out the target killings of Kashmiri Pandits and non-local Hindus. In the Jammu region they are trying to do the same.

► When the terrorists attacked Kashmiri Pandits and non-locals in Kashmir in 2021, local Muslims came out in large numbers to express solidarity with Hindus and Pandits. Muslims deplored the actions of the terrorists and castigated them for spilling the blood of innocents.

► In Jammu region they have once again been given a befitting reply as the people have understood that Pakistan and the terror bosses sitting across the Line of Control (LoC) want to pit two communities against each other to vitiate peace.

Srinagar | Agencies

Pakistan sponsored terrorists killing six persons, including two minors, at Dhangri village in Jammu's Rajouri district triggered outrage across Jammu and Kashmir.

On January 1, terrorists fired upon three houses of the members of Hindu community killing four people on the spot and injuring nine others. On January 2, two minors lost their lives when an IED planted by the terrorists in one of the houses attacked by them went off.

The gruesome murders left everyone shell shocked. Muslims condemned the tar-

get killings of the members of Hindu community and joined the anti-Pakistan protests in Doda, Kishtwar and Rajouri districts.

The shutdown call given by the Santan Dharam Sabha Kishtwar and other Hindu organisations against the cold-blooded murder of the civilians was supported by Majles-e-Shoura, an amalgam of various Muslim organisations in Kishtwar and Doda districts.

In response to the shutdown call, business establishments of both the communities remained closed in Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban and Rajouri districts.

Muslims, including Imam

Jamia Masjid Kishtwar, Farooq Ahmed Kichloo, univocally condemned the barbaric murders of innocent Hindus by the terrorists. They sent a clear message to Pakistan and the terrorists sponsored by it that people of J&K won't allow them to succeed in their design to create a wedge between the two communities by carrying out selective killings.

Muslim scholars in Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban districts reminded the terrorists that Islam is a religion of peace and it doesn't preach killing innocents. They demanded exemplary punishment for the murderers.

'IT'S A HUMAN ISSUE'

SC stays Uttarakhand HC's order for eviction of over 4k families

The petitioners have claimed that they are in possession of valid documents that clearly establish title and valid occupation. Also, the names of the local residents have been recorded in the municipal records in the house tax register and they are paying the house tax regularly. They said there are five government schools, one hospital, and two overhead water tanks in the area.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Uttarakhand High Court direction for eviction of over 4,000 families from the railway land in Haldwani in the state's Nainital district. A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Abhay S. Oka said: "There is a human angle to it", and added there cannot be uprooting of several thousand people in seven days.

The bench also noted that it may not be correct to say that paramilitary forces have to be deployed to remove people, who have been living there for many decades. The top court stayed the high court's direction for eviction of families within a week and that their houses be demolished. It observed that a large number of people cannot be uprooted by using force without examining their occupancy rights, and emphasised that alternate arrangements would have to be made before uprooting people.

The petitioners claimed they are poor people who have been lawful residents of Mohalla Nai Basti and Line No 17 &



18, Banbhulpura (Azad Nagar), Haldwani for more than 70 years.

The top court issued notice to the Uttarakhand government and the railways on a batch of petitions filed against the judgment passed by a division bench of the high court on December 20, 2022. During the hearing, the top court asked the railways to find a practical solution to the issue and stressed that many of the occupants have been residing there for decades, claiming rights on the basis of leases and auction purchases. After staying the high court direction, the top court scheduled the matter for further hearing on February 7, and asked the state government and

the railways to find a "practical solution".

CJI RECUSES FROM HEARING CONTEMPT PLEA AGAINST COMEDIAN KUNAL KAMRA

New Delhi: Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud on Thursday recused himself from hearing a clutch of petitions seeking initiation of contempt action against comedian Kunal Kamra for publishing tweets making undignified and derogatory comments against the top court.

As a bench headed by Chief Justice Chandrachud and Justice P.S. Narasimha took up the petitions seeking contempt action against Kamra, the Chief Justice said the matter will be placed before a bench, where he is not a part, because the comments (tweets) were made on the order, which he had passed.

QUAKE OF 5.98 MAGNITUDE HITS AFGHANISTAN, TREMORS FELT IN DELHI-NCR

New Delhi: Tremors were felt in Delhi and its surrounding areas after an earthquake of magnitude 5.9 struck Afghanistan on Thursday.

The National Center for Seismology, in a tweet, said that an earthquake of magnitude 5.9 occurred at 7.55 p.m. (IST) at latitude 36.39 degrees and longitude 70.66 degrees, at a depth of 200 km, at a point 79km south of Afghanistan's Fayzabad town.

This was the second time this week when tremors were felt in the national capital. On January 1, an earthquake of magnitude 3.8 hit in Haryana's Jhajjar and it also jolted Delhi-NCR at 1.19 a.m.

No work, no pay on strike days for govt employees, rules Kerala HC

Kochi | Agencies

The Kerala High Court has come down heavily on government employees going on strike and directed the government to see that no salary is paid on those days of the strikes called by them.

Its order came while disposing of a petition seeking its intervention to prevent the state government employees from participating in the nationwide strike called by the joint trade unions in November last year. The court pointed out that paying salaries on protest days of the employees is one which will act as an incentive to them to strike and the



state government should see that it takes strong action on this issue. The common practise followed by successive governments in the state is the day the government employees announce a strike, soon comes the directive that dies-non will be applicable to striking employees. But once the protests ends and with the passing of time, that order gets revoked and all get paid also. Now with the court coming down heavily on this, it remains to be seen, if the government will act.

AI conduct unprofessional, led to systemic failure, notes DGCA in urination case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's aviation regulator DGCA has said that the conduct of Air India in the case related to Mumbai businessman urinating on a female co-passenger on board an international AI flight on November 26 last year was unprofessional and has led to a systemic failure.

Observing that provisions related to handling of an unruly passenger onboard have not been complied with, it asked why enforcement action should not be taken against the airline executives concerned for dereliction of their regulatory obligations in the matter.

The aviation regulator has noted that the incident of passenger misbehaviour with a female co-passenger was reported to it only on January 4.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Ministry has taken a strong note of the

matter and has asked the airline to conduct a detailed internal probe into the matter and submit the report.

The DGCA on Thursday issued show

cause notices to senior Air India executives and pilots and cabin crew of the flight following receiving a report from the airline on the incident.

Another same incident

New Delhi: Another incident of a drunk air passenger allegedly urinating on a blanket of a female passenger on an Air India flight has come out.

The incident was reported on Air India flight 142 on the Paris-Delhi sector last month but penal action was not initiated, following an apology and mutual compromise. Sources said that the matter was reported to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport and subsequently, the male passenger was apprehended. The flight landed at nearly 9.40 a.m. at Delhi and the airport security was informed about the issue that the male passenger was under the influence of alcohol and he was not following the instructions of the cabin crew, and he later urinated on a blanket of an onboard woman passenger. Sources said that the woman passenger had initially made a written complaint, however, she refused to file a police case and the passenger was allowed to go by the airport security after he cleared immigration and customs formalities.

RAM MANDIR TO BE READY BY JAN 1, 2024: AMIT SHAH

Agartala: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday that Ram Mandir would be ready by January 1, 2024. The Minister said this while flagging off BJP's 8-day-long "Rath Yatra" in Tripura. He also claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would come to power after the Lok Sabha elections scheduled to be held next year with two-third majority.

Shah also urged the people to book their tickets to go to Ayodhya where Ram Mandir would be ready by January 1 next year. Referring to Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Shah said that the Prime Minister has promised HIRA (Highway, I-way, Railway and Airway) to Tripura, but people of the state also got "Manik" (ruby/gem).

Weeks before the announcement of Assembly elections in Tripura, the ruling BJP initiated the 'Rath Yatra' across Tripura.

If I can, I will cut hair of rapists, gangsters and parade them in public: Raj CM

Udaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday expressed his strong resentment against rapists and gangsters.

"If I can, I will cut the hair of rapists and gangsters and parade them in public at a market place. When such people feel ashamed, others will be scared to commit similar acts," Gehlot said. The Chief Minister said this after he was asked about the increasing cases of gang wars in Rajasthan at a programme here. On Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) cancelling its second grade teacher



recruitment exam due to paper leak in December last year, Gehlot said, "If question papers are leaked, we take prompt action. The government employees and officials involved in the paper leak have been dismissed. We took action immediately." The Chief Minister also said that similar cases of paper leaks have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Bihar as well, but no arrests were made there. "We reached to the bottom of the paper leak case to find out how it happened. Such gangs are active all over the country," Gehlot said.

Centre stays all tourism and eco-tourism activities at Sammed Shikharji

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre on Thursday stayed all tourism and eco-tourism activities at the Parasnath Hill in Jharkhand's Giridih district, where Sammed Shikharji, one of the holiest pilgrimage sites for Jains, is located.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has directed the Jharkhand government to strictly enforce the relevant provisions of the management plan for the Parasnath Wildlife Sanctuary that specifically prohibit damage to flora or fauna; coming with pets; playing loud music or use of loudspeakers; defiling religious and

cultural significance such as sacred monuments, lakes, rocks, caves, and shrines; sale of liquor, drugs, and other intoxicants etc.; and unauthorised camping and trekking, among others. The move came after the ministry over the last few days received several representations from different organisations representing the Jain Samaj about the issues related to certain activities taking place in the Parasnath Wildlife Sanctuary, which adversely affected the sentiments of the followers of Jainism. The grievances included faulty implementation of the provisions of the notification declaring Parasnath Wildlife Sanctuary as an Eco Sensitive Zone by the Jharkhand government.

124 INT'L TRAVELERS TEST COVID POSITIVE, 11 TYPES OF VARIANTS FOUND IN INDIA

Avinash Prabhakar | New Delhi

After the Union Health Ministry made it mandatory for foreign arrivals to undergo RT-PCR tests upon their arrival in the country, a total of 124 international passengers have been found to be Covid-19 positive, a source said on Thursday, adding that 11 types of variants have been found so far in India.

The Health Ministry source said that a total of 19,227 international passengers have been screened across all ports in the country from December 24, 2022 to January 3.

Of the 124 positive samples, genome sequencing results of 40 were received in



which the XBB variant, including XBB.1, was found in 14 samples. The other XBB variants are XBB.2, XBB.3, XBB.4, XBB.5.

The BF.7.4.1 variant has been found in one sample so far, the source said.

The source however, said none of the 11 variants seem to causing much problem as of now and no visible impact have been observed so far.

The other variant found in the country include BA.5, BQ.1.1 and BQ.1.122, BQ.1.1.5, CH.1.1, CH.1.1.1, BF.7.4.1 and BB.3.A. However, the source said that no visible impact have been observed of these variants in the country so far.

China under-representing true impact of Covid: WHO

Geneva: The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that China is "under-representing the true impact" of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, especially the exact number of deaths.

In a statement on Wednesday, Michael Ryan, Executive Director of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, said: "We believe that definition (of a Covid death) is too narrow," the BBC reported. China's figures "under-represent the true impact of the disease in terms of hospital admissions, in terms of ICU admissions, and particularly in terms of deaths", he added. Amidst the ongoing outbreak, China has stopped publishing the single-day tallies for Covid-19 cases and deaths.



DELHI HORROR: COURT EXTENDS POLICE REMAND OF 5 ACCUSED BY 4 DAYS

Delhi: Man flashes private part at woman in DTC bus

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Thursday extended the police remand of the five accused -- involved in the death of a 20-year-old woman in a tragic accident that took place in the early hours of January 1, by four days, officials said.

The woman, Anjali, died a painful death after her scooter was hit by a car following which she got stuck beneath the vehicle that went on to drag her for around 12 km.

The police had earlier arrested five persons, who were in the car when the incident took place. They have been identified as Deepak Khanna, Amit Khanna, Krishan, Mitthu and Manoj Mittal.

The court observed that there are two more accused persons involved and it requires further investigation.

Appearing for accused Manoj Mittal, advocate Ganendra Kumar said that he has not applied for any bail till now for him.

Kumar objected police's demand



to extend the police custody for five days as the court had already granted them earlier.

"There is no further requirement for police custody," he said. Amit (25) works with SBI Cards in

Uttam Nagar, Krishan (27) works at the Spanish Culture Centre, Mitthu (26) is a hairdresser at Naraina, while Manoj Mittal (27) is a ration dealer in Sultanpuri who is also a BJP worker.

They were brought to the court amid high security to avoid any untoward incident.

The trial court on January 2 sent all accused to a three-day police remand, which ended on Thursday.

The incident took place on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday after the victim's scooter was hit by the car and her clothes had gotten entangled in one of the wheels, which led to her being dragged.

A tight security was maintained as, in November last year, a police van carrying Aaftab Amin Poonawala, who is accused of the ghastly murder of his live-in partner Shradha Walkar in Delhi's Mehrauli area, was attacked by a group of men armed with swords outside the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) in Rohini when he was being taken back to Tihar jail after a polygraph test.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a shocking incident, a man allegedly flashed his private part at a woman passenger inside a Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus before being caught by Sandeep Chhikhara, the marshal on the bus.

A video has gone viral on social media in which the accused can be seen crying after being caught.

In the clip, the marshal could be heard saying that he has informed the police about the incident and that appropriate action will be taken against the accused.

The man, who has been identified as Zakir, a native of Bihar, lives in North-East Delhi's Khajuri area.

After the video went viral, the police contacted the victim, who refused to file any complaint.

"A video was being circulated on social media on Tuesday regarding an incident in a DTC bus. As the same had come to the notice of North Rohini police station, an inquiry was initiated into the matter and the same was assigned to a woman sub-inspector. The victim was contacted to record her statement or file a complaint in this regard," said a senior police officer.



"However, she refused to comment on the alleged incident. In future, if any complaint is received with respect to the alleged incident, legal action will be taken under the appropriate sections of law," the officer said.

3 more MLAs quit Meghalaya

Assembly, party, likely to join NPP

Shillong | Agencies

Weeks before the announcement of Assembly elections, shifting of loyalty of MLAs continued in Meghalaya with three more legislators of local parties on Thursday quitting the Assembly, and their parties.

All three - Hamlet Dohling (Myliem), Samlin Malngiang (Sohiong), and Jason Sawkmie (Umsning) - are likely to join the ruling National People's Party (NPP) soon. While Dohling and Sawkmie belonged to the People's Democratic Front, Malngiang belonged to the Hill State People's Democratic Party. In another development, NPP MLA from Phulbari, S.G Esmatur



Mominin, along with former MLA Robinus Syngkon, joined the Trinamool Congress during a joining-cum-poll campaign launch ceremony of the party here on Thursday.

Syngkon is also a sitting member of the District Council in Jaintia Hills. Mominin on Wednesday resigned from the house.

So far, eleven Meghalaya MLAs since December last

year have resigned from the house and their respective parties and joined different parties. On December 14, Independent MLA Samuel Sangma and three resigned legislators - Benedict Marak and Ferlin C.A. Sangma of the NPP and H.M. Shangpliang of the Trinamool - joined the BJP in New Delhi in presence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and BJP spokesman Sambit Patra.

EXPERTS VISITING JOSHIMATH AS IT FACES INCREASING RISK OF LANDSLIDES

Team Absolute | Joshimath

The holy town of Joshimath in Uttarakhand is facing an increasing risk of landslides, with big cracks appearing in the houses and streets. Due to the critical situation, Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Sinha is visiting the city on Thursday, along with a team of experts.

The team of scientists and experts will study all the aspects of the landslides in the city for two days, and engage with the locals to know more about the problem.

The Uttarakhand BJP unit has also formed a 14-member committee to assess the landslides and the damage.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said: "I will visit Joshimath in a few days. All possible steps will be taken to handle the situation. I have asked the Municipal Corporation Chairman Shailendra Pawar to monitor the situation."

Pawar said that big cracks have appeared in the houses due to leakage of water from inside the land in Marwadi ward of the city.

He added that the residents have been moving to safer places after the landslides. The weather and the constant danger of the houses collapsing have become a major issue in the city.

Nine wards of the city have been extensively



affected by the landslides. The cracks on the walls and floors of the houses are widening by the day, which has alarmed the residents.

Pawar said that more than 3000 people from 576 houses in the city had been affected by the landslides and the houses had been ruined by the increasing cracks.

He apprised that all the houses were being surveyed by the municipality. Protests were held on the Badrinath Highway on Thursday morning to save Joshimath, which led to a traffic jam. Earlier, a team of experts had submitted their report to the government after assessing the situation with

increasing landslides, and deemed the city's drainage system to be its cause.

The present situation seems to be getting worse, with increasing water leakage due to the widening of the cracks.

The team will have experts from the Disaster Management Department, IIT Roorkee, scientists from Wadia Institute, along with other research institutes.

Content of the old report: The team sent to Joshimath by the state government in August last year submitted its report in September, 2022.

The report stated that such landslides occurred in the absence of a proper drainage system, which led to soil flowing along with the ground water. In the report, suggestions were given to make proper arrangements for drainage in the city, to take steps to prevent erosion from the Alakananda river, to channelise and strengthen drains, among others.

Cracks have appeared in more than 550 houses, which has displaced the locals. The government has sought suggestions from the local people regarding the displacement.

District Magistrate Chamoli, Himanshu Khurana has been constantly sending reports to the government in this matter, on the basis of which the outline of the upcoming work is being decided.

Nitish Kumar hints to start country-wide yatra to unite Oppn for 2024 LS polls

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday hinted to start a country-wide yatra after the budget session of Bihar Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) this year to unite Opposition parties for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Interacting with mediapersons on day one of his 'Samadhan Yatra' in Garua Badi village in West Champaran, he said: "We have started the Samadhan Yatra to review the development programmes of the state government. I want to assess the situation. If there are any issues in implementation of the development programmes, they will be resolved."

On RJD vice president Shivanand Tiwari's suggestion to postpone Samadhan Yatra due to the extremely cold weather in the state, Nitish Kumar said chilly weather will not affect the Yatra as he had



done many yatras when he was Union Minister.

"At present, I am focusing on Samadhan Yatra to review the development programmes of the

state government. Let's finish this Yatra first and then I will think of going for the Yatra of the country after the budget session," the chief minister said.

Man carrying mother's body on shoulder in Bengal's Jalpaiguri shocks people

Kolkata | Agencies

Commuters on the road adjacent to the Jalpaiguri Medical College & Hospital in the northern part of West Bengal were shocked on Thursday afternoon when they saw a man carrying the body of his deceased mother on his shoulder, with his aged father helping him.

Enquiries revealed that the helpless son was forced to carry his mother's body back home from the hospital after the hospital ambulance drivers refused to drive him back unless he paid Rs 3,000.

The scene seemed to be a rerun of the incident in August 2016 when Dana Majhi, a tribal in Odisha, had to walk nearly 10 kilometres carrying the body of his deceased wife on his shoulder with his little daughter walking beside him. The mortuary



van drivers at the hospital where his wife was under treatment for tuberculosis denied assistance to him. In the Jalpaiguri incident, Laxmirani Dewan (71), a resident

of Nagardangi area, was admitted with various age-related ailments to Jalpaiguri Medical College & Hospital. She died on Thursday and her body was released by the

hospital authorities.

When the ambulance drivers refused to carry the body of the deceased back home without a hefty payment, her son Ramprasad Dewan decided to carry his mother's body on his shoulder and walk back all the way to their home.

"I requested the ambulance drivers for a ride back. They demanded Rs 3,000 for that. I pleaded with them again and again to settle at a lower rate. But they refused. Hence, I decided to walk back carrying my mother's body on my shoulder," he said.

However, Dewan was not that unlucky like Dana Majhi who had to walk in Odisha for 10 kilometres carrying the body of his wife on his shoulder. After Dewan had gone some distance from the hospital, an ambulance arranged by a local voluntary organization reached the place and drove them to their home.

Bihar Cong MLA gets one-year jail term in poll violation case

Patna | Agencies

A special MP-MLA court of Bhagalpur has given one-year imprisonment to Congress Legislative Party leader and MLA Ajit Sharma.

The special court judge Vivek Kumar Singh on Wednesday found him guilty along with six of his associates for creating obstructions during the polling of 2020 Assembly election. The court, however, gave provisional bail to all of them immediately.

Ajit Sharma, who was the sitting MLA and then candidate of the Congress along with six of his associates, named Mohammad Riyajullah Ansari, Mohammad Safakatullah, Mohammad Niyajullah alias Azad, Mohammad Manjanuddin alias Chunna, Mohammad Niyajuddin and Mohammad Irfan Khan alias Sittu, obstructed the proceedings of election proce-



dures and stopped the roaming voting vehicle in Bhikhanpur locality under Bhagalpur city constituency on November 3, 2020.

Following that incident, the duty magistrate Valmiki Kumar lodged an FIR against Ajit Sharma and his aides.

The special court pronounced them a 15-day jail term under the IPC section 341 and one-year imprisonment under IPC section 353. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on each. In case they become defaulters, they have to pay Rs 3,000 extra as a fine.

10 'green stations' of Mumbai Metro-7 win top Platinum Rating of IGBC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As many as 10 'green stations' on the 16-km long Mumbai Metro Line 7 operating from Dahisar East-Andheri East, have bagged the coveted top ranking of Platinum Rating awarded by the IGBC, a top official of Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, said here on Thursday.

The elevated stations are: Ovaripada, Rashtriya Udyan, Devipada, Magathane, Poisar, Akurli, Kurar, Dindoshi and Jogeshwari E. and Aarey, which were evaluated by the Indian Green Building Council's (IGBC) Green Mass Rapid Transport System Rating (GMRTSR) Program.

Besides these 10 stations, the MMRDA has sought evaluation for other stations which is in progress and in future all stations of upcoming Metro lines shall be made eligible for the IGBC's topmost rankings, said MMRDA Commissioner S.V.R. Srinivas.

"The certification by IGBC empha-



sizes the compliance by design to sustainability measures such as water efficiency, energy efficiency, passenger comfort, multimodal integration of the Metro System, etc.," said Srinivas.

The evaluation is categorised by IGBC into 6 types which include - Site Selection & Planning, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Material Conservation, Indoor Environment & Comfort, and Innovation in Design & Construction, he added.

The MMRDA has incorporated vari-

ous measures for universal access of Metro-7 at all 10 stations, with wide access doors, handrails, and control buttons at convenient heights for wheelchair-bound commuters, specially designed wide Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) gates, ramps to maintain floor level uniformity, dedicated space inside the train close to entry/exit gates, and low-height ticket counters, and a series of other 'green' initiatives.

The implementation of Indian Road Congress Code IRC: SP:55-2001 has been planned with a sequence of activities related to the planning of traffic diversion during construction including reconnaissance, traffic survey, data analysis, preparation of traffic diversion scheme, consultation with stakeholders, etc.

"The MMRDA is focusing on sustainability and eco-friendly development. We are performing sustainable practices and solutions as per the green building initiative of the government's goal of the 'Net Zero initiative by 2070'," said Srinivas.

GURUGRAM: INTERSTATE HOUSE THIEVES' RACKET BUSTED, 4 HELD

Gurugram | Agencies

Gurugram Police has busted an interstate gang of house thieves and arrested four of its members from the city.

The police have also recovered Rs 4.45 lakh, gold and silver jewellery, one car and instruments used in the crime from their possession.

The gang has committed 19 thefts in Gurugram, Panipat, Jhajjar, Delhi and Sonapat.

In connection with the incident, a complaint of house theft was received on December 22.

Giving this information on Thursday, Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime), informed that the arrested accused have been identified as Rakesh, Priyanshu alias Ansh, Prakash Soni and Nazmula.

Three of the accused were arrested from JJ Colony in Bawana of Delhi while the fourth accused Priyanshu



was arrested from Uttar Pradesh.

During interrogation, it was found that the accused used to do a recon and usually target locked houses in different areas. The accused even target the locked houses of police officials residing in the Panipat district Police Line.

"There are about 19 cases registered against the culprits in four districts of Haryana and Delhi. Rakesh, Priyanshu and Prakash are on police remand for further questioning while Nazmula has been sent to jail," Sangwan said.



WINTER CHILL CONTINUES, SEVERAL DISTRICTS TO SEE MODERATE TO DENSE FOG, SAYS IMD

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The India Meteorological Department on Thursday issued an 'orange alert' for moderate to dense fog in six divisions and 15 districts in Madhya Pradesh.

The IMD also said two districts in the state experienced cold wave during the day, while four districts witnessed 'severe cold' and 12 districts, including capital Bhopal and commercial hub Indore, seeing 'cold day'.

"Datia and Chhatrapur saw a cold wave, while Dhar, Khandwa, Chhindwara and Datia experienced severe cold day on Thursday. Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Chhatrapur, Narsinghpur, Seoni, Umaria, Rewa, Ujjain and Ratlam had a cold day," IMD Bhopal duty officer HS Pandey said.

Explaining further, he said 'cold day' is one when the minimum temperature drops to 10 degrees Celsius or below and the normal maximum temperature dips by 4.5 degrees Celsius or below.

"A severe cold day is when the normal maximum temperature drops by 6.5 degrees Celsius or below," he added. The spell of cold in the state since Sunday is likely to weaken after three days since there was cloud



cover in some parts, and Chhindwara and Balaghat's Waraseoni and Malajkhand reporting light showers on Thursday, he said.

"The chill underway at present is due to northerly winds blowing in MP after snowfall in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir. The orange alert issued is for fog like-

ly to engulf Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Chambal, Rewa and Sagar divisions on Friday morning," the official said.

He said such foggy weather is expected to prevail over Indore, Jabalpur, Anuppur, Katni, Narsinghpur, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat, Neemuch, Khandwa, Jhabua, Dhar, Ratlam and Burhanpur

districts till Friday morning.

Cold waves are expected in Gwalior, Chhatrapur and Datia, with the last two districts also likely to have frost conditions, he said.

The lowest minimum temperature in Madhya Pradesh of 2.8 degrees Celsius was recorded at Nowgaon in Chhatrapur district, the IMD said.

700 Pigs Culled In Madhya Pradesh Amid African Swine Flu Scare

Team Absolute | Damoh

The administration has culled over 700 pigs amid the African Swine Flu scare in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district in the last two days, a veterinary doctor said.

According to reports, deaths of animals were reported continuously for the last fortnight in the rural areas of the district. The first case of the sudden death of an animal came to light in the Hata block of the district. Later, hundreds of animals which include cows, bulls and pigs were found dead within a week in the Banawar area of the district.

After that, the locals



informed the matter to Animal Husbandry Department and when the department investigated the matter, it turned out to be a case of African Swine Flu. Veterinarian Dr Somil Rai said, "After the instructions of the district administration, sampling of sick pigs was done and African Swine Flu was detected in the Hata and Banawar area of the district. The flu has been completely

spread in the area as a result of which pigs are being killed in the area." "The pigs are killed on a large scale and the animal husbandry department is burying them with the help of JCB. More than 700 pigs have been killed and buried in the last two days," Dr Rai added. On the other hand, Damoh collector S Krishna Chaitanya said, "After confirmation of African Swine Flu, an advisory has been issued. Special precautions are being taken in the Hata and Banawar areas of the district. Pigs are being killed continuously. Besides, if any swineherd is found heedless in this work then legal action will be taken against him."

A grand statue of Rani Padmavati will be built on Manuabhan Tekri

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today performed Bhoomi Pujan at Manuabhan Tekri in Bhopal for

installation of statue of Rani Padmavati that depicts courage and valor of Indian history. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan had made this announcement in the conference of Rajput Samaj at Chief Minister's residence today and immediately implemented it and performed Bhoomi Pujan. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that the statue will become an important medium in making the new generation aware and inspired by the contribution of Rani Padmavati. Co-operative Minister Dr. Arvind Singh Bhadoria, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion Minister Shri Rajvardhan Singh Dattigaon, Transport and Revenue Minister Shri Govind Singh Rajput, Culture Minister Sushri Usha Thakur, Bhopal MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, MLA Shri Rameshwar Sharma participated in Bhoomi Pujan. Officers and members of Rajput society were present along with Shri Rampal Singh and public representatives.

POLICE OFFICER SEXUALLY ASSAULTS TO-BE-WIFE, REFUSES TO MARRY

Gwalior: A CISF official identified as Hitendra Meena has been charged for repeatedly sexually assaulting his to-be-wife after they got engaged. Later, it was noted as per the victim's complaint that the man refused to marry the woman and broke the engagement with her. On Thursday, the fiancée approached the police and filed a case against the Assistant-Sub-Inspector of the Central Industrial Security Force. Hitendra Meena, a resident of Sheopur, got engaged according to the Hindu custom in presence of the concerned family members. After getting engaged, reportedly, the accused called his partner to hotels for satisfying his sexual desires and molested the victim against her will. However, after sexually exploiting the woman on the pretext of marriage, Meena refused to marry her. After being betrayed, the victim resorted to seeking legal help in the matter and brought the matter to the notice of the police. Following the victim's complaint, the police registered a rape case against the accused Hitendra Meena, and started investigating the case.



MEDICAL STUDENT DIES AFTER BEING DRAGGED BY TRUCK IN JABALPUR, BATCHMATE CRITICAL

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A third-year medical student was killed after being dragged for around 100 meters by an unknown truck in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur.

The body was recovered late on Wednesday. The victim was a pillion rider on a bike, which was being driven by her batchmate, who survived with multiple injuries.

The deceased was identified as Rubi Thakur, a resident of Shahdol district. She was pursuing her MBBS degree from Netaji Subhas Chandra Medical College, Jabalpur, the oldest government-run medical college in Madhya Pradesh.

Sources said that Rubi and her male batchmate, Saurav Ojha, had gone to Bhedaghat, a waterfall area located around 35 km from Jabalpur district headquarters. While they were heading back towards Jabalpur, they were hit by a speeding truck.

Saurav Ojha, who is also pursuing his MBBS course

from the same college, hails from Rewa district. He was admitted to a hospital in Jabalpur, and his condition was said to be critical.

Sources said that due to the impact, Saurav fell around 20 meters away, while Rubi's clothes got entangled with the truck and was dragged for around 100 meters. Her body was found crushed on the road.

Local police rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. College staff and family members were also informed about the incident. "Girl's body was mutilated and has been sent for autopsy. Boy has been admitted to a government hospital. It was found that a heavy-loaded truck hit them from behind. We are locating the suspected road," said a police official.

The incident occurred days after a woman was dragged under a car for several kilometers and her mutilated body was recovered on a road in New Delhi.

Sanitation workers will get Rs 5 lakh on death in accident: Bhupendra Singh

Bhopal : Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has informed that in case of death of sanitation workers working on regular pay scales in urban bodies in an accident, now their families will get an insurance amount of Rs. 5 lakh. Currently they get 2 lakh rupees.

It may be noted that the sanitation workers employed in regular pay scale in urban bodies at present get an insurance



Singh has instructed the officials to take necessary action in this regard.

amount of Rs. one lakh on normal death and Rs. 2 lakh on accidental death.

Minister Singh has told that the officers and employees appointed in the urban bodies after January 1, 2005 will get the benefits of death-cum-retirement gratuity under the National Pension Scheme, like government officials.

'SET' TO BE HELD BEFORE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR EXAM

Team Absolute | Indore

With finalising the date of the state eligibility test (SET) on June 4, the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC) has signalled that the test will be held ahead of the assistant professor recruitment exam.

An official source stated the assistant professor exam will tentatively be held in July. Candidates, who will be appearing for SET, had already requested to the MPPSC not only to hold SET before the assistant professor exam but also declare the results so that they can also become eligible for the latter exam.

On the request of the Department of Higher Education, MPPSC has already started the application process for filling 1,669 posts of assistant professor in 36 subjects.

Online applications have been called till May and it is believed that the exam will be conducted in July.

The NET or SET is mandatory for assistant professor recruitment. But candidates in the state are at a disadvantage as SET was not held for the last five years.

The date and format of the exam was decided in a steering committee meet-



ing on Wednesday. MPPSC chairman, Dr Rajesh Lal Mehra, member Chandrashekhar Raikwar, steering committee chairman, Dr Krishnakant Sharma, PSC secretary, Prabal Sipaha, DAVV vice-chancellor, prof Renu Jain, and others were present at the meeting.

The committee decided that SET will consist of two papers which will be held in offline mode. There will be no negative marking in any of the papers.

MPPSC media coordinator Ravindra Panchbhai said that SET and the assistant professor exam will be organised this year itself. "As of now, only the exam

date of the SET has been decided. The assistant professor exam dates will be decided later on," he added.

MPPSC declared the results of Assistant District Public Prosecution Officer (ADPO) exam-2021 on Wednesday. In this, the selected candidates will have to go through the interview in the next phase.

Final selection list will be issued on the basis of marks obtained by candidates in written test and interview.

Written examination was conducted on December 18 in Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior and Jabalpur for filling 256 posts.

MP to bring in its public records act

AFTER FREQUENT CASES OF MISSING DOCUMENTS FROM GOVT DEPTS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Concerned over the frequent cases of files and documents being vanishing from government departments, Madhya Pradesh State Information Commissioner Rahul Singh has directed the State's General Administration Department (GAD) to initiate the legislation of the Public Records Act.

Singh also instructed the GAD to devise guidelines according to the Centre's Public Records Act, 1993 to regulate the management of documents and have strict provisions, including 5 years' imprisonment and fine of Rs 10,000 against guilty officers accountable for the missing the records until the Public Records Act is enacted in the state.

Singh pointed out that the absence of any legal framework for the management and administration of the records is the reason behind the officers being callous and apathetic towards cases of loss, mismanagement and illegal destruction of records in government offices. Singh's order has exposed the stark reality behind callous approach of officers towards missing documents and plight of common man. The order warns that cases of vanishing and loss



of records should not be dealt with in a superficial manner at the administrative level.

Singh said the loss of documents may have disastrous impact at times, jeopardising the lives and careers of affected individuals. The SIC order pointed out that the State Information Commission receives complaints, including missing land records, files and documents in cases of wrongful or irregular appointments, loss of documents in enquiry reports and missing documents in cases of corruption, loss of documents that can seriously affect

individuals or organisations and also disappearance of documents in administrative actions against government officials.

Interestingly, Singh said there have been cases where these documents made reappearance after the concerned authorities were ordered by the Information Commission to file an official police report.

Singh, in his order, said the vanishing of public records not only affects common citizens but, at times, puts government officers and employees at the receiving end. When the service or the enquiry reports are misplaced, officials face a lot of hardship during the service period and at the time of retirement.

NO ACCOUNTABILITY REGARDING MISSING DOCUMENTS

Singh passed the order while hearing an appeal related to the missing caste certificate from the government record. Not only the public records and documents were lost, but also the RTI application that was filed was also reported missing. What surprises Singh that no accountability has been fixed for the past three years in the matter. Singh levied a penalty of Rs 58,000 against three Sub-Divisional Magistrates and also instructed Satna District Collector to initiate inquiry into missing records.

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DEMAND NOTICE
 (under Rule 3 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

SUBSTITUTED SERVICE OF NOTICE U/s.13 (2) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the borrowers as mentioned below that since they have defaulted in repayment of the Credit facility availed by them from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited (ABHFL), their loan accounts have been classified as Non-Performing Assets in the books of the Company as per RBI guidelines thereto. Thereafter, ABHFL has issued demand notices under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) on the last known addresses of the said borrowers thereby calling upon and demanding from them to repay the entire outstanding amount together with further interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. as stated in the said demand notices. However, the demand notice is also being served by way of publication, as per Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (SARFAESI Rules):

S. No.	Name and Address Borrower / Co-Borrower and Guarantor / Co-Guarantor / Loan A/C No.	NPA Date	Date of Demand Notice	Amount due as per Demand Notice / as on Date
1	1) Chandra Mohan Thakur, 2) Radhika Rani Thakur, Both residing at: Shop Cum Residential House No. 27, On Mother Plot No. 27-B, at Subhash Colony, Semra Kalan Nagar Nigam Ward No. 67, Near Subhash Colony Water Tank, Tehsil-Huzur, District-Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462023. 3) Chandra Mohan Thakur, 4) Radhika Rani Thakur, Both residing at: Flat No. 14, Plot No. E-7/140, Ashoka Apartment, Lala Lalpat Rai Society, Arera Colony, R.S. Nagar, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462016. 5) Chandra Mohan Thakur, C/o Shiv Mansion Steel Furniture, 42, Near Bus Stop, Govindpura, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462023. 6) Radhika Rani Thakur C/o Chetak Enterprises, Shop-114, Bhawani Dham Phase-2, Narela Shankar, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462041. 7) Chandra Mohan Thakur, 8) Radhika Rani Thakur, Both residing at: H.No. 71, Bhawanidham Phase-2, Ayodhya Nagar, Ayodhya Bypass, Huzur, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462041. Loan Account Nos. LNBHOLAP-10210105216 & LNBHOLAP-10210105217	02.12.2022	30.12.2022	Rs. 26,61,798.19/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lac Sixty One Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety Eight And Nineteen Paise Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.12.2022
2	1) Rakesh Kushwah, 2) Shradha Kushwah, Flat No. 18/6, Ground Floor, Old Subhash Nagar, MPBH Colony, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462001. 3) Shradha Kushwah, Central Jail Road Jail Colony, Bypass Road, Bhopal G.P.O. Huzur, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462001. 4) Rakesh Kushwah, I-2-51, Jai Colony, Gandhiji Nagar Road, New Central Jail, Karond, Huzur, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462038. Loan Account Nos. LNBHOLHL-05180007227, LNBHOLHL-06180008198 & LNBHOLHL-05180006903	09-12-2022	30.12.2022 (Old notice dated 11-01-2020 withdrawn. This publication to be treated as effective notice)	Rs. 27,32,411.00/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lac Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred Eleven Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.12.2022
3	1) Khuman Singh, 2) Anita Bai, Both residing at: Part of KH. No. 3502/New 3507/1, Mm 04 Vikas Khand Phanda, Tehsil Huzur Dist. Bhopal M.P., Plot No. 05 & 06 Gram Nayapura Ph. No. 28, Near Victoria College, Bhopal, M.P. 462042. 3) Khuman Singh, Mundra Pliamber Nagore Nateran, Vidisha M.P. 464001. 4) Anita Bai, Mundra Pliamber Nagore Nateran, Vidisha M.P. 464001. Loan Account No. LNBHOLHL-10210105855 & LNBHOLHL-10210105856	02.12.2022	30.12.2022	Rs. 21,25,191/- (Rupees Twenty One Lac Twenty Five Thousand One Hundred Ninety One Only) by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.12.2022.
Description of Immovable property / properties mortgaged: All that piece and parcel of one residential house on part of Plot No. 27-b, Comprising of plot area 750 Sq.ft. or 69.70 Sq.mtr. Ground floor three shop constructed area 570 Sq.ft. or 52.97 Sq.mtr. & First Floor Residential Constructed Area 750 Sq.ft. or 69.70 Sq.mtr. & Second Floor Residential Constructed Area 450 Sq.ft. or 41.82 Sq.mtr. Being part of land Revenue Survey No. 233, 237, 240, 242, 243, at Subhash Colony, Sector-C, Village Semra Kalan, New Ward No. 70 (Old Ward No. 67) Tehsil: Huzur, District: Bhopal (M.P.), Which is Bounded As Under: North: Remaining Part of House No. 27-B (No. 27-A, Mr. Vikram Singh Dhakadi), South: Road, East: Road, West: Shop Then Plot.				
Description of Immovable property / properties mortgaged: All that piece and parcel of a residential Plot No. 5 & 6, part of Old Khasra No. 3502, New Khasra No. 3507/1, situated at Vineet Grah Nirman Sahkari Samiti Maryadit Village Nayapura Kolor Road Ward No. 83, Teh. Huzur District Bhopal, total area of Land 602 Sq. Ft., and total area of both lands 1204 Sq. Ft., i.e., Plot Is 111.89 Sq. Mtr., and bounded as: North: Colony Road, South: Nala, East: Plot No. 07, West: Plot No. 04.				
We hereby call upon the borrower stated herein to pay us within 60 days from the date of this notice, the outstanding amount (s) together with further interest thereon plus cost, charges, expenses, etc. thereto failing which we shall be at liberty to enforce the security interest including but not limited to taking possession of and selling the secured asset entirely at your risk as to the cost and consequences. Please note that as per section 13(13) of the SARFAESI Act, all of you are prohibited from transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise, the aforesaid secured assets without prior written consent of the Company. Any contravention of the said section by you shall invoke the penal provisions as laid down under section 29 of the SARFAESI Act and / or any other legal provision in this regard. Please note that as per sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, if the dues of ABHFL together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by ABHFL are tendered to ABHFL at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured asset shall not be sold or transferred by ABHFL, and no further step shall be taken by ABHFL or transfer or sale of that secured asset.				
Date: 06.01.2023 Place: Bhopal				Sd/- Authorised Officer (Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited)



EDITOR'S SPECS

PATCH UP BETWEEN KERALA GUV, CM?

All it took was a phone call from Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to Governor Arif Mohammed Khan for the ice to melt and the latest is that the customary Governor's address to this year's first Assembly session will take place. The phone conversation happened on Tuesday. At the Wednesday's routine weekly cabinet meeting, Vijayan informed his colleagues that the decision to prorogue the Assembly session which ended on December 13, 2022 will have to be made. The decision not to prorogue was taken last month in order to keep out the Governor from reading his address as since August last year both Khan and Vijayan have been taking potshots at one another. There were quite a few occasions when the spat took dangerous turns. A never before situation arose in the state when Vijayan and his cabinet colleagues did not attend the customary Christmas eve get-together called by the Governor, and Vijayan when he hosted such a get-together did not invite Khan either. Since then the relationship between the two has worsened. However, the ice appears to have melted on Tuesday when Vijayan spoke to Khan to give the concurrence for the swearing-in of Saji Cherian, who had to quit the cabinet in July last year over a speech controversy. After the two spoke, the first in a several months, Khan immediately gave his nod for the swearing-in of Cherian which will take place at the Raj Bhavan later Wednesday. According to sources, there will be a special cabinet meeting held shortly and the decision to ask the Governor to call a fresh session of the Assembly, thereby paving the way for Khan's address to the Assembly which should happen at the end of this month. The state chief secretary is now working on the Governor's address.

Bridging India's edible oil gap with mustard oil

Vivek Puri



India has always been a predominantly agricultural economy and even today, around 70 per cent of the population is engaged either directly or indirectly in agriculture. However, in spite of being the world's largest producer of millets and the second largest producer of wheat and rice, India faces a chronic shortage of edible oil and is compelled to bridge the demand-supply gap through imports. Just a couple of decades ago, India's edible oil imports were around 4 million tonnes a year. This figure has grown exponentially over the decades and now stands at 14.03 million tonnes (oil year ending October 31, 2022). This adds up to an import bill of INR 1.57 lakh crore, which represents an enormous depletion of our precious foreign exchange reserves.

This dependence on imports additionally leads to the onset of severe inflation as demonstrated by recent global shortages. Which caused edible oil prices to become almost unaffordable for common people. The demand-supply gap for edible oils is significantly wide and, therefore, difficult to bridge. The annual demand for edible oils in India is around 250 lakh tonnes, while domestic production is much lower - barely 111.6 lakh tonnes per annum, according to data published by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. This creates a gap that varies from 55 to 60 per cent. It is encouraging to note that the Government of India is proactively formulating policies and adopting measures aimed at rectifying this imbalance. The National Food Security Mission has outlined several action points aimed at increasing production and productivity of oilseed crops.

These include increasing the area under cultivation; developing improved high-yielding varieties of oilseeds; support for agri inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides; mechanisation of key farming operations to improve productivity; and providing support to farmers for post-harvest management of oilseed crops. On a parallel track, the National Mission on Oilseed and Palm Oil (NMOOP) is also striving to boost the supply side for oilseeds. It is very important for mustard to be promoted within the ambit of the diverse measures being initiated by the Government.

After all, mustard is an ancient Indian oilseed and an integral part of our country's agricultural and culinary heritage. It is a

remunerative and profitable cash crop that contributes to farmers' incomes. The oil extracted from mustard oilseeds is proven to be healthy from a nutritional perspective; it is also widely used in natural home remedies, skincare, hair care, Ayurveda formulations and body massage. In order to make any meaningful headway, it is essential for mustard oil to be promoted in a structured manner. To do so, one of the key measures that we have consistently advocated for is the establishment of a mustard oil promotion board to implement the policy decisions taken by the Government, and also to look after the interests of all stakeholders - farmers, manufacturers, marketers and consumers.

Such an institution could also be instrumental in promoting Indian mustard oil across the globe in line with similar activities undertaken quite successfully by bodies such as the Malaysian Palm Oil Board, American Soybean Association and the International Olive Council. One of the key challenges in bridging the demand-supply gap vis-a-vis edible oils is to find ways to leverage technology, research, scientific innovation and grassroots-level interventions to increase the yield of the mustard crop and bring productivity on a par with Western farming standards - in terms of both yield and quality. A possible solution being considered is the introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) Mustard.

However, there is a discernible difference of opinion among agricultural scientists, ecologists, researchers and policy makers. Until such differences are resolved, it is better in the larger public interest to keep GM Mustard in abeyance. In fact, we too share these concerns. As manufacturers and marketers of a well-known brand of mustard oil (P Mark Mustard Oil since 1933), our concerns are focused on whether or not the characteristic pungency of mustard oil will be retained in the GM varieties. Traditional Indian consumers are accustomed to this pungency and even use it as a measure of purity and authenticity. Such consumers will be disappointed and dissatisfied if GM mustard oil fails to deliver on taste, aroma and pungency. The need of the hour is to proactively address the demand-supply gap in the edible oil segment. In this regard, we reiterate that mustard and mustard oil can definitely play a pivotal role in driving India towards self-reliance, import-independence, and national pride.

AS MERCURY DIPS, ENTHUSIASM RISES FOR MAGH MELA IN PRAYAGRAJ

With temperatures going down and freezing conditions prevailing on river banks, Prayagraj is all set to host the 44-day long Magh Mela that begins on Friday.

Devotees have already started arriving at the tent city set up on the banks of Ganga and Yamuna.

The Yogi Adityanath government has made arrangements for an estimated seven crore pilgrims who will take the holy dip at the Sangam -- the confluence point of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati -- during the Magh Mela-2023.

The Mela is one of the biggest annual religious affairs for Hindus attracting men and women from across the country besides seers.

Hindu mythology considers the origin of the Magh Mela to be the beginning of the Universe.

An important occasion, the Magh Mela is held every year on the banks of Triveni Sangam and finds mention even in the Hindu epic Mahabharat, major Puranas and ancient Hindu texts about a wide range of topics, particularly about legends and other traditional lore.

The religious basis for the Magh Mela is the belief that pilgrimage is a means for atonement, penance for past mistakes. The effort cleanses people of sins and that bathing in holy rivers at these festivals is a means to liberation from the cycle of rebirths.

Pandit Diwakar Tripathi Purvanchali, director of Utthan Jyotish Sansthan, Prayagraj, said, "the Magh Mela will kick-start with the fair's first bathing festival of Paus Purnima on January 6". Being organised at a budget of Rs 78 crore, the annual fair is housed in a tent city with five pontoon bridges interlinking it.

It has 1,000 km of metal chequered plate roads and 5,000 police and security personnel guarding it.

Apart from making arrangements grander than ever before, the administration this time has added a few elements to the mela.

Promising a truly grand Maha Kumbh-2025, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said if Prayagraj was improved in a comprehensive manner, it would be transformed into a "New Prayagraj" for Maha Kumbh-2025, starting with Magh Mela-2023.

Magh Mela officer and CEO of Prayagraj Mela Authority, Arvind Singh Chauhan, said the fair would be kept open defecation free (ODF) and plastic free.

Sanitation in-charge of Magh Mela, Dr Anand Singh, said 17,400 toilets are being installed in the Mela area.



"As many as 1,400 fibre-reinforced plastic toilets will be installed here. Apart from this, 10,000 tent toilets and 3,000 other toilets will also be installed in the parking area. Another 1,600 toilets are to be set up in the camps of main religious and other organisations attending the fair. An STP has also been constructed in the Magh Mela area. The cleaning system of the fair will be in the hands of 2,160 sanitation workers," he stated.

Besides distributing free cloth bags, officials have planned playing messages related to the Swachh Bharat Mission campaign on LCD screens being installed in the Mela area.

Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant said with an aim to provide best of facilities to pilgrims and visitors alike, a 500-bed dormitory will also be constructed at the fair. For the first time, water sports activities like water polo, triathlon and others will also be organised during the fair to attract tourists.

Mela officer Arvind Chauhan said all the sectors of the fair have been divided into zones/circles, and for the first time, their proper digital mapping will be done. The aim is to put up signboards 'You are here' at every intersection of the fair area that would allow visitors to know exactly where they stand.

To help visitors, young volunteers will also be engaged. An agreement has been made on engaging college students for this. About 700 'mela friends' will be seen helping devotees.

In light of the Covid threat, 100 helpdesks too have been set up to undertake awareness drives among pilgrims and also undertake their vaccination.

Chief medical officer Anshu Pandey said four-member health teams would remain stationed at all 18 entry points of the fair. They would do random screening of pilgrims.

The Magh Mela holds special significance for the kalpavis who stay on river banks for the entire duration of the Mela and take holy dip in the river every day.

international

RACE TO OVERTHROW PUTIN HAS BEGUN, CLAIMS RUSSIAN WAR ANALYST

London | Agencies

The race to overthrow Vladimir Putin and grab his crown is underway, said Russian war analyst and former loyalist Igor Strelkov, according to a media report.

"The fight for the political Olympus has begun between the groupings that surround Putin," Strelkov said, Daily Mail reported.

Strelkov -- a former FSB colonel key to Putin's annexation of Crimea and subjugation of the Donetsk region of Ukraine in 2014 -- is now a staunch critic of the Kremlin's war strategy.

An immediate mass mobilisation of half a million more men is the only way for Putin to avoid defeat and ignominy in the war in Ukraine, he claimed, Daily Mail reported.

He spoke amid claims that Putin has



approved in principle a huge new mobilisation drive.

The fight at the top of the Kremlin focuses on insurgent Putin crony Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner private army, and loyalist forces in the defence ministry around weakening defence minister Sergei Shoigu, accord-

ing to Strelkov, Daily Mail reported.

Others believe security apparatchiks around ex-FSB head Nikolai Patrushev -- secretary of the powerful security council -- are more likely to pull the trigger on Putin in a bid to save the elite ruling circle if the war continues to go wrong. Some claim the security bloc is lining up his son and Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev as the frontman for a coup replacing Putin if he is forced out by war setbacks or ill health, Daily Mail reported.

Strelkov sees Prigozhin, once Putin's 'chef' in charge of Kremlin banquets, as aiming to be a major political force in his own right, and there is evidence he is now securing prominent coverage in the state media.

There has been speculation he wants to become Defence Minister - or even President, Daily Mail reported.

Kathmandu | Agencies

A controversy has erupted in Nepal over Chinas Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) after the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu unilaterally declared that the Pokhara International Airport is a "flagship project of China-Nepal BRI cooperation".

At a time when Nepali and Chinese officials themselves admitted that not a single project under the BRI, the multi-billion dollar flagship project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, has been signed in Nepal under the BRI framework, a recent announce-



ment made by the Chinese side in Kathmandu has courted a huge controversy.

The airport was constructed upon a Chinese loan which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday but a sudden

announcement made by the Embassy on the day of inauguration has created spirals of controversy in Kathmandu.

A day ahead of the inauguration, the Embassy said: "This is the flagship project of China-Nepal BRI coopera-

tion. Warmly congratulations to Nepali Gov and Nepali people!"

On the day of the inauguration, the Charge d'Affaires Wang Xin said: "2023 is the 10th anniversary of President Xi Jinping's proposal of BRI Initiative. Under the guidance of the two heads of state, we will jointly build the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, and let the BRI cooperation bear fruitful results." According to Nepali media reports, Prime Minister Dahal on Wednesday also expressed concern over why and how this issue surfaced now.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CULL POULTRY TO FEND OFF AVIAN FLU

Stockholm | Agencies

Poultry farmers across Europe have been forced to cull their flocks in the latest effort to slow the spread of the highly-contagious avian influenza on the continent.

On Wednesday, Swedish authorities announced they would cull around 165,000 chickens at a single farm in the southern part of the country after a salmonella outbreak.

"We have decided to cull the animals before the coops are sanitized and new animals are reintroduced," Katharina Gielen, head of disease control and prevention at Sweden's Board of Agriculture, told Xinhua news agency.

In the Czech Republic, it was announced this week that more than 750,000 chickens on a cluster of farms in the western part of the country were culled for similar reasons. "Despite the measures taken and all efforts, it was not possible to prevent the spread of the highly contagious poultry disease to other areas," the country's State Veterinary Administration said. Meanwhile, France is reportedly considering widespread vaccination of its chicken and turkey populations. Tens of millions of birds across Europe are reportedly being kept indoors as a safeguard, adding to the cost of upkeep and raising the possibility of a fast spread if some of those populations become infected. Case numbers for the disease were high in Europe throughout 2022, particularly on farms in the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. Additionally, wild bird populations in Austria, Denmark, Italy, and the Netherlands have been testing positive for avian influenza since December 30, 2022. The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control said that an outbreak of avian influenza (otherwise known as bird flu) between October 2021 and September 2022 was the "most devastating" the continent had ever seen, with around 2,500 outbreaks reported in 37 European countries. The disease, known scientifically as the H5N1 Avian Influenza, was first recorded in 1879, and has seen periodic outbreaks since then. Crossover from birds to humans is relatively rare, although in November 2021 it was announced that two farm workers in Spain had tested positive for avian flu.



RUSSIA GETTING READY FOR ESCALATION IN FEB: TOP UKRAINIAN OFFICIAL

Kiev | Agencies

A top Ukrainian official has said that Russia is getting ready for an escalation on the frontline in February as the ongoing invasion is set to complete a year next month.

In a statement to the country's public broadcaster on Wednesday Oleksii Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, said that "February will be decisive for them... They are preparing for an escalation", Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

"There are many indicators that give us reason to say that in February, they may have another attempt at resolving this issue," he added.

Danilov said Ukraine is preparing for any development, adding that the Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief meets two to three times a week.

He also expressed optimism at Ukraine having powerful weapons at its disposal, saying: "Sooner or later, we will have powerful tanks, completely different planes, and this will happen in the near future."

In his statement, Danilov further said that Taras Kozak, a Ukrainian politician who is said to be a close associate of the pro-Russian oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, is "conducting meeting with Europeans and trying to persuade them to sign 'peace deals' akin to



Minsk-3".

Minsk-3 refers to a series of international agreements which sought to end the conflict in Donbas in eastern Ukraine.

Kozak escaped to Belarus when the Ukrainian authorities opened a criminal case against him for high treason and an attempt to steal natural resources from the country.

Sources say he is hiding in Russia and that his partner owns real estate in Moscow.

The US government imposed sanctions against Kozak in January 2022 for his involvement in undermining Ukraine's sovereignty.

As the war will mark its first anniversary on February 24, Russia has lost ground in Ukraine in recent months, being pushed out of Kherson in the south and the Kharkiv region in the north-east.

Controversy in Nepal over China's BRI project

IRAN, RUSSIA SIGN DEAL TO BUILD SHIP FOR CASPIAN SEA PORT

Tehran | Agencies

Iran and Russia have signed a contract for building a cargo ship for the Caspian Sea port of Solyanka.

According to a local media report, the Russian side will manufacture a cargo ship for Iran to be used at Solyanka, which is located in the southern Russian city of Astrakhan and jointly developed by the two countries, reports Xinhua news agency.

The order, which has been placed by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), aims at "strengthening the transportation network of the Caspian Sea" and renovating the IRISL fleet, Mehdi Akuchakian, Iran's consul general in Astrakhan, was quoted as saying at the signing meeting with the Russian port officials.

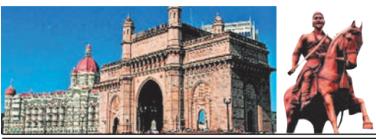
He said the vessel would be capable of carrying all kinds of cargo, indicating that the contract would boost trade and commercial relations between Iran and Russia.

"It will have a positive effect on the reduction of the final price of Iranian and Russian export goods, and as a result, the quality of life of the people of the two countries will improve," Akuchakian added.

To develop the North-South Transport Corridor, which links India to Central Asia through Iran, it is necessary to provide more ships and strengthen the infrastructure of port services, Akuchakian noted.

The IRISL is investing \$10 million in the Solyanka port, part of which has been funded through Russian banking loans.





MAHA CM SHINDE MEETS UP CM YOGI, URGES TO BUILD MAHARASHTRA BHAVAN IN AYODHYA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, former UP Governor Ram Naik, and Gorakhpur MP Ravi Kishan were present during the meeting.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday met Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai. Yogi Adityanath also visited the 19th Century underground British Era Bunker Museum at Raj

Bhavan and inspected the Gallery of Revolutionaries 'Kranti Gatha' created inside the bunker. The UP chief minister paid his tributes at the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Later, Yogi Adityanath visited the historic Sri Gundi Devi Mandir located at the cliff of Malabar Point facing the Arabic ocean inside Raj Bhavan and performed the Aarti with the staff and devotees present. Yogi Adityanath is currently in Mumbai on a two-day visit. CM Yogi reached Mumbai to hold roadshows during his visits to draw domestic investors ahead of the Global Investors Summit to be held in Lucknow next month.

I stand by my statement: Ajit Pawar, on 'Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj is Swarajya Rakshak'

Maharashtra Assembly Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar refused to apologise for his statement that Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj should be called 'Swarajya Rakshak' instead of 'Dharmaveer'.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Ajit Pawar said that the Bharatiya Janata Party protest against him while they were silent when the Maharashtra Governor and many other leaders disrespected heroes like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He further added that the word 'Dharmaveer' is used widely, therefore Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj should be addressed as 'Swarajya Rakshak'. "If you google and search 'Dharmaveer' a lot of people use it as their designation. So if I said Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj is not a 'Dharmaveer' I was not wrong because Sambhaji Maharaj is one. I stand by my statement," Pawar added.



Swarajya and Sambhaji Maharaj continued it after Shivaji Maharaj. Pawar Added. In the recently concluded Maharashtra state assembly's winter session in Nagpur, during a debate, senior NCP leader and LoP Ajit Pawar said, "We always refer to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj as 'Swaraj Rakshak'. But some people are calling him 'Dharmaveer' (protector of religion). It is incorrect to call him 'Dharmaveer'. Sambhaji Maharaj never championed the cause of any particular religion; his sacrifice and work were for national and inclusive welfare."

Sanjay Raut labels UP CM Yogi's roadshow as 'political biz'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut questioned the need for Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to conduct a roadshow in Mumbai and termed it as 'political business', here on Thursday. Currently on a two-day visit to Mumbai, Adityanath will flag off a roadshow Thursday to attract investments for the three-day global investors meet scheduled in Uttar Pradesh from February 10. "Yogi is welcome to come and discuss investment prospects for UP... But

what is the need for him to hold a roadshow in Mumbai? It is nothing but politics of business and this must stop," said Raut sharply. He said Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis will be attending the upcoming World Economic Forum meet in Davos (Switzerland) next fortnight. "Do you expect them (Shinde-Fadnavis) to carry out a roadshow on the streets of Davos... Then why does Yogi come to conduct a roadshow in Mumbai," Raut pointed out. Referring to Yogi's meetings with

some Bollywood actors on Wednesday, he softened his stance over the earlier stand, saying that if UP is keen on setting a film industry in that state, it would be welcome as the move could spur the development there. "It was Dadasaheb Phalke who introduced the film industry and bequeathed it to the whole nation, it belongs to everybody... There are already very big film industries in the south, Andhra Pradesh and I feel the film business should come up in every state," said the Sena (UBT) Chief Spokesperson.



Woman ragpicker crushed under falling Metro pillar metal plate

Team Absolute | Thane

In a freak accident, a 37-year-old woman ragpicker was crushed to death when a huge iron metal plate fixed on a Mumbai Metro pillar, crashed on her near the Viviana Mall in Thane officials said on Thursday. The Thane Fire Brigade authorities said the incident occurred at around 10 a.m. when the woman was walking beside one of the pillars when the metal plate suddenly gave away and fell directly on her from above. Trapped by the large object, the woman tumbled into the ditch dug around the pillar foundation



and succumbed instantly, said an official. The victim was identified as Sunita Babasaheb Kamble, residing in Lokmanya Nagarpada. Thane Police, civic and disaster rescue teams rushed to the spot, heaved off the heavy metal plate and retrieved her body from the ditch. Sunita was rushed to the Thane Civil Hospital by the Rabodi Police, where she was pronounced dead. Further investigations are on into how the metal plate may have broken loose from the Metro pillar, the official added.

BJP "bluffing" people of Goa over Mahadayi River dispute: Nationalist Congress Party

Team Absolute | Panaji

The Nationalist Congress Party alleged that the ruling BJP in Goa was fooling the people of the state on the Mahadayi river dispute with neighbouring Karnataka. Earlier in the day, leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Goa claimed that Karnataka officials stopped them when they visited the site of the proposed dams on the river's tributaries that have become a bone of contention between the two states. "By declaring that they will start a signature campaign to ask the Central Government to withdraw approval given to Karnataka's DPR (detailed project reports) of the Kalasa-Bhandura dam project on Mahadayi, BJP is bluffing the people of Goa," said NCP national spokesperson Clyde



Crasto in a statement. With the BJP being in power in the Centre as well as in Karnataka and Goa, it did not need a signature campaign to put pressure on the Union government, he said. Karnataka cannot divert the water of the Mahadayi River because under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, no water from Kalasa River

can be diverted, the NCP leader claimed. Dams on the Mahadayi will take way water from Goa and also affect five talukas and five Wildlife sanctuaries in the coastal state adversely, Crasto alleged. "All three governments can take a decision and withdraw the approval to DPR," he said. Earlier, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Goa chief Amit Palekar claimed that Karnataka officials stopped a group of party leaders during their visit to the site of the Kalasa-Banduri project on Tuesday. "They stopped us. We were told that we cannot go to the site. However, when we refused to budge and the officials realised that two of the leaders are MLAs, they allowed us to go," Palekar claimed. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had on Monday said he will soon lead an all-party delegation to Delhi, opposing the approval granted to Karnataka's DPRs for the two dams.

CASE REGISTERED AGAINST 3 'FAKE' DOCTORS

Team Absolute | Thane

Police have registered a case against three persons in Maharashtra's Thane district for allegedly working as doctors without having a valid medical degree and cheating patients, an official said on Thursday. Notices have been issued to the three persons from Bhiwandi town, they said, adding that no arrest has been made so far. The three accused, in the age group of 46 to 52 years, were allegedly practising allopathy without a valid medical degree, the police said in a release. Following a complaint by the Bhiwandi Nizampur Municipal Corporation's medical officer, the



police registered the case on Wednesday against the three accused under Indian Penal Code Section 420 (cheating) and provisions of the Maharashtra Medical Practitioners Act, it said

WOMAN DIES AFTER FALLING INTO SEPTIC TANK IN BANDRA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A 41-year-old woman fell into a septic tank and died by drowning in Mumbai's Bandra East area, said Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation. The deceased has been identified as Nipuna Sharma. The incident occurred at 7:25 pm at Sunstone Building, Shastri Nagar in Bandra. Fire officials were deployed soon after the accident was reported. Fire officials brought the woman out of the tank and she was taken to Guru Nanak Hospital, where she was declared dead.

Man, cheated senior citizens at city ATMs held, aide on the run

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Vile Parle Police on Thursday said that a suspect who had been allegedly involved in multiple cases of cheating senior citizens at city ATMs was arrested after a 67-year-old man filed a complaint with the police. The police said, on December 31, 2022, the victim had filed a complaint with the police saying that he was allegedly duped of Rs 13,000 at a Vile Parle ATM when he had visited there to withdraw cash. He told the police that the complainant told the police that the man

who was present at the ATM witnessed him withdrawing the money and offered to help him. He took the ATM card from his hand and later asked for his pin, after the transaction was complete, the man made another transaction and withdrew Rs. 13,000 from his account and by the time the complainant could realize that another transaction was made, the man fled from the spot, the police said. "On his complaint, an FIR under section 420 (cheating) was registered by the police which began to check the CCTV footage to get clues on the suspect," an official said. The police learned that the

suspect had been involved in similar cases previously and there were offences registered against him at different police stations in the city and the neighbouring areas. A team of police officials began to work on the technical clues and laid a trap for him at different ATMs in western suburbs for three days. He was finally nabbed on January 3, the police said. The suspect was identified as Shatrughan Mahto, 32 who is a native of Bihar and has multiple cases of similar nature registered against him. The accomplice who is also a native of Bihar is being looked for, the police added.

MAN FIND NOT GUILTY BY SPECIAL POC SO COURT FOR KIDNAPPING, RAPING TEEN GIRL

Thane: A special court in Thane in Maharashtra has acquitted a man accused of kidnapping and raping a 15-year-old girl in 2016. The man was charged with provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for allegedly kidnapping the girl from Kalwa here and taking her to his native Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and raping and impregnating her. In his order dated December 24, the details of which were made available on Wednesday, Special Judge (POCSO Act) MB Patwari noted "the statement of victim that she got married with the applicant after attending majority and that they indulged in physical intimacy thereafter is not countered by any cogent evidence." The judge also said the victim's statement is supported by her mother. "Needless to say the choice of a major woman to marry and indulge in physical relations with her partner or to have children cannot be subjected to criminal prosecution," the order further said. The prosecution could not bring on record evidence to show commission of alleged offences, and, therefore, the accused is entitled for acquittal, the judge said.

'Bhagwa is our soul': Uddhav-led Shiv Sena after Congress leader's controversial remark

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) has hit out at Congress leader and former MP Hussain Dalwai after the latter courted a political controversy by commenting on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's 'saffron outfit'. Uddhav faction leader Anand Dubey on Thursday slammed the Congress leader for his statement and said that the saffron (Bhagwa) is our 'soul', irrespective of its other importance. "We do not agree with what Hussain Dalwai commented about UP CM's outfit. Bhagwa (Saffron) is not just a colour, but a symbol of India's culture and tradition. It is the mark of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Hindavi Swarajya. It is like our soul," Dubey said. Dalwai earlier on Wednesday said that UP CM should wear modern clothes instead of his saffron outfit. "Don't talk about religion every day, do not wear saffron clothes, and become a little modern. Embrace modern ideas," Dalwai said. Meanwhile, talking about Yogi's visit to Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena leader said, "Any leader of the country is free to visit



any state and can talk about business, but why do people depend on Mumbai for their business, why they don't go to Ahmedabad or any other place?" He further said that leaders of our states have worked hard for making the city prosperous, so other states' leaders should also work for development in their states so that you will not need to be dependent on any specific state. Dalwai also took a swipe at the UP CM's visit to Mumbai to draw domestic investors ahead of the Global Investors Summit to be held in Lucknow next month.

"Maharashtra has provided good facilities for industry. So instead of taking industries from Maharashtra, you should develop new industries in the state. Create an environment to allow them to thrive," Dalwai further said. Committed to making Uttar Pradesh one trillion-dollar economy and having successfully completed roadshows abroad to invite foreign investors to the Global Investors Summit (GIS 2023) and introduce them to the opportunities available in various sectors in the state through his team of ministers and officials, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has himself taken charge now to bring massive domestic investments to the state. It is noteworthy that in December, under the guidance of CM Yogi, eight delegations of ministers and senior officials visited 21 cities in 16 countries and received investment proposals worth Rs 7.12 lakh crore. The roadshows in nine Indian cities, which start today, are a continuation of that exercise. As per the schedule of CM Yogi, before and after the roadshow, will also have one-to-one meetings with various industrialists. This meeting will be on the basis of Business to Government (B2G)

ICICI fraud Dhoot's plea against arrest rejected; Kochhars' demand for home food, bed turned down

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A special court here on Thursday rejected Videocon founder Venugopal Dhoot's plea which claimed that his arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation in the alleged loan fraud involving former ICICI Bank CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar was illegal. The CBI court also rejected applications of Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar for home food, beds, mattresses and chairs. The court directed jail authorities to provide them diet food in consultation with the medical officer. The Kochhars were arrested by the CBI on December 23, while Dhoot was arrested three days later. All three are currently in judicial custody. Dhoot had challenged his arrest claiming it was illegal and sought immediate release from the case. His lawyer S S Ladda, along with advocate Viral Babar, argued that Dhoot was arrested only because the investigating officer



came under pressure after the Kochhar couple's arrest. During the first remand hearing of the Kochhars their lawyer questioned why Dhoot had not been arrested yet, the Videocon group founder's lawyer pointed out. The Kochhars were afraid that Dhoot might become an approver, advocate Ladda said. The Kochhars' lawyer made sure it was recorded in the remand order that Dhoot had not been arrested, which put pressure on the investigating officer leading to Dhoot's arrest, he claimed. Special Judge M R Purwar, however, didn't find merit in the arguments and rejected Dhoot's plea.



'False!!! But also slay'

Ellie Goulding denies cheating on Ed Sheeran with Niall Horan

London | Agencies

Singer Ellie Goulding has dismissed rumour that she once cheated on Ed Sheeran with 'One Direction' member Niall Horan. Before heading out for her New Year's Eve plans, the singer posted a casual TikTok video dancing to Harry Styles' 'As It Was', captioning it, "Quick boob checks then we're birthday groovin'," reports 'Billboard'.

However, a follower tried to stir up trouble in the comments section of the breezy post by writing, "can't believe u cheated on ed with niall but slay fr." Goulding

promptly responded, "False!!! But also slay."

The accusation dates back nearly a decade, when the 'Halcyon Days' singer was spotted holding hands with Sheeran in the audience of the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards just one week after a UK tabloid claimed she was packing on the PDA with Horan during an outing to England's V Festival.

At the time, Goulding insisted she and Sheeran were just friends by tweeting: "I love that holding hands with my friends means we're an item. In that case I am in many relationships. Lover not a hater. Whatthef-"

But the 'Shape of You' crooner said otherwise in a radio interview one month after the VMAs. "I mean, normal people don't hold

hands if they're just friends," he said. "It was going on. And now it's not."

The fire of gossip was further stoked the next year when Sheeran released "Don't" as the second single from his 2014 album X. On the track, he details an on-and-off relationship with a fellow singer that ends in infidelity, and another British outlet printed that the song was about Goulding.

In a 2015 profile for Elle UK, Goulding maintained she and Sheeran were never an item, saying, "I did go on a few dates with Niall, but I was never in a relationship with Ed. I have absolutely no idea where that came from and why it was turned into such a big thing."



Madonna 'secretly planning' greatest hits tour to celebrate 40 years in music

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Queen of pop, Madonna, is "secretly planning" her first ever "greatest hits" tour to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her music career. On Wednesday, January 4, 'The Sun' reported that the 'Material Girl' hitmaker is expected to announce new dates in the next few weeks, reports aceshowbiz.com.

A source close to the situation also confirmed to the outlet that the 64-year-old star has booked out London's O2 Arena for multiple events.

"Madonna is trying something completely new and really giving fans, young and old, what they want," the so-called insider shared. "She wants to capitalise on tracks like 'Frozen' and 'Material Girl' popping off on TikTok, and introduce her back catalogue to an entirely new generation."

The informant further explained, "Previously she has always wanted to be forward-facing and focus on whatever new album she's plugging. But now, in her mid-sixties, she is going back to basics and once again reinventing herself." "That being said, it is sure to be no holds barred and suitably risqué," the source added. "Her last 'Madame X' tour was in small theatres, but this one will be in stadiums, with the O2 already confirmed. It's massively exciting."

Her 'Madame X' tour in 2019 and 2020 saw her playing 75 intimate shows at theatres around the world.

Last July, Madonna hinted in an interview with 'Variety' that she's keen to get on the road again. "I'm just looking for interesting, fun ways to re-release my catalogue and introduce my music to a new generation," the "Like a Virgin" singer told the outlet.

"I'm focused on that and I've been writing a screenplay for my film for the last couple of years. The whole thing with 'Frozen' was so fun, but I woke up one day and went, 'I'm sick of living in the past! I want to go on tour again, I'm a creature of the stage. That is my happy place.'"

'First of all it's a JOKE'

Padma Lakshmi hits back at a follower, who criticised her fun video

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian-American model, TV host, author and activist Padma Lakshmi hits back at a follower, who criticised her fun video, which was shared on her Instagram account, of her and daughter Krishna.

The clip saw the celebrity chef cooking, with her daughter filming her. Her daughter, meanwhile, tried to cover her mom's chest from the camera's view as she put one of her hands in front of it, reports aceshowbiz.com.

When Padma asked her daughter what she was doing, the little girl said that she was "censoring". To that, Padma jokingly replied, "Censoring my boobs? You ate off those boobs for a good year-and-a-half." Further poking fun at the situation, the 52-year-old star wrote in the caption: "Littlehands: 'cover your boobs'. Also Littlehands: 'zooms in on boobs'". Fans in the comments section mostly praised Padma for the witty remarks to Krishna.

However, some others apparently took issue with her response. "As a mom of four daughters, there's a time and a place and when it starts making our daughters uncomfortable because we are being objectified, time to take notice," one person said.

Catching wind of the comment, Padma immediately replied to the individual. "First of all it's a JOKE," she defended herself.

"And my daughter isn't uncomfortable with me or my boobs or my posts, nor does she read these comments unless I show her because she isn't on social media." "It's really not that serious folks," the Bravo star stressed. The food writer later told the person that her daughter is not on social media because "she has her studies to attend to".



'I'm not very good at talking'



Simon Cowell doesn't believe he's talk show host material

Los Angeles | Agencies

Television personality Simon Cowell does not believe he's talk show host material. In a recent interview with E! News, the 'America's Got Talent' judge revealed that he has no plans to host his own daytime talk show - and even backed out of a previous offer to do so, reports people.com. "I got to the point where they built the set and I started to get anxious and then really stressed out, and I just walked out the meeting," Cowell told the outlet after being asked if he would consider hosting a daytime talk show like his American Idol discoveries Kelly Clarkson and Jennifer Hudson. He continued, "I just said I literally couldn't do this. I just couldn't talk to people all day long. I'm not very good at talking." While he may not be the right person for the gig, Cowell continues to be great at identifying talents and is resuming his role judging alongside Howie Mandel and Heidi Klum on AGT: All-Stars, a new extension of the beloved series on NBC, which premiered on Monday. Speaking previously to 'PEOPLE' about the show, Cowell said, "It was terrific and it was really fascinating to see people who've competed on the American show and done really well, competing with people who won the show in other countries."

"The dynamic was fascinating ... and what really was great and cool about the show was that so many people decided to come back and compete," he added.

James Wan is contemplating a "M3GAN" sequel'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker James Wan is already contemplating a 'M3GAN' sequel. The filmmaker is a producer for the new sci-fi horror flick about a robotic doll that becomes extremely protective of a child and he explained how the flick could develop into a franchise, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"What I will say to that is, whether it's The Conjuring Universe, or 'Saw', or 'Malignant', or 'M3GAN' here, we like to think of a bigger world," James told Collider.

"For me, it's about creating the world, and knowing who the characters are, where the story could potentially go, and then building this bigger world, and then going into that and going, 'Okay, I'm telling this particular story, but I know other stuff that's going on.'"

The director added, "So if we're fortunate enough to have sequels, then we have an idea of where we want to go."

'M3GAN' helmer Gerard Johnstone recently revealed how the movie, which stars Allison Williams and Violet McGraw, had to have reshoots to get a PG-13 age rating.

The director told Total Film magazine, "Making it PG-13 was something that hap-



pened after the fact, but it was always close to PG-13 anyway."

"It seemed kind of a mistake not to embrace it. I even remember thinking early on, 'This could be PG-13, and some of my

favourite films like 'Drag Me to Hell' are PG-13.' So we made the decision to go PG-13 and actually reshot a couple of things."

Johnstone claimed that the reshoots actually enhanced the quality of the picture. He

said, "What I was really stoked about is that when we reshot those scenes, they were more effective. It's like, 'Yes, you do have to cut away at certain times', but it's fun having to rely on sound and suggestion so much."



Coco Lodge



IND v SL 2nd T20I

SHANAKA'S BLASTING 56 HELPED SRI LANKA RACE TO 206/6

Pune | Agencies

Opener Kusal Mendis and skipper Dasun Shanaka blasted quick-fire half-centuries as Sri Lanka powered to 206/6 off 20 overs against India in the second T20I at Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Stadium.

Mendis hammered a 31-ball 52 and Shanaka raced to an unbeaten 56 off 22 balls, hitting the fastest fifty on this ground off 20 deliveries as Sri Lanka made merry against an Indian attack that struggled to make a mark.

After Mendis had given the visitors a good start by racing to his fifty off 27 deliveries on being asked to bat first, Shanaka went better as he blazed to a half-century off 20 balls -- both of them feasting on some ineffective medium-pace bowling.

Shanaka was totally dominant in the death overs and with Charith Asalanka hammering a 19-ball 37, Sri Lanka blasted 77 runs for loss of two wickets in the last five overs, thus reaching the second-highest score on



this ground. For India, Umran Malik claimed 3-48 while Axar Patel took 2-24. Shivam Mavi, the hero of India's 2-run victory in the first match, conceded 53 runs without success in four overs while Arshdeep, who was brought in place of Harshal Patel, gave away 37 runs off two overs, sending down five no-balls in the process. It was a poor performance by the Indians with the ball and barring

Umran and Axar, other bowlers were quite ineffective. Earlier, after a quiet first over sent down by Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep bowled a wild one, with three no-balls, and was carted around by Kusal Mendis for a four and six, conceding 19 runs in the over. But India pulled back things a bit and Yuzvendra Chahal gave them the much-needed breakthrough when he caught Mendis (52, 31b, 3x4,

4x6) LBW with a slider that cramped the batter for space. The field umpire was unmoved but the DRS ruled in favour of the bowler.

Umran Malik castled Bhanuka Rajapaksa (2) with a 147-kph thunderbolt and when debutant Rahul Tripathi brilliantly caught Nissanka near the boundary rope off Axar Patel, Sri Lanka were 96/3 in the 12th over. Malik was on fire and uprooted the stumps with a 140kph delivery to send Wanindu Hasaranga back for wickets off successive balls.

Dasun Shanaka, who was caught by Suryakumar Yadav off an Arshdeep no-ball, then hammered a few big ones to help Sri Lanka to a defensible total. He struck two fours and 6 sixes in all to lead his team from the front.

Brief scores

Sri Lanka: 206/6 in 20 overs (Kusal Mendis 52, Dasun Shanaka 56 not out, Charith Asalanka 37, Pathum Nissanka 33; Umran Malik 3-48, Axar Patel 2-24) v India.

Premier League

Tottenham bounce back with 4-0 win against Crystal Palace

London | Agencies

Harry Kane scored twice as Tottenham Hotspur returned to form with a 4-0 win away to Crystal Palace and revived their chances of a top-four finish.

Palace were the better side in the first 45 minutes on Wednesday night, but failed to take their chances and were made to suffer when Kane netted in the 48th and 53rd minute to take the game almost out of reach.

Matt Doherty and Son Heung-min added further goals in the 68th and 72nd minutes to take some pressure off Coach Antonio Conte, who had been criticized after recent poor results.

It was honours even in the game between two Spanish coaches, as Unai Emery's Aston Villa came back from a goal down to draw 1-1 with Julien Lopetegui's Wolverhampton Wanderers. Daniel Podence put



Wolves ahead in the 12th minute, but Danny Ings showed his poacher's instinct to level the game 12 minutes from time, reports Xinhua.

Nottingham Forest climbed out of the bottom three with a 1-0 win away to Southampton. Taiwo Awoniyi swept home the only goal of

the match in the 27th minute, leaving Southampton with six consecutive defeats and also dropping Everton into the bottom three as a consequence.

Wednesday night's final match saw Leeds United and West Ham draw 2-2.

India, Pakistan in same group for Asia Cup 2023

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India and Pakistan have been included in the same group for Asia Cup 2023 to be held in September, confirmed Asian Cricket Council President (ACC) Jay Shah while releasing the cricket calendar for 2023/24.

Also joining India and Pakistan for the tournament will be Bangladesh, defending champions Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and a team from the qualifiers. But in the calendar, there is no mention of the host venue for Asia Cup 2023.

Shah, who is also the Honorary Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), posted through his social media accounts the "pathway structure and cricket calendars" for cricket in Asia.

As per the calendar, ACC will organize 145 games in both ODIs and T20Is during its two-year cycle. On the further breakdown of the cycle, 75 games will be played in 2023 while 70 matches are set to happen in 2024. The men's emerging (U23) Asia Cup is also back again.



As per the new calendar, 2023 will kick off with Men's Challengers Cup, a ten-team 50-over tournament, featuring Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Maldives, Thailand, Iran and two yet-to-be-named teams. Teams will be divided into two groups of five teams each. 2024 will start off with Men's and Women's T20 Challenger Cup in February and March respectively. It will be followed by Men's and Women's T20 Premier Cup in April and May respectively.

Third-tier Intercity push Barcelona all the way in Copa del Rey

Alicante (Spain) | Agencies

Spanish giants FC Barcelona were given a huge fright by third-tier CF Intercity but ultimately prevailed 4-3 in their third-round Copa del Rey tie.

The side from Alicante fell behind Barca on three separate occasions on Wednesday night, but each time they fought back to force extra time, only for Barca to win the game with a deflected shot from Ansu Fati.

Things looked to be going to plan for Barca in the fourth minute, when Ronald Araujo, back after injury, powered home a header from a corner.

Intercity defended in depth in the first half, but switched to a 4-4-2 formation after the break and took the game to their rivals. Oriol Soldevilla took advantage of



some poor defending in the 59th minute to level following a corner, and although Ousmane Dembele put

Barca back in front six minutes later, Soldevilla again equalized with a smart header.

Atletico Madrid are also into the last 16 with a 2-0 win away to Oviedo, thanks to Marcos Llorente's first-half goal and an 83rd-minute effort from 19-year-old Pablo Barros, reports Xinhua. Sevilla put their poor league form behind them with a 5-0 win away to Linares. Morocco international Youssef En-Nesyri scored a hat-trick, with Erik Lamela and an own goal helping to complete the rout.

Robert Navarro's 33rd-minute goal was enough to give Real Sociedad a 1-0 win away to third-tier Logrones and book the 2020 winners a place in the last 16.

Mallorca needed extra time to win away to Pontevedra, with Abdou Prats putting them ahead in the 97th minute and Vedat Muriqi sealing the win soon afterwards.

Elsewhere, Alaves won 1-0 against Real Valladolid.

Adelaide International 1

Djokovic survives Halys test to sail into quarterfinals

Adelaide | Agencies

Novak Djokovic faced a stern test by Frenchman Quentin Halys as he battled into the Adelaide International 1 quarterfinals with a 7-6(3), 7-6(5) win.

Djokovic will next play Canadian Denis Shapovalov, who registered a comfortable win over Roman Safiullin 6-4, 6-3, the second straight qualifier he has subdued following his first-round win over Australian Rinky Hijikata. "It was a great performance from my opponent today. I want to con-



gratulate him for great quality and a great fight," Adelaide International quoted Djokovic as saying. "Tough luck but he played like a top-10 player today no doubt. As far as my game goes, I feel good on the court. I didn't have such a great start; I lost my serve early. He was serving really well, fast, big serves, hitting

his spots in the box very well. "Just difficult to play in this kind of court that is really fast. It kind of favours the server. If you're serving well, it's tough to break the serve of a big server like him, so two tiebreaks were probably the most realistic score of today's match. Just glad to overcome the tough challenge. "Playing his second singles match of 2023, the Serb was trailing 5-2 in the first set as world No.64 Halys broke the top seed in the opening game. But the world No. 7 fought back at the crunch point in time to force the tiebreak.

Tata Open Maharashtra

MARIN CILIC PULLS OUT OF QUARTERFINAL AFTER KNEE INJURY

Pune | Agencies

Top seed Marin Cilic of Croatia withdrew from his quarterfinal match of the Tata Open Maharashtra on Thursday due to a knee injury.

Cilic, who was scheduled to play Dutch player Tallon Griekspoor in the last-eight match, sustained an injury during the warm-up.

"Very sorry that I couldn't come out again today to compete. Today during the warm-up I injured my knee and unfortunately it didn't get better until I was about to go out on the court," Cilic said in a statement released by the organizers on Twitter.

"Thanks to the fans for the great support this week, it was



fantastic. I'm looking forward to return to India in the future to compete over here again," he added.

Griekspoor will play Aslan Karatsev in the semifinals, who has defeated Pedro Martinez 6-1, 6-2 in the quarterfinals.

Rani returns to action as India name women squad for South Africa tour

Bengaluru | Agencies

Veteran star and former captain Rani Rampal returns to international hockey as Hockey India on Thursday announced the Indian women's hockey team squad for the upcoming tour of South Africa, set to begin on January 16, 2023, in Cape Town.

The veteran forward will be back in the squad for the first time since FIH Women's Hockey Pro League 2021/22 match against Belgium. Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, who led the Indian women's junior team at the Unipharm U23 5 Nations Tournament 2022 in May, has received her maiden call for the senior team.

On the tour, India, who recently won the inaugural edition of the FIH Women's Nations Cup 2022 in Valencia, will play four matches against South Africa, and three matches against the Netherlands between January 16 to 29, 2023. Goalkeeper Savita continues to be the captain for the tour with experienced campaigner Navneet Kaur as the Vice-Captain of the team.



Speaking on the tour, Indian women's hockey team chief coach Janneke Schopman said. "The South Africa tour is a brilliant opportunity for us to build on our performance of the Nations Cup. Playing both South Africa as well as The Netherlands on this tour provides us with everything we need to learn about ourselves come the Asian Games. "Playing the World number 1 Netherlands will most likely expose our vulnerabilities and will also show where we are with our performance and growth. Playing South Africa, where we most likely will have more of the ball, will give us the opportunity to improve in ball possession areas," she added.

Serie A

Juve, Milan win as action resumes after World Cup break

Rome (Italy) | Agencies

Italy's Serie A restarted with leaders Napoli seeing their unbeaten run ended as Inter Milan inflicted the season's first defeat on the Partenopei with a 1-0 victory.

Serie A had been on a World Cup-enforced hiatus since November 14. Napoli were flying high before Wednesday's game as they led the table with 41 points and were the only unbeaten side in Europe's top five leagues, while Inter Milan had picked up 30 points after 15 rounds.

Napoli dominated possession at San Siro, but it was the home side that scored the only goal in the 55th minute, as Federico Dimarco crossed from the left and Edin Dzeko steered a header into the net.

Napoli's defeat allowed second-placed AC Milan to cut the gap to five points as the Rossoneri won 2-1 away at Salernitana thanks to goals from Rafael Leao and Sandro Tonali.

Juventus registered their seventh consecutive win as the Bianconeri edged past Cremonese 1-0 with Arkadiusz Milik's free-kick in stoppage time, reports



Xinhua. The two capital clubs were locked on 30 points after Wednesday as Roma beat Bologna 1-0 thanks to Lorenzo Pellegrini's penalty, while Lazio fumbled a 1-0 lead to lose 2-1 to Lecce.

Elsewhere, Atalanta came from 2-0 down to hold Spezia 2-2, while Sampdoria beat Sassuolo 2-1 away. The matches between Torino and Hellas Verona, Fiorentina and Monza, and Udinese against Empoli all finished 1-1.

Everyone should know that they have a fighting chance to play in the World Cup: Kumar Sangakkara

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Legendary Sri Lanka cricketer Kumar Sangakkara believes that every player in the Indian team has to be made aware that they have a good chance of playing in the ODI World Cup, to be held in October and November this year in India.

"Your best players have to play a lot of ODI cricket, the rest that are in support can be rotated around them, but everyone should know that they stand a fighting chance to be in that 15."

"They must play enough ODI cricket, get enough cricket in their legs and bodies, to make sure they are fit, that they know how to play the ODI game in this year, and they are fluent and they play together as a team."

"And that their ODI skill levels are at peak so they can go ahead and win the world cup, so that's



got to be their main target, irrespective of what happens around them," said Sangakkara on 'Road to World Cup Glory' show on Star

Sports. "I think T20 has impacted all formats including test cricket positively, but the real key is having

your best players available to play for you in the World Cup. And you can't sustain all your best players playing back-to-back cricket in every format and expect all of them to be fit and ready."

"You have to really manage the workload, you can have squads of 20, 30 whatever you want but at the end of the day you got to identify very early what your core side is, what the core is going to be around which you build all the other players to add on."

"Because if you take the Indian side, everyone knows what the core is, everyone knows who the most important players are and you have a strenuous season ahead. So, you got to be really smart about how you control the workload. And you have the IPL, you have the other entire cricket. But if it's a one-day world cup year, that's got to be the main focus."

THE CRUSH OF MILLIONS OF HEARTS:

DEEPIKA'S
BIRTHDAY WISHES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The crush of millions of hearts, Deepika Padukone celebrated her birthday yesterday. She has been synonymous with versatility with the choices she has made in her 15-year-long career.

Ever since her debut in 2007 with Om Shanti Om, the actress has been constantly emerging and evolving as a powerhouse of talent. Deepika has never ceased to leave a lasting impression everytime with the characters she portrays on the big screen.

Many celebrities like SRK, Katrina Kaif, Anushka Sharma, Prabhas, Sara Ali Khan and many more wished the actress on their social media accounts.

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan took to Instagram on Thursday to wish his friend and Pathaan co-star Deepika Padukone a very happy birthday. Khan shared a new poster of Deepika from the upcoming Yash Raj Films actioner with a caption that read, "To my dearest Deepika Padukone - how you have evolved to own the screen in every avatar possible! Always proud and always wishing for you to scale new heights... happy birthday... lots of love..."

Katrina Kaif shared a picture and extended her wishes. Sharing the image, Katrina wrote: "Happy birthday to u Deepika Padukone. May this year be only full of only health, peace and happiness."

Anushka Sharma also shared a photo of Deepika and wrote: "Happy birthday Deepika Padukone. Wishing you love and light always."

Deepika Padukone's Project K co-star Prabhas also wished the actress. "Happy birthday to you girl with a gorgeous smile, the one who lights up the Project on sets with her energy and talent. Wish you the best, always!" wrote Prabhas in his Instagram story.

Sara Ali Khan also wished Deepika Padukone and wrote: "Happy Birthday Deepika Padukone, hope you have the best day and a wonderful year ahead, wishing you all the luck, love, laughter, joy and abundance. Continue shining, dazzling and ruling," along with many emojis.



'The character is like me in a lot of ways'

Saavir Omana finds a connection between her real and reel personality

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Saavir Omana is a part of the ongoing show 'Rabb Se Hai Dua'. She plays the role of Kaynaat in the show and the actress shares how much she connects with her character.

Saavir shares: "Kaynaat is like me in a lot of ways. She is a simple next door sort of a girl, which I really like about her. The way she looks at things, her positivity, are things that we have in common. It is not at all difficult to get into the skin of my character because she feels real. Kaynaat is a humble person who just wants to help everyone and is very emotional about her loved ones."

On the challenges she faced while playing her character: "No it's not difficult or I would say I'm loving it as I'm learning new things being Kaynaat Akhtar on the show. The best thing is that I am doing something that I have done before," adds the 'Dharm Yodha Garud' actress. The actress says she prefers keeping her personal and professional lives separate, as she says: "There are few things that are there in Kaynaat which are very different from mine. As far as dissociation is concerned, I always leave my character on the set right after my pack-up because that is the job as an artist to keep things separate or else it will get difficult. The difference between Kaynaat and Saavir helps this process."

SRK'S NICKNAME FOR ALIA BHATT IS 'AMMA BHATT KAPOOR'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

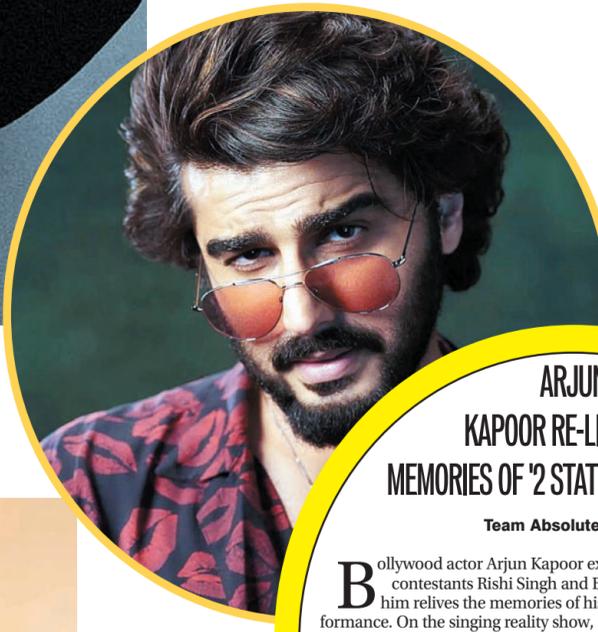
Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has shared a nickname for actress Alia Bhatt after she said she will call him 'Pathaan' after the film's release. Alia had a banter filled exchange with SRK on Twitter, where the actor treated his fans with an 'Ask SRK' session on Twitter. Alia joined the question and answer session, as she responded to a fan, who had asked Shah Rukh, "Why does Alia call you just SR?"

Responding to why Alia called Shah Rukh only 'SR', the actor tweeted He wrote, "Could mean sweet and romantic or maybe senior and respected or maybe just Shah Rukh."

Alia revealed what 'SR' stood for, and tweeted, "More like sweet and respected :) But from 25th January I'm going to switch to calling you Pathaan. See I'm so creative na."

After Alia announced her new name for Shah Rukh, he too, came up with a name for Alia.

In reference to Alia's daughter Raha Kapoor, he tweeted, "Done little one. And I am now going to call you little Amma (mother) Bhatt Kapoor!"



ARJUN KAPOOR RE-LIVES THE MEMORIES OF '2 STATES' MOVIE AGAIN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor expressed his gratitude towards contestants Rishi Singh and Bidipta Chakraborty for making him relives the memories of his film '2 States' through their performance. On the singing reality show, 'Indian Idol 13', Rishi along with Bidipta Chakraborty performed on the track 'Mast Magan', originally sung by Arijit Singh for the 2014 film '2 States'. After looking at their performance, Arjun, who acted in the film opposite Alia Bhatt, praised Rishi and Bidipta for singing the duet that took him down memory lane and he recalled his shooting days. He shared: "I finally saw your face Rishi, you sang the entire song facing her! I could sense another vibe and emotion while you were performing. I feel both of you did justice to this song and thank you for making me relive '2 States' again."

Arjun Kapoor, Tabu, Aasmaan Bhardwaj, Rekha Bhardwaj and Vishal Bhardwaj are coming on the sets of the singing reality show to promote their film 'Kuttey' Vishal Dadlani, Neha Kakkar, and Himesh Reshammiya are seen as judges on 'Indian Idol 13'.



Major fight breaks out after Shalin pushes Priyanka

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In an upcoming episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', a major fight will be seen taking place between Shalin Bhanot and Priyanka Chahar Choudhary amid a task. In the task, the voice of Bigg Boss will be heard saying that it has been 14 weeks and who according to the contestants still needs a clear vision.

A contestant has to name another housemate who is confused and unclear about his/her thoughts; post taking a name they have to give explanation and apply foam on them. Sumbul calls Shalin and says he is very unpredictable by nature. Nimrit too names Shalin and says that reality show mein real side kidhar hai samaj nahi aaya. Sajid calls Sreejita



because he finds her confusing. "I am not able to understand her character who is she exactly," says Sajid. Sreejita names Archana and says she is very unpredictable. "Samaj nahi aata next move kya hoga."

She then calls Sumbul and says initially she was quite a bubbly and chirpy girl, the vibrance that she had is lost. Priyanka calls Shalin and says is very confused. "Samaj hi nahi aata ki chal raha hai. Oversmart bhi banne ki koshish karte hai. Inki baatein bahut zyada contradict hoti hai." A huge fight between Priyanka and Shalin as he jerks away her hand while she was trying to put foam on him. As shocking as it sounds, but Tina calls Shalin and says he fights and disrespects a lot. "False promises karta hai. It's always about mein mein mein", she said.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Tara Sutaria