

absolute india

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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI



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Delhi L-G reconvenes MCD House for Mayoral poll on Feb 22...



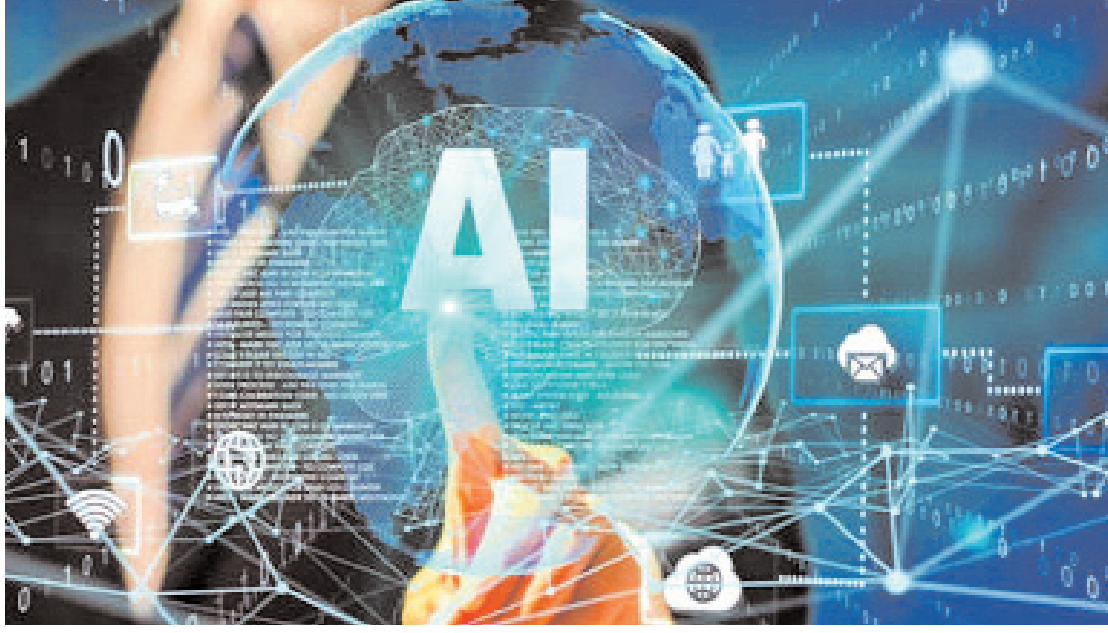
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INDIA TOP COUNTRY IN AI SKILL PENETRATION GLOBALLY: NASSCOM

- The current demand-supply gap in data science and AI in the country stands at 51 per cent, significantly lower than major economies such as the US.
- Currently, the top five roles -- ML engineer, data engineer, data scientist, data architect and DevOps engineer -- together constitute 73 per cent of all AI job openings in the country.
- At the same time, the two top roles -- ML engineer and data engineer -- constitute 46 per cent of total installed talent.
- With over 1.6 million digital talent pool (as of FY2022E), India has emerged as the prime destination for talent globally, said the report.



India's 'AI Skills Penetration Factor' has been reported to be 3.09 -- the highest among all G20 and OECD countries. It shows that India's tech talent is 3X more likely to have or report AI skills than other countries, according to the report by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) in partnership with Salesforce and Draup. India is also expected to witness high growth in the demand for data science and AI professionals with an estimate of more than 1 million professionals by 2024.

"AI-led disruption in India's core sectors alone has a potential impact of \$500 billion on India's economy in gross value added (GVA) terms by 2026. However, this cannot be achieved alone and would require concentrated efforts from the government, industry and academia to ramp up AI skilling and initiatives at scale," said Debjani Ghosh, President, Nasscom.

More than 1,900 AI-focused start-ups are providing innovative solutions, primarily in the areas of conversational AI, NLP, video analytics, disease detection, fraud prevention and deep fakes detection. "People with the right domain expertise and business context have the ability to build predictive models, plan simulations and scenarios, and cluster data. These skills are in high-demand and have huge potential to optimise business efficiency and more importantly build trust among customers and employees," explained Deepak Pargaonkar, VP, Solution Engineering, at Salesforce.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India currently ranks first in terms of AI skill penetration and AI talent concentration and fifth in AI scientific publications, a Nasscom report said on Friday.

BEWARE WHILE SEARCHING FOR PHONE NUMBERS ON INTERNET

Team Absolute | Lucknow

It may seem rather convenient to search for a phone number on search engine but not many realize that this could be a trap set up by miscreants.

Two recent incidents prove this. In the first case, a man was duped of Rs 71,000 when he surfed the Internet to find the number of a hospital. His wife had fallen ill and he called up the number for consultation.

The victim, Bhagwandin, was asked to deposit Rs 10 through Phonepe to get the patient's registration done for consultation with a doctor of Indiranagar.

Since the victim told the miscreant that he cannot make the payment through the app, on which the miscreant asked him to share the bank account number, which he did.

He was asked to download the QuickSupport app and pay Rs 10 through the app. A little later the victim got an OTP from his registered mobile number and the miscreant asked him to share it.

After his wife was admitted, the man went to an ATM to withdraw the money, he came to know that Rs 71,755 had been withdrawn from his bank account.

In another case, a resident of Aminabad was duped of over Rs 64,000 in the name of purchase of sweets from a prominent shop in



Sadar locality under Cantonment.

The victim, Ashok Kumar Bansal, placed an online order for sweets from the shop after he searched the mobile number of the shop on Google. He said that the person who took the call asked him to furnish details of his bank account for the payment.

Superintendent of Police, Cyber cell, Triveni Singh, said that when a user downloads this type of (Quick Support) app, they give all the permissions to the app. While the victim is busy filling his name, number and paying Rs 10 as service charge, miscreants can watch the pin code, which is then used to withdraw the money later.

UNICEF NAMES AYUSHMANN AS ITS NATIONAL AMBASSADOR FOR CHILD RIGHTS

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who is known for his knack for off-beat scripts and roles, was on Saturday appointed as the National Ambassador of Child Rights for UNICEF India. As a part of his duties, Ayushmann will work with UNICEF to ensure the rights of every child to survive, thrive, be protected besides promoting their voice and agency in decisions that concern them.

"It is truly an honour to further my advocacy for children's rights with UNICEF India as a National Ambassador. I am passionate about the issues facing children and adolescents in India. As UNICEF's Celebrity Advocate, I have interacted with children and spoken on internet safety, cyberbullying, mental health, and gender equality."



छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराज जयंती

१९ फेब्रुवारी



शिवायान्या सर्वसमावेशक राज्यकारभाराचा वारसा पुढे नेऊ या

श्री छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराज जन्मोत्सव

किल्ले शिवनेरी येथे १८ ते २० फेब्रुवारी २०२३ या कालावधीत जन्मोत्सवाचे भव्य आयोजन

प्रमुख आकर्षण : 'महाशिवआरती', 'जाणता राजा' महानाट्य

• शिवकालीन गाव • शिववंदना • 'मराठी बाणा' कार्यक्रम • स्थानिक पारंपरिक व सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम

• महाविद्यालयीन विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी शिबीर • स्पर्धा • सहली • कॅराल्हॅन पार्क • बचतगटांची उत्पादने • खाद्यपदार्थांची ३०० पेक्षा जास्त दालने

लाल किल्ला, आग्रा येथे शिवजयंती कार्यक्रम

• महाराष्ट्र शासन व अजिंक्य देवगिरी प्रतिष्ठान यांच्या संयुक्त विद्यमाने आग्रा येथील लाल किल्ला परिसरात

प्रथमच शिवजयंतीनिमित्त भव्य आयोजन • शिवजन्माचे नाट्यरूप सादरीकरण

• महाराजांच्या आग्रा येथील पराक्रमाने सादरीकरण यांसह विविध आकर्षक कार्यक्रम • डिजिटल माध्यमांतून जगभरातील शिवप्रेमी अनुभवणार हा आनंदसोहळा, कार्यक्रमाचे आयोजन व प्रसारण - दि. १८ व १९ फेब्रुवारी २०२३

राज्यगीताचा स्वीकृती सोहळा

• छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराज यांच्या जयंतीचे औचित्य साधून कविवर्य राजा बडे लिखित

'जय जय महाराष्ट्र माझा' या गीताचा 'राज्यगीत' म्हणून स्वीकृती सोहळा

• राज्यगीतीची लिंक <https://www.maharashtra.gov.in> या संकेतस्थळावर उपलब्ध



नरेंद्र मोदी
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शिवजयंतीच्या हार्दिक शुभेच्छा!



देवेंद्र फडणवीस
उपमुख्यमंत्री

एकनाथ शिंदे
मुख्यमंत्री

ROC-2022-23/No-5/C 6147



DELHI L-G RECONVENES MCD HOUSE FOR MAYORAL POLL ON FEB 22

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After the Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday recommended the Mayoral election to be conducted on February 22, Lt Governor V.K. Saxena has approved the proposal.

"As recommended by Hon'ble Chief Minister, GNCTD, I approve the proposal to convene the adjourned first meeting of Municipal Corporation of Delhi on Wednesday, the 22nd February, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at 4th Floor, A-Block, Dr. S.P. Mukherjee Civic Centre for election of Mayor, Dy Mayor and six members to the Standing Committee," said the notification from L-G Saxena.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday sent a proposal to Delhi's L-G V.K. Saxena regarding the election to be held on February 22. The capital city



is yet to elect the Mayor and Dy Mayor as three previous meetings held on January 6 and 24 and February 6 were adjourned without holding the exercise following a ruckus between BJP and AAP councillors over the 'voting rights of nominated councillors'. However, the Supreme

Court in a ruling on Friday said that the nominated members cannot vote in Delhi Mayor elections. The last meeting of MCD councillors held on February 6 was adjourned until the next date amid sloganeering and ruckus over the issues of aldermen voting rights.

'Housewife a nation builder...', says Kerala HC while ordering adequate compensation to woman

Kochi | Agencies

The Kerala High Court slammed the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) for denying compensation to an accident victim on the ground that she is a housewife and does not earn any income.

The High Court not only called the role of the housewife to that of a nation builder, but also ordered for a good compensation to be paid to her. Justice Devan Ramachandran said that such a stand by the transport body was 'outrageous' and urged that accident compensation should be same for a housewife and a working woman as the former also invests her time for the family and ensures that the next generation is fostered with the highest levels of excellence.

He also went on to point out that the life of human beings can never be tested on the scales of their monetary worth but by their contribution and selflessness. Specifically on the role of a house-



wife, the judge said that her contributions as a mother and wife is invaluable.

"At the outset, I must say that the contentions of the KSRTC, that a housewife earns no income and therefore, not eligible for compensa-

tion for disability and loss of amenities, is outrageous and beyond comprehension. The role of a mother and wife at home is beyond compare, and she is a true nation builder. She invests her time for the family and ensures that the next generation is

fostered with the highest levels of excellence; and her efforts can never be taken trivially or brushed aside, as being without monetary value. The lives of human beings are never tested on the scales of their monetary worth, but by their contribution and selflessness," the court said.

The court made this directive while hearing an appeal moved by a housewife challenging the order of the Motor Vehicle Accidents Claims Tribunal (MACT) that awarded her only Rs 40,214 as compensation for the grievous injuries she sustained on account of a rash application of brake by a KSRTC bus driver.

The woman instead sought Rs 2 lakh as she had to undergo extensive treatment and trauma for a long period of time after the incident.

This prompted her to approach the High Court with an appeal and the judge termed it as outrageous stand taken by the KSRTC, granting the petitioner a compensation of Rs 1,64,654, instead of Rs 40,214 awarded earlier.

Nikki Yadav, Sahil Gehlot got married in 2020, photos surface

Pawan Tripathi | Greater Noida

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has revealed that deceased Nikki Yadav and Sahil Gehlot got married in October 2020. Their wedding photos have also come to the fore now.

Nikki (23) was strangled to death by Sahil with a charging cable, who then stuffed her body in a fridge on February 10.

As per the Crime Branch, the couple got married at the Arya Samaj Mandir in Greater Noida on October 1, 2020.

Delhi police interrogated the temple's priest on Friday after the accused revealed details of his marriage during interrogation.

According to sources, Sahil and Nikki were in a relationship since a long time and he had vowed to marry each other, which was known to their family members.



While the victim's family had agreed to the arrangement, Sahil's family were not in favour of their relationship, said sources.

According to a Crime Branch official, on the night of February 9, the accused, a resident of Mitraon village, went to meet Nikki at her Uttam Nagar residence where she lived with her younger sister.

"Sahil stayed there for two-three hours and later both of them went to Nizamuddin railway station. But as they could not get tickets to Goa, they decided to go to Himachal Pradesh instead and reached the ISBT in Kashmir Gate," said the official.

When the duo reached ISBT, an argument broke out between them. Sahil then strangled Nikki with his mobile phone data cable inside the car, probably at around 8 a.m. on February 10, drove to his dhaba and hid her body in the fridge before proceeding to marry another woman.

Haryana Police identify body abroad by matching relative's DNA

Chandigarh | Agencies

In a first-of-its-kind case, Haryana Police by establishing enhanced coordination with CBI and Interpol officials has identified a body abroad by matching DNA of a blood relative with that of the body.

A police spokesperson said in the case related to Kurukshetra district the police did not resort to lengthy procedures like MLAT (mutual legal assistance treaty) or LR (letter rogatory) in the DNA investigation.

This is the first time that such a case of DNA matching has been done using Interpol's standardised digital format.

Initially, Haryana Police



had sent a physical sample of DNA which could not be sent through Interpol channels. Later, the digital format DNA profile was collected by the police in Interpol standardised format and the police received the digital profile of DNA from CFSL in Chandigarh and transmitted to Croatia through Interpol's 24x7 channels on the same day.

A complaint in this regard

was received from Paramjeet Kaur, a resident of Kurukshetra district, in which she said her son Parminder wanted to go to Italy. After completing required formalities, she came to know that his son has reached Serbia and later he will be sent to Italy by air. She also learned from sources that an unidentified body had been found in Croatia, which she suspected to be that of her son Parminder Singh.

The complainant expressed apprehension that accused Gaurav Gupta and others may have killed his son out of greed for money. Based on the complaint, a formal case was registered in Pehowa town on April 13, 2022.

Silver valued at Rs 3 cr looted on Ahmedabad Rajkot Highway

Surenranagar | Agencies

Silver valued at Rs 3 crore was looted from a vehicle carrying the booty on the Ahmedabad Rajkot Highway on Saturday.

Surenranagar District Superintendent of Police Pratap Dudhat told media persons, "An angadia pedhi (traditional courier service) employee and its driver were carrying silver and imitation jewellery in a four-wheeler to Ahmedabad, when robbers in four vehicles intercepted their vehicle and looted the booty." On getting information, 15 police teams were dispatched to all district and



state highways leading to Surenranagar, and all vehicles passing through it were being thoroughly checked.

An Angadia Pedhi employee informed the police that 1,000 to 1,400 kg silver was looted.

HC asks DDA, DUSIB to file affidavits in Mehrauli demolition drive case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to file affidavits by February 21 in a plea filed by the Goshiya Colony Sewa Samiti and others residing in Mehrauli.

Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora dealing with a plea filed through advocate Anupradha Singh also directed the petitioner to file its rejoinder within three days after DDA and DUSIB file their affidavits.



The court listed the matter for next hearing on February 28.

The plea challenges the December 12, 2022 demolition notice, wherein DDA purports to carry out a demolition drive in the entire

Goshiya Colony, which is in existence for more than five decades and consists of over 600 houses, with approximately 4,000 population.

The plea stated, citing the 'Ajay Maken and others vs Union of India' case that a

demolition drive cannot be carried out without following the protocol for removal of jhuggis as per the order of Delhi High Court.

The plea stated that before beginning any demolition drive, the land-owning agency must send a request to DUSIB, which will determine if the jhuggis qualifies for rehabilitation in accordance with the cut-off.

The petition claimed that the land-owning agency cannot begin the demolition process until DUSIB determines that the jhuggis are not eligible for rehabilitation.

TWO KILLED, 19 INJURED IN J&K ROAD MISHAP



Jammu: Two persons were killed and 19 others were injured in a road accident in J&K's Rajouri district on Saturday.

"A passenger bus going from Rajouri town to Shiv Khori shrine in Reasi district went out of the driver's control and fell into a gorge near Teryath town. "Two persons died on the spot while 19 were injured. The injured have been shifted to a hospital for treatment," officials said.

CAR DRIVER DECAMPS WITH RS 7 CR JEWELLERY IN HYDERABAD



Hyderabad | Agencies

Hyderabad police have launched a massive hunt for a driver who decamped with gold and diamond jewellery worth Rs 7 crore.

Srinivas, who was working as a driver for a woman running jewellery business, escaped with a car containing the gold and diamond ornaments from Madhuranagar under SR Nagar police station limits on Friday. Police registered a case on a complaint by Radhika, who was running the business from her apartment at Madhapur.

According to police, on the direction of Radhika, salesman Akshay had gone to a customer's house in

Madhuranagar along with Srinivas (28) to deliver an order at a house. Akshay went into the house to deliver the jewellery worth Rs 50 lakh while Srinivas was waiting outside in the car. When the salesman came out, he found Srinivas missing along with the car. He had switched off his mobile phone.

Akshay alerted Radhika, who then lodged a complaint with the police. According to her, the gold and diamond ornaments were supposed to be returned to Sirigiri Raj Gems and Jewellers at Banjara Hills.

The police registered a case and launched a hunt for the accused. A Police were scanning CCTV footage to trace the vehicle and track down the accused.

NORTH INDIA'S FIRST NUCLEAR PLANT TO COME UP IN HARYANA

New Delhi: North India's first nuclear plant is coming up at Gorakhpur in Haryana's Fatehabad district, which is about 150 km north of the national capital.

Disclosing this on Saturday, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh, said that during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime, one of the major achievements would be the installation of nuclear or atomic energy plants in other parts of the country, which were earlier confined mostly to the southern states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh or in the west in Maharashtra.

The Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Pariyojana's (GHAVP) two units of 700 MW capacity each are under implementation near the Gorakhpur village. Till date, an amount of Rs 4,906 crore has been spent out of the total allocated funds of Rs 20,594 crore for the project.

Construction of the main plant buildings/structures viz. fire water pump house (FWPH), safety related pump house (SRPH), fuel oil storage area, ventilation stack, overhead tank, switchyard control building, retaining walls and garland drain is progressing well.

Ground improvement in Turbine Building 1 and 2, 220 KV Switchyard and IDCT-1A is completed. Ground improvement in other areas are in progress. The contractors for the IDCT package and turbine island package have mobilised the site. Purchase orders for major long manufacturing cycle equipment and components like primary coolant pumps, calandria, reactor headers, refuelling machines heads, moderator and other D20 heat exchangers etc. are already in place.

Construction of water duct from Tohana to GHAVP for meeting operational cooling water requirements has been taken up through the Haryana Irrigation & Water Resources Department (HI&WRD) as deposit work and is progressing well.

Real estates, film production among others avenues to divert coal scam proceeds: ED

Kolkata | Agencies

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which has given a renewed push to the ongoing probe in the multi-crore cattle smuggling scam in West Bengal by recovering unaccounted cash of Rs 1.40 crore from a businessman's office on February 8, has brought under scanner a number of real estate development agencies, film production houses and one Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the matter.

According to the probe sources, the officials probing the coal smuggling scam have questioned two city-based businessmen and thoroughly examined their books of accounts through which their business transactions with these new entities have surfaced.

Although the ED is not revealing the names of these connected real estate and film production units as well as the NGO, the central agency sleuths have decided to summon their associates one after another and grill them. The production firm behind a recently released Bengali movie is also under the scanner of the ED sleuths.

One of the two Kolkata-based businessmen who was ques-



tioned by ED was Bikram Sikaria, the owner of Gajraj Group, from whose office at Earl Street in South Kolkata the Rs 1.40 crore of unaccounted cash was recovered by the central agency sleuths on February 8.

On the very next day, the central agency had issued an official release claiming that the seized cash was unaccounted and part of the total cash payment of approximately Rs 9 crore for a property called Salasar Guest House, at an undervalued price.

The ED also questioned another businessman named Manjit Singh Grewal aka Jitti Bhai, who actually purchased that property of Salasar House at the undervalued price.

In the statement issued on February 9, the probe agency claimed that the recovered Rs 1.40 crore cash was part of the coal scam proceeds. "The market value of this property is more than Rs 12 crore, however the deed value of the same is shown at around Rs 3 crore.

This money was part of the agreed differential amount to be paid in cash from the proceeds generated from coal smuggling," the statement read.

In the statement, ED also made a serious revelation that one highly influential political person was making an attempt to launder the proceeds of crime originating from coal smuggling through his close confidant Manjit Singh Grewal, who was also involved in handling illegal cash of a minister.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.



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SC SEEKS CENTRE'S RESPONSE ON FAILURE TO ASSESS BEARING CAPACITY OF FRAGILE HIMALAYAN REGION

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Against the backdrop of the recent land cracking and sinking issues in Joshimath, a plea has been filed in the Supreme Court raising the failure of Centre and state governments in assessing the "carrying capacity or bearing capacity" of the ecological fragile Indian Himalayan region.

The plea claimed this region, which is spread across 13 states/Union Territories (UTs), is facing issues of unsustainable and hydrologically disastrous constructions - home stays, hotels, and commercial accommodations - hydropower projects and unregulated tourism, which has allegedly collapsed the drainage and waste management system.

The plea filed by Ashok Kumar Raghav, which was argued by advocate Akash Vashishtha before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, said the governments in the Indian Himalayan Region, spread across 13 states/UTs - have failed in preparing and implementing the master plans/tourism plans/layout/area development/zonal plans, and also failed to the "carrying capacity or bearing capacity of ecologically fragile areas," which is home to nearly 50 million people.



The region includes: Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.

The plea said, "Carrying or bearing capacity of the ecologically fragile areas, hill stations, and highly visited areas in hills is necessary as the same would inter alia determine how much can a given place bear the load of human population or human intervention and the extent of infrastructure projects could be permitted, given its geological/tectonic/seismic position, water resources available, food, habitat, air quality and other resources."

It further added that due to non-existent carrying/bearing capacity studies, grave geological hazards in the form of landslides, land subsidence, land cracking and sinking issues such as that in Joshimath and previously as flash floods/glacial bursts in Kedarnath (2013) and Chamoli (2021), are being witnessed and serious ecological and environmental degradation is taking place in the hills.

The plea added, "That the Uttarakhand Tourism Policy 2018, of

the Department of Tourism, State of Uttarakhand, had itself recognised identification of the permissible carrying capacities as a major challenge of the Uttarakhand Tourism. The objectives of the said policy are, inter alia, to resolve the carrying capacity issues of the prominent tourism destinations in the state."

On Friday, the Supreme Court asked the petitioner to approach the National Green Tribunal. However, Vashishtha insisted that there is a bar under Section 14 of the NGT Act as there has to be a specific case of environmental violation. After Vashishtha pressed that this is an important issue, the Supreme Court issued notice to the Centre, Ministry of Jal Shakti, and others.

The plea added that 56,37,102 tourists visited Himachal Pradesh in 2021, which was 75.43 per cent over that recorded in 2020. The places which witnessed the most number of visitors include but not limited to Shimla, Manali, Lahaul & Spiti, Sirmour, Bilaspur and Chamba.

"In 2020, 32,13,379 persons toured Himachal Pradesh, which was 81.33 per cent above that recorded in 2019. In 2019, 1,72,12,107 visitors arrived in the state, according to the tourist statistics of the Department of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh," it added.

Entire Rs 16,982 cr GST compensation cess to states to be cleared: FM

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday that the entire GST compensation cess for June 2022 totalling Rs 16,982 crore will be cleared.

She said this while addressing a press conference soon after the 49th meeting of the GST Council ended.

She also informed that Rs 16,524 crore to six states which have submitted the account general's (AG) certificate will also be released.

Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are among the six states which have submitted AG certificates.

Though submission of AG certificate is a requirement for the states to seek GST compensation, Sitharaman said that it wasn't a strict pre-requisite, as 90 per cent of funds are anyway released to the states, while the remaining amount is given after the AG certificate is submitted.

The GST Council meeting, which was held at Vigyan Bhavan here, discussed matters pertaining to setting up of appellate tribunals and curbing tax evasion in pan masala and gutkha businesses.

The group of ministers' (GoM) report on taxation for pan masala was accepted by the council. At the meeting, the GST Council decided to reduce GST on pencil sharpeners and certain tracking devices. Exemption on coal rejects supplied by and to the washeries was also approved by the Council. Also, GST on a type of liquid jaggery has been reduced to nil from 18 per cent if sold loose. If its pre-packaged and labelled, the tax rate on it



would be 5 per cent. The GST Council also recommended rationalisation of late fee for delayed filing of annual returns.

However, no decision could be arrived at by the fitment committee for SUVs and MUVs.

Sitharaman said that the GST Council decided to tax services supplied by courts and tribunals under the reverse charge mechanism.

She also informed that the decision on the GST Appellate Tribunal has been accepted with change in language and the modification in draft will be circulated within a week.

Sitharaman said that she expects to finalise the GoM report on GST tribunals with slight modifications so that it is ready by March 1 and can be included in the Finance Bill.

The GoM's report on online gaming could not be taken up at the meeting as the Chairman of the GoM, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, could not attend the meeting due to the upcoming Assembly elections in the state, the Finance Minister said.

Pak Defence Minister acknowledges country has already gone bankrupt

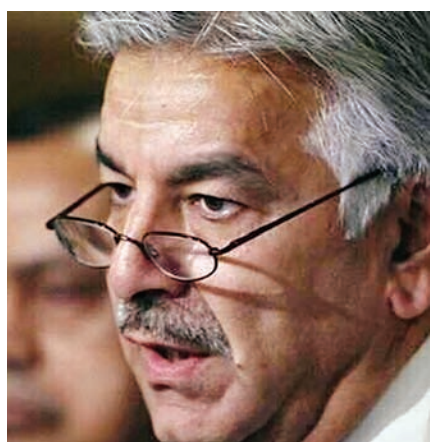
Sialkot | Agencies

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif suggested on Saturday that one-fourth of Pakistan's debt could be paid off if only two golf clubs built on expensive government land are sold, media reports said.

The minister acknowledged that the country has already gone bankrupt, and that the solution to the country's problems lies within the country, and not with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Samaa TV reported.

He also blamed the establishment, bureaucracy, and politicians for the current economic situation.

Asif revealed that he has been in the Parliament for 33 years and had witnessed the country's politics being disgraced for 32 of those years. The PML-N leader also pointed out that golf clubs had been built on government land, and that selling two of them would reduce one-fourth of Pakistan's debt, Samaa TV reported. Asif also expressed his condolences for the loss of personnel in the fight against terrorism, saying that security agencies are working tirelessly to combat the issue.



He claimed that terrorists were allowed to settle in the country two years ago.

Asif also said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will announce major austerity measures in all government institutions to control the fiscal deficit by minimising government expenditures, The Express Tribune reported.

Congress must decide on Oppn unity without delay: Nitish Kumar

Patna | Agencies

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said on Saturday that the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi must take a decision on Opposition unity without any delay.

Speaking at the 11th national convention of CPI-ML held at the Sri Krishna Memorial hall here, Nitish Kumar said, "If all the Opposition parties, including the Congress, fight together, BJP will get less than 100 seats in next year's Lok Sabha elections."

"I met Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi soon after the formation of the Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar. Now I am waiting for Congress to take a decision on Opposition unity," the Chief Minister said.

"If Congress leads the Opposition unity and takes my suggestions, BJP will get below 100 seats in the Lok Sabha elections. We are working for Opposition unity in Bihar," Kumar said. "When I



came out of the NDA, every opposition party welcomed me. If every opposition party unites before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, BJP will face a whitewash. I have no personal wish to lead the country. I just want change. Whatever is decided by the Opposition parties, I will accept it," Nitish Kumar said. The event was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, Congress leader Salman Khurshid, and former Bihar Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi.

"WHO SHOULD SAY I LOVE YOU FIRST": CONGRESS LEADER ON OPPOSITION UNITY

Patna: It is a question of who utters I love you first, senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid said on Saturday, with reference to his party's intent to forge opposition unity and take on the BJP juggernaut in Lok Sabha polls next year.

"Honorable chief minister, you made many points, some bluntly and others indirectly", Mr Khurshid said about the speech of Kumar, the JD(U) boss, who had exhorted the grand old party to take the lead in forging opposition unity.

"As far as my understanding of my own party goes, I can assure you that your sentiments are shared by us. But the situation is akin to lovers taking their time to decide who should say I love you first", said the senior Congress leader evoking peals of laughter.

"Something Big" Buzz as Shivraj Singh Chouhan calls Ministers for Sunday meet

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has called a meeting of his cabinet colleagues today, sparking a buzz about "something big likely to happen".

BJP sources said Chouhan asked ministers to be in Bhopal for 12 hours on Sunday.

The call for the meeting came hours after Chouhan met with Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of the BJP's ideological mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), for 45 minutes at its headquarters in Nagpur on Wednesday.

"We have been called to the Chief Minister's house. He will meet us one by one from 11 am and will hold the cabinet meeting at 6 pm (on Sunday). We have been told to attend the cabinet meeting. He may discuss some incidents during the Vikas Yatra, or the report card of some low-performing ministers... just as he did with MLAs



based on the findings of the party's internal surveys," a BJP minister told NDTV, asking not to be named.

The Vikas Yatra started on February 5 and will end on February 25.

There has been speculation about a refreshed cabinet for the past few months. The Madhya Pradesh assembly election is some nine months away.

"It is not normal for the government to hold a cabinet meeting on Sunday. Anything can happen or it can also turn out to be nothing," another BJP leader told NDTV, requesting anonymity.

The buzz is that there could be a repeated of what happened in Gujarat in September 2021, when former Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and his cabinet quit, opening the way for a completely new Gujarat council of ministers headed by Bhupendra Patel 14 months before the assembly election held towards the end of 2022.

NIA raids PFI hideouts in Rajasthan, seize weapons

Jaipur | Agencies

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is conducting raids since Saturday morning at the hideouts of Popular Front of India (PFI) in connection with a terror funding case.

The NIA, sources said, raided the houses of PFI members at seven locations in Rajasthan and arrested several of its members. During the raids, digital devices, airguns, sharp weapons and incriminating documents were seized. The NIA probe is underway in Jaipur, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur and Kota. The agency conducted three raids in Kota, while other places raided include Jaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Bundi and Bhillwara.

The NIA raided the house of Imran Rangrez, a resident of Gulnagari in Bhillwara, early on Saturday morning. Rangrez is a social activist



of the SDPI and also a former PFI worker. However, the NIA team did not give any inputs in this regard to the local police.

Sources said that the NIA team reached Kota early on Saturday morning and conducted raids in the Rampura police station area.

According to information received from NIA sources, accused Sadiq Saraf, a resident of Baran, and Mohdammed Asif, were arrested in the raids conducted earlier in Rajasthan.

CBI summons Manish Sisodia in Delhi Excise Policy case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday summoned Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia to join the investigation in the excise policy scam case on Sunday.

Sisodia will have to join the investigation by 11 a.m. at the CBI headquarters in the national capital. In response to the development, Sisodia said in a tweet that the CBI wants to stop the ongoing development in Delhi. "CBI has called me again on Sunday. They have put full force of CBI and ED against me. They raided my home,

HI GOVERN



searched my bank locker but didn't find anything. I have made arrangements of best education system in Delhi, they want to stop it. But I have always supported in their investigation and will do," he added.

Chidambaram slams George Soros over 'revival of democracy' remark

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader and former finance minister P.

Chidambaram on Saturday reacted sharply to George Soros's "revival of democracy" remark.

In a series of tweets he said, "I did not agree with most of what George Soros had said in the past and I do not agree with most of what he says now. But to label his remarks as an "attempt to topple the democratically elected government in India" is a puerile statement".

The former union minister further said in the tweet that the people of India will determine who will be in



and who will be out of the government of India. "I did not know that the Modi government was so feeble that it can be toppled by the stray statement of a 92 year old rich foreign national", he said in another tweet.

He further said to ignore George Soros and listen to Nouriel Roubini. "Roubini warned that India is increasingly driven by large private conglomerates that can potentially hamper competition and kill new entrants". "Liberalisation was to usher in an open, competitive economy. The Modi government's policies have created oligopolies", he concluded in the tweets.



IAF PLANE CARRYING 12 CHEETAHS FROM SOUTH AFRICA ARRIVES IN GWALIOR

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indian Air Force's (IAF) C-17 Globemaster plane carrying as many as 12 cheetahs from South Africa arrived in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior airport on Saturday afternoon, months after eight big cats had been ferried from Namibia.

After reaching the Gwalior air base, the big cats were taken to Kuno National Park, which is located around 200 km, along with South African cheetah experts. Thereafter, the cheetahs would be released into quarantine bomas by the Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also joined the Union Minister on this occasion. As per the official information, of the 12 cheetahs -- seven males and five females -- will find their new home at Kuno National Park in Sheopur



district. As many as 10 quarantine enclosures have been created at the reserve for the big cats, officials said. As per Indian wildlife laws, the animals are required to be kept in isolation for 30 days after their arrival in the country. In September 2022, eight cheetahs from Namibia were flown into India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released the big cats to the Kuno National Park on his birthday -- September 17. The eight Namibian cheetahs are

now in a hunting enclosure -- a six square km-area where they can interact with each other -- and will soon be released into the wild.

The relocation of 12 cheetahs from South Africa comes three years after the idea was mooted by the Centre -- the world's first inter-continental translocation project that aims at reintroducing the big cats in the country.

The last cheetah died in India in 1947, and the species was declared extinct from the country in 1952.

KUNO CENTURY WILL BECOME THE CENTER OF ATTRACTION OF ASIA: CHIEF MINISTER

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that with the return of cheetah in India, the broken link of biodiversity has now been rejoined. He said that now with 20 leopards, the Kuno Century will become a center of attraction in Asia. Chief Minister Chouhan freed 2 cheetahs from the cage out of 12 cheetahs that came from South Africa in the century. Union Forest and Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, State Forest Minister Dr. Kunwar Vijay Shah had a dignified presence. As soon as the Chief Minister released the leopard from the cage, it started roaming in the enclosure. After the end of the quarantine period, they will be freed for free movement.

Planting saplings everyday by Chief Minister Chouhan Echoes globally

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In this era of ill-effects of climate change and global warming, Madhya Pradesh's name has been established as a brand committed to environment protection in the country and abroad by planting saplings every day by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Chouhan. When climate change and prevention of effects of global warming are being discussed only academically in conferences, seminars and environmental debates in the country and abroad, Shivraj Singh Chouhan has taken a vow to

work in this regard on a personal level. It was a vow to plant saplings everyday and to involve people in the daily undertaking of planting saplings. Two years ago today, Chief Minister Chouhan visited Amarkantak, the origin place of Maa Narmada, on 19 February 2021. He started planting saplings every day on the occasion of Narmada Jayanti, which he is continuing even after two years. Be it the change of weather like winter, summer, rain or his own health problems, or the busyness of discharging the responsibilities of the Chief Minister and the complica-

tions of migrations in the state and outside the state, no situation deters him from his vow of planting saplings every day. Chouhan planted about 2200 saplings in 730 days of these two years. The activity of planting saplings expanded from many towns and cities of the state including Bhopal to 12 states of the country. Now the situation is that along with Chief Minister Chouhan, many social organizations and individuals, planting saplings with self-motivation. This is the reason why this effort of social concern started from zero is continuously moving towards becoming infinite.

4 KILLED, 20 INJURED AS BUS OVERTURNS IN SAGAR

Sagar: Four persons, including a woman, were killed and more than 20 others injured when a speeding bus overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district on Saturday morning, an official said. Of the injured, three are critical, he said. The accident occurred at Niwar Ghati on Sagar-Chhatrapur Road, some 70 km from the district headquarters, under Chhanbila police station limits around 6 am, Superintendent of Police Tarun Nayak said.

The SP said the Indore-Chhatrapur passenger bus overturned in which four persons were killed and more than 20 injured.

Three critically injured passengers have been sent to Sagar district hospital, he said.

Those dead are yet to be identified, he added.

Internationally renowned Khajuraho Dance Festival from 20 to 26 February

Governor Patel will inaugurate. Madhya Pradesh State Rupankar Art Award ceremony will be held along with the exhibition Adventure activities of tourism

Team Absolute | Bhopal

UNESCO World Heritage Site Khajuraho, the ancient city of Chandelas, will once again witness a unique confluence of praise of the Lord and classical dance. In the 49th Khajuraho Dance Festival, from February 20 to 26, the spring of art will bloom on the Khajuraho amphitheater. Governor Mangubhai Patel will inaugurate 'Khajuraho Dance Festival-2023' on February 20 at 7 pm. Tourism, Culture and Religious Trust and Endowment Minister Usha Thakur and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Om Prakash Sakshalecha along with MP Vishnu Dutt Sharma will be present. Madhya Pradesh State Rupankar Kala Puraskar will be given at the ceremony and an exhibition of artists' artworks will also be held at the venue.

The colors of art and culture will spread on the land of Khujraho



The festival is being organized with the joint efforts of Department of Culture, Ustad Alladin Khan Music and Arts

Academy, Tourism Department, Archaeological Survey of India, World Dance Alliance and Chhatrapur District

Administration. During this, the cultural landscape of Indian dance-styles and the exhibition of art-travel focused on Kathakali-Backstage, art exhibition of other countries of the world including India, Art-Mart, search of new language of dance by dance artists of India and 5 countries-Choreo Lab-rhythm flow, dialogue of artists and artists-Kalavarta, senior painter Shubha Vaidya's concentrated exhibition on the art contribution-Pranati, fair of indigenous knowledge and tradition-terracotta with skills and ceramic national exhibition workshop-Samshti will be major attractions.

This time too, various dance styles from Bharat Natyam to Kathak, Kuchipudi will present the cultural splendor of India. Famous artists of the country and the world will give dance performances. Following the ancient tradition, this year also the Khajuraho dance festival will become the aura of the temple premises, which will be a unique confluence of

dance and devotion to God.

Tourists will be able to enjoy adventure activities

Along with cultural programs, art lovers and tourists will also enjoy adventure activities in Khajuraho. Tourists will be able to get acquainted with the culture, heritage, traditions, customs and cuisine of the particular region. Thrilling activities like Glamping, Village Tour, Walk with Pardi, E-Bike Tour, Seg-way Tour, Water Adventure can be enjoyed in the festival. Along with this, tourists will also enjoy the taste of local culture, art and local Bundeli cuisine.

This is the country's top festival focused on Indian classical dance styles, which is famous at the national and international level. Entry to the ceremony will be free for all spectators. The ceremony will be broadcast live on the YouTube channel of the Culture Department and on the Facebook page and YouTube channel of Khajuraho Dance Festival.

Chief Minister Chouhan planted Rudraksh, Peepal and Neem saplings on Mahashivaratri

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted Rudraksh, Peepal and Neem in the garden situated at Shyamala Hills on the occasion of Mahashivaratri. Sadhvi Krishna Kishori and Harimohan Das, who came from Vrindavan, participated in planting saplings. Social worker and President M.P. Cricket Association for Blind Raghavendra Sharma was also present. Along with Chief Minister Chouhan, members of Lakshya Educational and Social Welfare Society also planted saplings. Ashish Patel, Shivam Baghel, Abhishek Sahu and Ruchi Samudre,



Ritika Pal, Khushbu Vishwakarma, Chanchal Gaur and Aarti Maravi of Lakshya Society, working in

the field of school education, women empowerment and environment, planted saplings.

BJP LEADER RIDES HORSE AT PARTY'S VIKAS YATRA IN KHARGONE

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Madhya Pradesh Agriculture Minister, Balkrishna Patidar, was seen riding a horse to a village in the state as part of the BJP government's Vikas Yatra. The senior politician was seen controlling the horse alone with a huge crowd surrounding him.

The BJP's Vikas Yatra entered Khargone district's Thibgaon on Thursday night where Balkrishna Patidar was welcomed by a jubilant crowd.

A video from the rally shows the 69-year-old former minister mounted on a horse as villagers greet him with thumping beats of dhols and fire-works. At one point, the horse gets agitated due to the noise and starts moving erratically. But, Mr Patidar firmly holds the reins and controls the horse as it jumps around. Later, the BJP leader is seen attending a cer-



emony. Speaking about riding the horse, Balkrishna Patidar said, "Ghoda humara maza le raha tha, hum ghode ke maze le rahe the (the

horse was having fun and so was I)." The former minister shared that he rode the horse at the demand of the villagers, who had brought the animal

for him. Patidar further said that the public is happy with the development in Madhya Pradesh and that it was reflecting in the yatra. He added that people were celebrating the work done for them and he was just a part of it.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan flagged off the Vikas Yatras in the state this month. The march will continue till February 25. According to BJP leaders, the Vikas Yatras are aimed at spreading the Madhya Pradesh government's development mantra across the state. The party said that during the march, the state government will interact with beneficiaries of various schemes and launch development projects.

The Assembly elections are scheduled in Madhya Pradesh this year where the BJP is aiming to return to power.

AIIMS Bhopal adopted TB patients

Team Absolute | Bhopal

It is no secret that India has the largest number of people infected with TB in the world. Over the years, we have seen T.B. in the society and it's battling effects, but now there is a race to end this disease like never before. We all know that the main initiative has been taken by the Honorable Prime Minister of India who has made a commitment to make India TB free by 2025. Under the National TB Elimination Programme and its TB Mitra yojna, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare encourages everyone to become a TB Mitra and adopt patients through which TB Mitras will take care of TB patients and provide vocational training to patients and/or take responsibility for their six months good quality nutrition.

Under this scheme, a program was organized at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhopal on February 17, 2023, in which five patients each were adopted by Canara Bank and AIIMS Bhopal and the responsibilities of their nutritional supply for six months were taken up. On this occasion, Executive Director, Prof (Dr) Ajai Singh, Deputy Director (Administration) Colonel Dr. Ajit Singh, Medical Superintendent Prof (Dr) Manisha Shrivastava were the main dignitaries on behalf of AIIMS Bhopal while Mr. Vikram Duggal (Canara Bank), Prof (Dr) Manoj Topo (STP Chairperson), Dr. Varsha Rai



(STO) and Mr. Manoj Verma (DTO) attended the event on behalf of State TB Cell. On this occasion, Prof. Ajai Singh expressed his commitment on behalf of AIIMS Bhopal in TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan and announced that AIIMS Bhopal would adopt fifty more patients in the next few weeks and this adoption of five patients was just a beginning.

At the same time, he also emphasized that AIIMS Bhopal and State TB. officials should work together in the goal of TB-free India and ensure that no TB patient in remote areas, be

it pulmonary TB, bone TB or any other type, is left without immediate treatment. He briefed the audience that villages of Shivpuri and Bhojpur have already been adopted by the institute and the institute stands committed to its mandate of providing best and accessible services to the people of Madhya Pradesh.

On behalf of Canara Bank, Mr. Vikram Duggal while addressing everyone said that the bank is open to other such activities and is keen to work closely with AIIMS. Praising Canara Bank and AIIMS Bhopal, Prof.

Manju Topo and Dr. Varsha Rai, on behalf of State TB Cell, said that they are ready to cooperate in every way and together with AIIMS to eliminate TB in the state of Madhya Pradesh. They praised Canara Bank and AIIMS for this initiative. In the end, Prof Manisha Shrivastava thanked everyone and said that the institutional TB Core Committee would make more and more doctors and staff TB Mitras inside the AIIMS Bhopal premises, so that everyone could contribute to the overall improvement of these patients.

2 held for supplying illegal weapons to Neeraj Bawana gang in Delhi-NCR

Team Absolute | New Delhi/Bhopal

Two persons, including a juvenile, have been apprehended for procuring illegal weapons from Madhya Pradesh and then supplying them to the members of Neeraj Bawana gang in Delhi and its peripherals, said an official on Saturday.

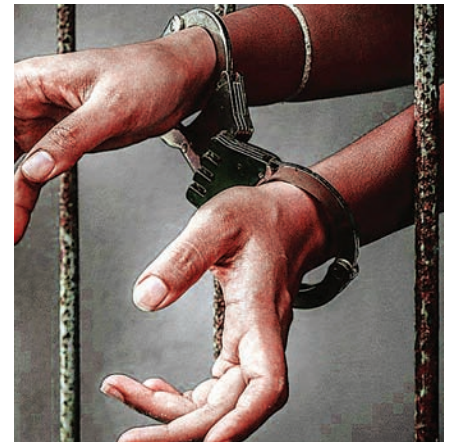
The accused have been identified as Mohd. Sameer (19), a resident of Delhi's Shaheen Bagh and a juvenile.

Police have also recovered 10 pistols, including four semi-automatic pistols of .30 bore, two pistols of .32 bore and four single shot pistols of .315 bore, and a Maruti Ertiga car used in carrying firearms from the possession of the accused duo.

"There was an input that gangsters and hardcore criminals of Delhi-NCR have been procuring sophisticated firearms from Madhya Pradesh-based arms suppliers. This information was further developed by the team. After efforts of more than four months, members of an inter-state illegal firearm syndicate were identified," said Alok Kumar, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell).

On February 15, specific information was received that two active members of an arms trafficking syndicate namely Mohd. Sameer and a juvenile had procured a consignment of pistols from Khargone, Madhya Pradesh, and they had brought them to Delhi in the Ertiga car.

"Acting on the information, a trap was laid by the police team led by Inspectors Shiv Kumar and Jitender under the supervision of ACP Attar Singh. The duo arms traffickers



were nabbed near NTPC Eco Park, Kalindi Kunj-Mithapur Road, Delhi. A total of six pistols were recovered from Mohd. Sameer and four pistols were recovered from the juvenile," the DCP added.

Upon questioning, both the arms traffickers have disclosed that they had procured recovered pistols from a notorious arms supplier in Khargone and brought the consignment in Delhi as per the directions of their Uttar Pradesh-based handler.

"Pistols were to be further supplied to the members of Neeraj Bawana gang in Delhi by them. The accused also revealed that they have already brought three more consignments of pistols during the last six months and further supplied the same to the members of Neeraj Bawana gang and other criminals in Delhi as directed by their handler," said the DCP.



AFTER ECI RULING, MAHA CM, MINISTERS CHANGE TO NEW NAME-SYMBOL

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Day after the Election Commission of India (ECI) awarded the original 'Shiv Sena' name and 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol to the breakaway faction, several of its leaders adopted the new identity on their social media profiles on Saturday.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, several of his Ministers like Shambhuraj Desai, Uday Samant, Deepak Kesarkar, Tanaji Sawant, Abdul Sattar and many MPs and MLAs have now switched over to the new name-symbol on their social media accounts.

The ECI on Friday allotted the name-symbol to the Shinde faction, which was earlier given the name of 'Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena'



and had a symbol of 'Two Swords and Shield', sparking a political furore in the state.

Strongly protesting at the ECI verdict, the Shiv Sena (UBT), headed by former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced that it would challenge the decision in the court, and was backed by its ally, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi President Prakash Ambedkar. The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of

Sena (UBT), Congress and Nationalist Congress Party have also flayed the ECI's move in very strong words, terming it as "hasty, unexpected, injustice, amounts to death of democracy".

The Sena (UBT) will be permitted to use Aits present name-symbol -- allotted in October 2022 -- only till the Pune by-elections are completed on February 26, as per the ECI order.

THACKERAY THUNDERS AT ECI ORDER, VOWS TO FINISH OFF 'THIEVES' IN ELECTIONS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a massive show of strength, Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray targeted the Election Commission of India, terming it as a 'slave' of the Centre and vowed to finish off the 'thieves' who have been given the original 'Shiv Sena' name and 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol, here on Saturday. "These thieves have stolen the name and symbol of Balasaheb Thackeray's party... It was done on the eve of Maha Shivratri today and Shivaji Jayanti tomorrow. But my 'Sainiks' (soldiers) are with me. We shall not rest till we bury these robbers in the elections," roared Thackeray amidst loud rounds of applause.

Slamming the Centre, he said that all institutions including the ECI have become the slaves of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but they can never 'destroy' Balasaheb Thackeray's Shiv Sena, though the name-symbol has been given away to the breakaway group led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. "Even the ECI commissioners are behaving like Modi's slaves... probably they may be rewarded with some plum posts after retirement... But the people of Maharashtra know very well who is genuine... I challenge these stealers to come for the electoral battle with the 'Bow-and-Arrow'... We will



confront you with our 'Flaming Torch', and teach you a lesson," Thackeray dared the Shinde group.

Citing precedents, the former chief minister claimed that in the past there were similar disputes in the Congress, Samajwadi Party and the AIADMK, but never was the original party name or symbol given to the breakaway faction, but this time, "the ECI gave our name-symbol to those

thieves."

Virtually taking to the streets and interacting directly with the grassroots workers, Thackeray stood atop a vehicle to address an impromptu rally at the Kalanagar Junction in Bandra east.

Way back on October 30, 1968, his father the late Balasaheb Thackeray had also stood on the roof of a car to give a public speech to a large group of his supporters, photos of which emerged on the social media today, drawing comparisons with Uddhav Thackeray's meeting on Saturday.

Earlier, the Sena (UBT) top leaders, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and others gathered for a meeting to chalk out the future strategy after the ECI's stunning order of Friday that created a huge political row in the state.

Meanwhile, thousands of supporters from Mumbai and other parts of the state converged outside the Thackerays' family home 'Matoshree', carrying banners, posters supporting him, and raising slogans in his favour, after which Thackeray came out to greet and speak with them.

Thackeray is understood to have told all leaders and workers to shift to the fighter mode, and fully prepare to tackle all the barbs that the Shinde faction may hurl in the coming days including during the Budget Session of the Maharashtra Legislature.

HYDERABAD'S JAIL-THEMED RESTAURANT NAMES ITS BIGGEST THALI AFTER SONU SOOD



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sonu Sood, who is known for his philanthropic work, was recently honoured as Gismat Jail Mandi near Kondapur, Hyderabad launched the biggest plate in India 'Sonu Sood Plate' across all 17 branches for the actor.

Sonu Sood appreciated Gismat Jail Mandi for coming up with such an innovative idea around food that'll only enhance joy among people. Gismat Jail Mandi founder Gautamy Choudary also added that it's named after actor Sonu Sood because the actor has a big heart.

The Sonu Sood plate can accommodate as many as 12 members of a fami-

ly to feast all at once with a variety of food.

The plate has already become a raging success in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as families have flocked to the restaurant just to eat the Sonu Sood plate. At the launch, fans were present at the restaurant to just catch a glimpse of the actor, click selfies, and thank him for his humanitarian work he's been doing non-stop.

Sonu Sood had served the people during the thick of the pandemic during both the first and second waves. During the first wave, he had made the arrangements to help stranded people in Mumbai reach their hometowns and during the second wave, he had arranged for medical essentials.

Ramesh Bais takes oath as new Maharashtra Governor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Senior BJP leader and former Governor of Jharkhand Ramesh Bais was sworn-in as the 20th Governor of Maharashtra here on Saturday afternoon.

Bombay High Court Acting Chief Justice SV. Gangapurwala administered the oath of office to Bais at a brief function held in the Raj Bhavan. In what is described as a special goodwill gesture, Bais took the oath in Marathi language, and was later felicitated with bouquets by Acting Chief Justice Gangapurwala and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Besides Shinde, his cabinet colleagues, Speaker Rahul Narwekar, prominent dignitaries, top officials and other select invitees were also present on the occasion.

Bais, 75, was transferred from Jharkhand to Maharashtra last Sunday after the former Governor



here Bhagat Singh Koshyari

resigned to opt for retirement.

Dalit student's suicide: IIT Bombay forms panel for "parallel" probe

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay has formed a panel to conduct a "parallel" probe into the death of a first-year B.Tech student amid allegations of caste bias and has urged its students to come forward if they have "relevant" information.

The panel is headed by Professor Nand Kishore and also has SC/ST Students Cell members, including faculty and students, a few student mentor coordinators and the in-charge chief medical officer of IIT Bombay hospital, said a statement by institute Director Subhasis Chaudhuri on Saturday.

Darshan Solanki (18), who belonged to a Scheduled Caste community, allegedly died by suicide by jumping off the seventh floor of a hostel building on the Powai campus of the IIT on February 12, but his family suspects something wrong in his death and



said he faced discrimination.

The Powai police are investigating the matter and have also visited Solanki's home in Ahmedabad.

Highlighting that Prof. Nand Kishore was the chief vigilance officer of IIT Bombay till recently and is experienced "in these matters", Chaudhuri said that the committee is actively meeting everyone who might have relevant information.

"If you have any information that you believe may be relevant, please reach out to the committee by either meeting any of the committee members, or by emailing Prof. Nand Kishore or to the Powai Police," Chaudhuri appealed through the statement.

IIT Bombay and police are actively investigating the "environment, incidents, and reasons

behind Darshan's tragic death", it said. The police have interviewed a large number of people, and also taken Solanki's phone and laptop for forensic analysis, Chaudhuri said.

In the statement, Chaudhuri said IIT B is working towards changes in their UG curriculum, starting with the batch of 2022, to make it "more relevant and motivating to students, and to reduce some of the stress".

Calling some media reports about the student's death "premature", Chaudhuri said that "as the matter is sub-judice so we cannot comment on the causes until either police report or our inquiry committee report is ready".

According to Chaudhuri, IIT Bombay has an SC/ST students cell, where students can reach in case of issues including discrimination.

"We are working actively to create an inclusive campus where all students feel at home," Chaudhuri said.

Accept new symbol: Sharad Pawar's advice to Uddhav Thackeray

Team Absolute | Pune

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Chief Sharad Pawar remarked on the loss of the "bow and arrow" symbol of his ally Uddhav Thackeray faction on Friday, stating that it would not have any major impact.

He also stressed that the people would accept the new symbol. Pawar's remarks came after Election Commission of India (ECI) ordered that the party name "Shiv Sena" and the party symbol "Bow and Arrow" will be given to the Eknath Shinde faction. The NCP chief asked Thackeray to accept the Election Commission's decision and take a new symbol.

"It's the decision of the Election Commission. Once a decision is given, there can be



no discussion. Accept it and take a new symbol. It (the loss of the old symbol) is not going to have any major impact as people will accept (the new symbol). It just would remain in the discussion for the next 15-30 days, that's it," Pawar said. He recalled the Congress having to change its symbol from two bullocks with a yoke to hand and said that the people would accept the new sym-

bol of Uddhav Thackeray faction like the way they accepted the Congress' new symbol.

"I remember Indira Gandhi also faced this situation. Congress used to have a 'two bullocks with a yoke' symbol. Later they lost it & adopted 'hand' as a new symbol & people accepted it. Similarly, people will accept the new symbol (of Uddhav Thackeray faction)," he said.

THACKERAY'S PLAN TO CHALLENGE ECI VERDICT IS 'CORRECT', SAYS PRAKASH AMBEDKAR

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) President Prakash Ambedkar on Saturday termed as "correct" the plan by Shiv Sena (UBT) to challenge the Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision allotting the original 'Shiv Sena' name and 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol to the breakaway group, led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in the high court or Supreme Court.

The VBA entered into an electoral tie-up with Sena (UBT) last month and will contest the upcoming civic elections together.

Ambedkar said the Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray is on the right path to challenge the ECI's move. Nevertheless, the VBA chief also raised doubts whether taking the decision on a political party name and symbol was within the ECI's domain or not. Ex-Chief Minister and Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray has convened a meeting of all top party leaders in Mumbai this afternoon to chalk out the further strategy. The Sena (UBT) - which is a constituent of the Maha Vikas Aghadi comprising Congress and Nationalist Congress Party - had entered into an independent alliance with Ambedkar's VBA. The ECI ruling has been flayed by the Sena (UBT) and the MVA allies in very strong words, terming it as "hasty, unexpected, injustice, amounts to death of democracy," etc, while a furious Thackeray and other party leaders announced last night that they would move the courts against the decision. The original 'Shiv Sena' with a symbol of 'Bow-and-Arrow' and logo of a tiger, was founded in June 1966 by the cartoonist-turned-politician, the late Balasaheb Thackeray. However, the party split in June 2022, and the faction led by Uddhav Thackeray was given the name of Shiv Sena (UBT) with a new symbol of Flaming Torch, while the group led by Shinde was handed the identity of Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena, till the ECI verdict of February 17 allotting it the original name-symbol.



New data shows mumbai air pollution rose sharply

Team Absolute | New Delhi/ Mumbai

Much has been made of Mumbai's air pollution in recent months being worse than Delhi's notorious pollution. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal even tweeted a global ranking, in which Mumbai was placed second, saying that after a long time the national capital was not in the list of the world's most polluted cities.

That was on a day, however, when the Delhi region benefited from strong winds blowing away much of the pollutants in the air. The ranking was by a Swiss firm, IQ Air, and is updated frequently.

While Mumbai's air quality has indeed deteriorated, new data from IQ Air shows different and worrying trends about the real picture.

In NDTV exclusive, data shows that the national capital's pollution levels have been consistently twice the level of India's financial capital, Mumbai. This is based on the measurement of PM 2.5 pollutant levels, which is the microscopic and lethal particulate matter (PM) that can beat the human body's defences and embed itself deep in the lungs and thence into other organs. The new data (table below) shows how Delhi's air pollution level has been higher than Mumbai's every month in 2022, particularly in November-December, which was when Mumbai's air pollution first made headlines for surpassing the national capital's. Delhi's air pollution level has been higher than Mumbai's every month in 2022.

And it's not just recent months. For the past four years, Delhi's annual average of PM 2.5 has been an average of 95 micrograms per cubic metre, whereas



Mumbai's has been 45.

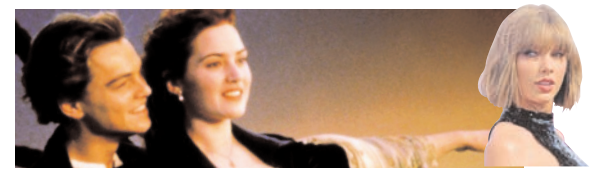
For last November and December, Delhi exceeded the WHO's safe air quality standard by almost 40 times

The metropolis on the coast usually benefits from the sea breeze clearing the city of pollution, mainly from vehicles, construction and road dust. However, this winter, doctors have reported a spurt in patients with respiratory infections, especially among children.

The data (table below) shows that PM 2.5 levels in November and December rose by 18 per cent over the previous year. The government's data reportedly shows

an even steeper increase of over 60 per cent last November. PM 2.5 levels in November and December rose by 18 per cent over the previous year.

The data, which is presented alongside the World Health Organisation's guideline (table below) for clean air, shows just how far off both cities are from the safe PM 2.5 limit of only 5 micrograms per cubic metre. For last November and December, Delhi exceeded the WHO's safe air quality standard by almost 40 times, and Mumbai by about 16 times - both very hazardous to health.

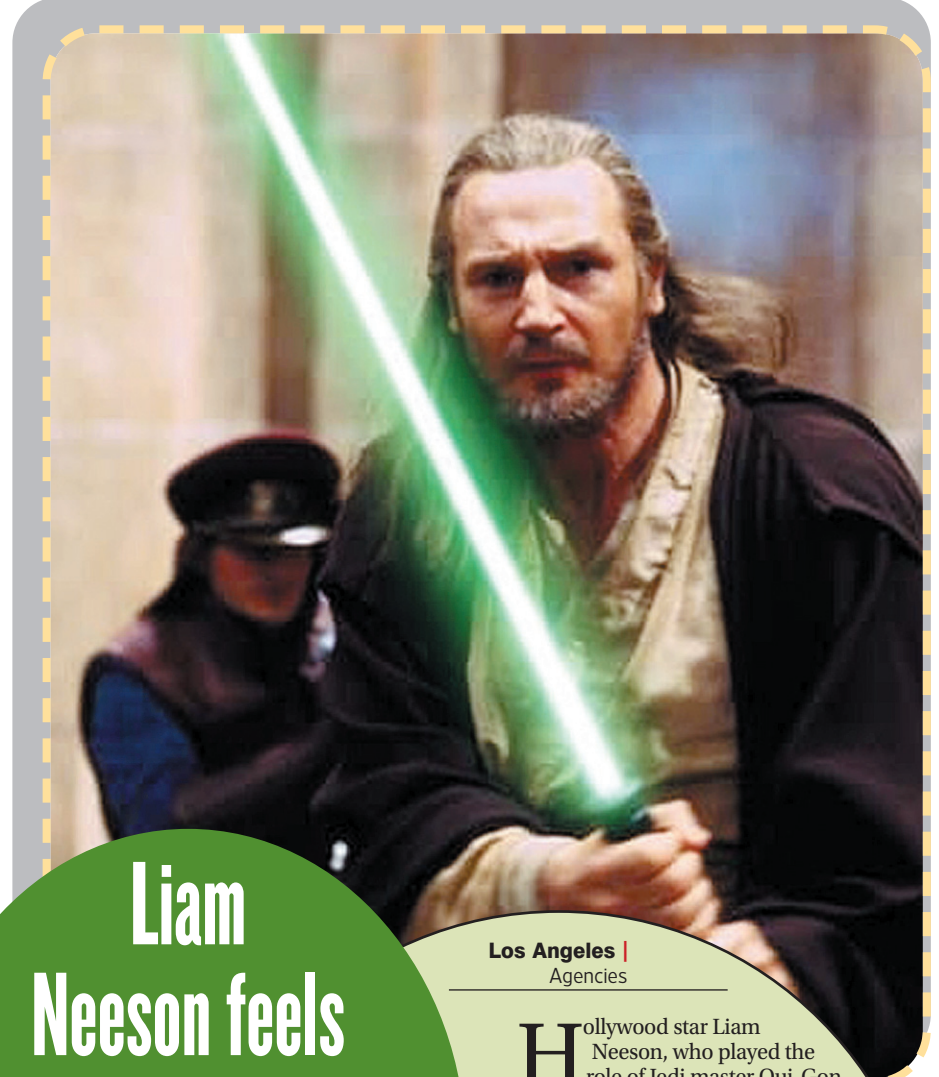


DUA LIPA IS DESPERATE TO FIND MUSIC LEAK SOURCE AHEAD OF RELEASING THIRD ALBUM



Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Dua Lipa is less excited about the release of her upcoming third album and is more in blind panic. The singer fears her new tracks will be leaked ahead of time, reports Mirror.co.uk. The 27-year-old has not had the best of luck when it comes to keeping her tunes locked up before release in the past. Her second album, 'Future Nostalgia', was leaked in its entirety two weeks before the planned release date in 2020 - prompting a hasty official release earlier than expected. As per Mirror.co.uk more recently, discarded songs from this past album have made their way online - including a collaboration with NERD superstar Pharrell Williams - sparking fears hackers could target her upcoming third album. A concerned source told The Sun: "Over the past month or so countless demos and rejected songs from Dua have been appearing online. It's annoying as they didn't make the album for a reason but obviously the main concern is to know if information about her third album is next." The source went on to say that Dua herself has stressed to her music label bosses that her third album cannot be allowed to be leaked before it is ready for official release.



Los Angeles | Agencies

Liam Neeson feels spinoffs are hurting 'Star Wars' legacy

Hollywood star Liam Neeson, who played the role of Jedi master Qui-Gon Jinn in the 'Star Wars' franchise, doesn't want to reprise his role. The actor joined Paul Rudd on the recent episode of 'Watch What Happens Live!' and he explained the reason for not wanting to reprise the role, reports Variety. It is because the 'Star Wars' franchise is damaging its own magic. "No, I'm not," Neeson said when asked if he's interested in returning. "There's so many spinoffs of 'Star Wars.' It's diluting it to me, and it's taken away the mystery and the magic in a weird way." As per Variety, Neeson had a brief cameo in the Disney+ series 'Obi-Wan Kenobi', but he only had about two lines of dialogue. The actor made his 'Star Wars' debut in 'Star Wars: The Phantom Menace', but his character died and his 'Star Wars' tenure was cut short. Neeson told ComicBook.com last year that he'd consider reprising Qui-Gon Jinn under one condition: It's got to be a movie, not a television show.

Shania Twain doesn't swear when she's in UK

Los Angeles | Agencies

Canadian singer-songwriter Shania Twain curbs her swearing when she is in the UK. The superstar - who is a new panellist on the UK talent contest 'Starstruck' - admits she has a foul mouth. But she tries not to curse as much when she's this side of the Atlantic, reports Female First UK. She told Best UK magazine: "It's very much a sister culture for me, coming from Canada. It doesn't feel foreign in many ways. I would drink tea in Canada! There's a much more relaxed sense of humour. We swear more in Canada, so I curb that a bit when I'm here! I always feel very at home here." The 'You're Still The One' hitmaker recently revealed her insecurities about her voice and the fact late music icon Prince didn't allow swearing stopped her from accepting his offer to work together. As per Female First UK, Shania was invited by the 'Purple Rain' hitmaker to his Paisley Park estate to make an album produced by him in the vein of Fleetwood Mac's 1997 'Rumours' record amid her split from her first husband, Robert John 'Mutt' Lange, who also produced and co-wrote some of her music.

ED SHEERAN PLAYS A HOMELESS DRUG ADDICT IN NEW ACTION-COMEDY FILM

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Shape of You' hitmaker Ed Sheeran is set to shock fans as he will soon be seen playing a homeless drug addict in a new action-comedy film. The 32-year-old musician will star opposite Denise van Outen, Jennifer Saunders, Jaime Winstone, Peter Serafinowicz and Kevin Bishop in a big screen adventure that was filmed in London last year, reports Mirror.co.uk. The film is titled 'Sumotherhood' and has been written and directed by Adam Deacon. In the past, Ed has caused upset in the acting world when he was crowbarred into an episode of 'Game of Thrones' but has also managed to bag appearances on 'Home and Away', 'The Simpsons' and 'Bridget Jones's Baby'. As per Mirror.co.uk, it is unclear the extent to which Ed will feature in the new film, but will be a rare instance where he is playing a character rather than himself on screen. A source told The Sun: "Ed plays this bloke who's not got a home and looks like a crack addict."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Kim Kardashian

Insta post first, family later

Los Angeles | Agencies

Why Paris Hilton kept baby's birth a secret?

Paris Hilton kept her baby's birth a secret from her entire family, the American socialite has revealed. Paris and her husband Carter Reum (41) welcomed a baby boy via surrogacy in January, reports 'Mirror.co.uk'. But 'The Simple Life' star admitted that she hid her baby's arrival from her nearest and dearest ones until just before she broke the news to the public on social media. In an interview with 'Harper's Bazaar' magazine, Paris revealed that she and her partner opted to keep their baby hidden even from their immediate family until she was ready to post the birth announcement on Instagram. Opening up about their choice, she said, as quoted by 'Mirror.co.uk', "My entire life has

been so public. I've never had anything for myself. We decided that we wanted to have this whole experience to ourselves. I want to protect him and to be with him every second. You have this mother instinct that kicks in, which I've never had before." Paris also doted over feeling 'so complete now' since welcoming their baby in the interview. While her surrogate was in labour in the hospital, Paris went so far to protect her identity that she even opted for a disguise - wearing a brunette wig - and signed into the hospital using an alias. At the time, she said of the birth of her first child: "You are already loved beyond words," before adding a blue heart emoji in the caption beneath a sweet photo of the baby's hand holding her finger.





Priya Banerjee on new series

It really challenged the actor within me

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Priya Banerjee, who was seen in 'Hello Mini', 'Twisted 3', 'Jamai 2.0', and 'Bekaboo 2', will be seen playing the female lead in the upcoming web series 'Rana Naidu', directed by Suparn Verma.

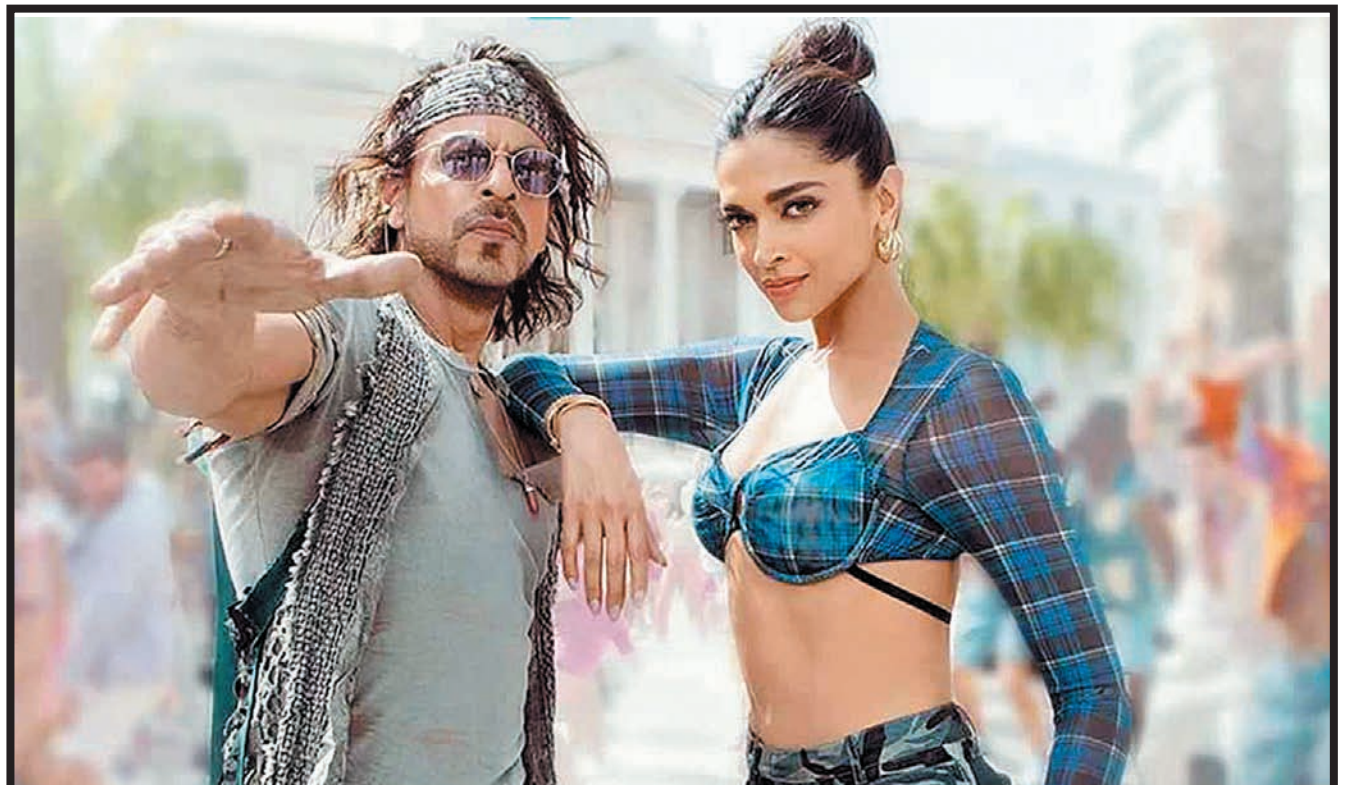
The web series is a Hindi adaptation of the American crime drama TV series 'Ray Donovan' starring Liev Schreiber in the titular role and is mainly set in the cities of Los Angeles and New York.

It is the story of Ray Donovan, who manages everything and arranges bribes or payoffs or opts for other illegal means to protect his clients.

Speaking about her character in the web show, Priya shared: "Suparn Verma contacted me regarding the role that Katie Holmes performed in the American series. When I auditioned for it, I was immediately selected."

"I am portraying a super interesting character in the show, it's something I have never done before, it really challenged the actor within me so altogether it was an incredible experience shooting for it and people will love it, I'm sure," she added.

Directed by Karan Anshuman and Suparn Verma, 'Rana Naidu' stars Rana Daggubati and Priya Banerjee.



SRK starrer's shows increase in its 4th weekend due to audience demand!

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Shah Rukh Khan has once again created magic at the box office with his recent release Pathaan. This film has not only broken several box office records but has also paved the way straight into the hearts of the fans. The

film which is having successful runs at the theatres even during fourth week, because of, #Pathaan's shows are being increased by multiplexes and single screens across the country. Pathaan is in cruise control at the box office right now and Yash Raj Films slashed ticket prices to Rs. 110 on Friday and Rs. 200 for Saturday and Sunday leading to spiking of public demand across India.

Meanwhile, all-time blockbuster Pathaan is rock-steady at the box office with collections at 981 crore gross worldwide! Directed by Siddharth Anand, Pathaan is now the highest grossing Hindi film worldwide in the history of Hindi cinema and also the highest grossing film of YRF's Spy Universe!

The film also stars Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in pivotal roles. It also has an extended cameo of Salman Khan.

NIKHITA GANDHI HAD 'MEMORABLE V-DAY' PERFORMANCE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood singer Nikhita Gandhi, who is known for her latest tracks including 'Kya Baat Hai' from the Vicky Kaushal-Kiara Advani starrer 'Govinda Naam Mera' and 'Jugnu' with Badshah, recalled her recent performance with Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor in Delhi. Her latest song 'Tere Pyaar Mein' from the Ranbir Kapoor and Shradha Kapoor-starrer 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar' has also become popular among the audience. Recently, the singer-composer performed alongside Ranbir during a concert in the national capital. Sharing the experience with the Bollywood star, Nikhita said: "The Makkaar Night concert was too much fun. I had never met Ranbir (Kapoor) before that, though we had worked on a lot of projects together, like 'Jagga Jasoos'. Ranbir was really sweet and such a nice person to meet. He was such a sport, also because we had not rehearsed his entry on stage or anything, but he just came on stage and killed it." According to the show flow, he (Ranbir) had to leave after two songs and we had to continue with our concert but he stayed back and kept entering the stage whenever songs that he knew were being performed. When I sang 'Balam Pichkari', he came back on stage and danced with me. We performed on 'Tere Pyaar Mein' again during the end of the show when he returned on the stage," shared the singer, who is also known for her groovy numbers such as 'Kya Baat Hai' with Hardly Sandhu from 'Govinda Naam Mera'.



SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI SHARES, SEVERAL PEOPLE ADVISED HIM TO NOT MAKE GANGUBAI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sanjay Leela Bhansali released the first look of his upcoming series Heeramandi at an event on February 18th. The Ram Leela director then spoke extensively about how he understands what the public wants him to produce.

According to the filmmaker, "Any filmmaker who says he knows the audience is being fooled. Nobody knows the audience. They are our everything 'Mai-Baap'." He subsequently claims that a filmmaker can only convey his own self and that he should be aware of what the public expects from him in particular. "A film maker should believe in what he is doing rather than thinking about what somebody wants." He believes that a film must be made from the heart. Later, the filmmaker admits that everything has changed since covid and said, "The people has changed they expect out of the box content. The demand has increased." The Gangubai Kathiawadi director also admits that several people told him not to film GANGUBAI because people would not like it. He revealed, "I tick marked all the wrong boxes but it worked. That should be the belief."



Sonu Sood shares how CCL opened doors for actors in regional film industry

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Sonu Sood has shared how Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) has helped the actors explore opportunities in regional cinema and opened new avenues for them.

He said: "Actors, no matter which industry they belong to, have one thing in common - the opportunities that came their way after participating in the Celebrity Cricket League."

The 49-year-old actor and philanthropist has worked in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada films and has

given several hits like 'Yuva', 'Athadu', 'Aashiq Banaya Aapne', 'Ashok', 'Jodhaa Akbar', 'Kandireega', 'Shootout at Wadala', 'R... Rajkumar', 'Happy New Year', 'Simmba' and 'Kurukshetra'.

He added: "When actors from different industries started playing together, they not only bonded together but the tournament also opened doors for them to newer opportunities, as some of them started receiving offers from other film industries across India."

"That's the beauty of CCL, it creates an environment where actors can

come together and not only showcase their cricketing skills but also explore new avenues in their careers," he concluded.

The sportainment event will have eight teams and will be held in different cities. Sonu will be seen on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' along with Sohail Khan, Manoj Tiwari, Dinesh Lal Yadav, Jishu Sengupta, Binoo Dhillon, Ninja, Rajeev Pillai, Sudheer Babu, and Jiiva to promote the CCL which will begin from February 18.

'The Kapil Sharma Show' airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rochelle Rao