



SHIVRAJ TURNS TO BULLDOZER TO SHORE UP HIS IMAGE IN POLL-BOUND MP

Whether the 'bulldozer action' initiated against criminals in Madhya Pradesh will be a blessing for the ruling BJP or the opposition Congress will get an edge by terming it an illegal measure would be known only after the results of the assembly elections to be held later this year.

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

As of now, the saffron party's move appears to have been successful in building Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's image as someone who is tough on crime. Insiders in the Madhya Pradesh BJP claimed the 'bulldozer action' had become the need of the hour with rising criminal activities especially against women. Chouhan, who has developed an image of 'mama' (maternal uncle), concluded that the rising crimes against women and other criminal activities was denting the image of 'mama', and therefore, he had to take some bold action to counter the accusations being hurled at him from every corner. As a result, Chouhan started using the same language -- 'those involved in crime against women will be buried' or 'rapists will be ruined' -- as his counterpart and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Some senior BJP functionaries, meanwhile, pointed out that law and order had never been as much a challenge in Madhya Pradesh as in UP. Rajneesh Agrawal, secretary of the



Madhya Pradesh BJP, claimed that prompt action was needed, and therefore, Chouhan decided to punish criminals without giving them much time. "Sometimes society demands some tough action from the government and this is what CM Chouhan did through the bulldozer action. Criminals need to live in fear, not society. The move has re-established people's faith in the BJP's governance. Houses were bulldozed which were

built illegally or of those who were involved in serious crimes. The government machinery has always taken action against criminals, but the criminals often escape from punishment due to long procedures of punishment. Bulldozer action is prompt action, which does not give much time to criminals," Agrawal added justifying his party's bulldozer tactics. Sources told correspondent that the bull-

dozer action was initiated solely by Chouhan and he monitors each and every action. Shivraj's bulldozer action was criticised by the opposition Congress especially when communal violence broke out in Khargone in April last year, following which the state administration bulldozed several houses belonging to Muslim families. The Congress leadership accused the BJP of targeting one particular community or a section of society for political vendetta. However, the government has maintained that the action was 'unbiased'. The Congress questioned the BJP's bulldozer action saying Chouhan's long tenure has an unimpressive track record when it comes to the rule of law in Madhya Pradesh. "The NCRB data says that Madhya Pradesh is number one in tribal atrocities, it is on top in Dalit atrocities and it is a disappointing government when it comes to rapes and POCSO charges, that's why they think that this UP model will benefit them. But people know that the BJP had bulldozed the people's verdict in Madhya Pradesh in 2018, the voters will avenge that by bulldozing the immoral Madhya Pradesh BJP government in 2023," said Mithun Ahirwar, a MP Congress spokesperson.

BJP's 'Tradition' counter to Congress jab at Scindia over viral video



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The BJP's Madhya Pradesh unit has come up with an explanation for a viral video that shows Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia stopping state party chief VD Sharma from addressing a public event and taking over the podium. The visuals from an event in Shivpuri district, organised to mark the translocation of tigers to Madhav National Park, had sparked a row. A video showing the announcer calling out Mr Sharma's name. As the state BJP chief is about to speak, Mr Scindia approaches the podium. He is seen speaking briefly to Mr Sharma, who returns to his seat with a smile as the Union Minister takes over. At the time, Madhya Pradesh Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was also on the dais. The Congress took a swipe

at Scindia, saying that it was his "family's tradition to sideline other leaders". Clarifying on the issue, the BJP's state media in-charge Lokendra Parashar said that it is a tradition for the state party chief to address an event at the end. "In the Bharatiya Janata Party, the honour of the President is the highest. The Congress cannot understand this. The president is the most honourable and hence, his speech comes right at the end," he said. Scindia, the BJP leader said, intervened during the function as a mark of respect to the state BJP chief. Earlier, Congress' media cell chief KK Mishra had tweeted, "It was politics. That's why Scindia stopped VD Sharma from giving a speech at a government function in Shivpuri. It is the Scindia family tradition to sideline other leaders and surge ahead."

Encroachers shoot arrows, throw bombs to foil eviction drive

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Thirteen people were injured in Madhya Pradesh's Burhanpur district after an anti-encroachment exercise by the forest department sparked a violent clash with illegal occupants of forest land. Shocking visuals of the standoff showed the encroachers using crude bombs, bows and arrows and country-made firearms to stop the anti-encroachment team from approaching. The incident took place on Saturday, when the team reached Ghaghrala forests following reports of encroachment and illegal felling of trees. They were attacked by at least 150 people armed with bows and arrows, stones, country-made bombs and other firearms. Videos show the team members in riot gear struggling to move forward in the face of the offensive. Some villagers accompanying the forest team also suffered serious injuries. "Around 200 encroachers have arrived here in the forest for three days. We received



information that they were carrying country-made bombs and open firing to spread fear. The DFO informed the SP and Collector about the matter in writing," forest department official RP Rai was quoted as saying by news agency. A forest department personnel and a villager were hit by arrows in the back and shoulder. The injured were admitted to Burhanpur District Hospital and their condition is learnt to be out of danger. According to reports, the encroachers have taken shelter inside the forest and are not allowing anyone to enter the woods. Further investigation is underway.

Indore turned coloured in Rangpanchami

3 KM LONG HAIL CAME OUT FROM RAJWADA, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE OF THE CITY DRENCHED IN COLOR-GULAL

Team Absolute | Indore

On Rangpanchami, the sky became colorful due to rain in Indore. As far as the eye could see, colors were seen flying from the ground to the sky. The enthusiasm of the people was at its peak. As the ger progressed, the number of people increased. More than 5 lakh people participated in Ger. Many people arrived with their families in this historic ger of the city. The process of getting out of ger longer than 3 km continued even after 3 pm. Here in the colonies and streets of the city, people applied color to each other. At the same time, people were also seen playing colors around Sarafa Bazar and Gopal Mandir. People participating in the ger were pelted with colours. There people danced and sang happily. Elderly



people were also seen dancing with their friends. This year is the golden jubilee year of Rasiya Corner Ger. The Ger started after worship at the Hariaram temple in Old Rajmohalla. In Ger, especially band instruments, dhul tasha, 3 DJ carts, 10 tractor trolleys kept on blowing water with drums. Saffron-coloured missiles that could fire up to 100 feet on five water tankers also joined the GIR. 500 youths came out wearing saffron helmets giving the message to the youths to wear helmets while driving. Big saffron flags symbolizing Hindu Sanatan Dharma

were included on all the vehicles involved in the Ger. Moral club's ger came out from Rajwada via Sarafa route. This time, the Moral Club also made vigorous preparations regarding Ger. A Tasha party of 70 people was called from Mumbai for Ger. Apart from this, gulal was blown up to 60 feet from different vehicles with 4 blower machines. 6 missiles were included from 40 thousand liters of water tanker. Special arrangements were made for the inclusion of Ger's name in UNESCO. Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava also participated in the gathering of Municipal Corporation. In this, councillors and BJP leaders were also seen moving forward sitting in tractors. This time people are being showered with water because of the corporation. This year the Municipal Corporation's ger was taken out for the first time.

Public cooperation, participation atmosphere has been created in the state: Chief Minister

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is necessary to encourage the positive and constructive work being done by the people of the state. The state government is especially sensitive and active in this direction. An atmosphere of public co-operation and public participation has been created in the state, and small children celebrating their birthdays by planting saplings is a reflection of this. Voluntary organizations are also active in plantation. Public participation can bring revolution in the state. In this direction, the people of village Gujarkheri in Narmadapuram district have presented a unique example of public cooperation. The villagers got the financially



weak daughter Deepa married with pomp. Chief Minister Chouhan told that the father of daughter Deepa Vishwakarma had passed away a few years back. His father worked as a carpenter by profession. The youth of Gujarkheri came forward for the marriage of Deepa, who was living in a struggling financial condition. With the help of the villagers, he organized a social media group and arranged Rs 1.5 lakh and got his daughter Deepa married with pomp. Local police and social workers also helped in the marriage. This initiative of the youth of Gujarkheri is definitely inspirational and exemplary. Chief Minister Chouhan was discussing with media representatives after planting saplings in the garden located in Shyamala Hills.

Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings along with the members of Paropkar Mahila Mandal

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Members of Paropkar Mahila Mandal along with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted saplings of Peepal, Neem and Karanj in the garden located at Shyamala Hills. Girl child Mishka Bondria along with Chief Minister Chouhan planted a sapling on her birthday. Dr. Sadhna Gangrade, Dr. Varsha Choubey, Kavita Aggarwal, Sunil Dubey, Rahul Choubey and Sunil Gangarade of Philanthropy Mahila Mandal, active in the field of women empowerment, women-welfare and environment-protection, also plant-



ed saplings. Mandal's Dr. Sadhna Gangrade presented an essay booklet 'Mann Ka Mogra' focused on interpersonal relationships, festivals, traditions, rituals and life values to Chief Minister Chouhan.

2 arrested over Pro-Khalistan message, threatening Narendra Modi stadium

Team Absolute | Ahmedabad

Two persons were arrested from Rewa district in Madhya Pradesh by Gujarat police in connection with a bulk video and voice message released allegedly by a pro-Khalistan group threatening to storm Narendra Modi Stadium ahead of the India-Australia cricket match that started on March 9 in Ahmedabad, an official said on Sunday. Ahmedabad police's cyber crime cell traced the origin of the message to a facility set up in Rewa in the neighbouring state for call spoofing and arrested two persons from there, the official said. The bulk message, urging people to stay safe at home as

a pro-Khalistan group planned to storm the cricket stadium and install its flag, was released ahead of the India-Australia cricket match that was witnessed by Prime Minister Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese. "We have arrested two persons from Rewa district and busted a facility set up there for call spoofing. We traced the threat video message from the facility and recovered 11 SIM boxes, around 300 SIM cards, 4-5 routers," Assistant Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crime) Jitendra Yadav said. He identified the accused as Rahul Kumar and Narendra Kushwaha, who hail from Satna in MP. The threat was issued on a recorded message, and the call is jumped, spoofed in such a way that it

becomes difficult to locate them. We have busted the centre from where the call was being spoofed. Further investigation will reveal who all are behind the recorded message," Yadav said. The messages, released purportedly by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, founder of US-based terrorist organisation 'Sikhs for Justice', threatened to disrupt the cricket match, with police saying it was aimed at creating panic among people. "People of Gujarat, stay home and stay safe on March 9 (the day of opening of match between India and Australia) because pro-Khalistani Sikhs are going to storm Narendra Modi stadium and install Khalistani flag," said message relayed through bulk messaging and mass voice call.

The color of development is raining on the land of Sheopur: Chief Minister Chouhan

There will be no dearth of funds for the progress of backward districts like Sheopur. Arrival of Cheetahs, National Highway, Broad Gauge Rail and Medical College will create history for the development of Sheopur. Project launched Announcement of opening of college in Baroda, Inauguration of development works worth more than one thousand crores, Foundation stone was laid in the presence of Union Minister Tomar and Scindia.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that Sheopur is changing, the Ganges of development is flowing here. Many schemes are run by the central and state government for development and public welfare. Government, people's representatives, administration and residents of Sheopur together take a pledge that they will cooperate in every possible way with full commitment in this race of progress and development. Along with this, 100 per cent implementation of government schemes should be ensured in Sheopur. Chief Minister said that our government is dedicated to poor welfare and development. The color of development is raining on the land of Sheopur on Rangpanchami. After arrival of cheetahs, national highway, broad gauge rail, the gift of



medical college in Sheopur is creating a new history of development. There will never be any shortage of funds for the progress of backward districts like Sheopur. Chief Minister Chouhan attended the foundation stone laying ceremony of Rs 768 crore Medical College building, Munjihari Major Irrigation Project, Prensar-Rinkhedda Mudhla road and CM Rise Government Model Higher Secondary School build-

ing and development works worth Rs 245 crore 41 lakh in Sheopur today. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the Chambal Micro Irrigation Project costing Rs 167 crore 58 lakh. During this, the sisters of Sheopur presented a 51 feet long rakhi to Chouhan for implementing Ladli Bahna Yojana in the state. Chief Minister also announced to open a college in Baroda. Chief Minister Chouhan has said that if the sisters are strong then the family and the society will be strong. Our aim is to make the life of sisters simple and pleasant. Sisters should not be troubled for their small needs and money requirement, therefore arrangements have been made to provide 1000 rupees to sisters every month in Ladli Bahna Yojana. Families whose annual income is less than two and a half lakh rupees, who have less than 5 acres of land, Sisters of such family will be eligible for the scheme.





EDITOR'S SPECS

SUSHMA SETH WINS META LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2023

Stage, film and television actor Sushma Seth will be conferred with the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award. She will be felicitated during the award ceremony on March 29 at Kamani Auditorium in the national capital. Teamwork Arts and Mahindra Group have also announced the jury members -- theatre director Amal Allana; theatre and film actress Arundhati Nag; award-winning theatre director Bruce Guthrie; theatre director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry; Sangeet Natak Akademi Award recipient actor Mohan Agashe; award-winning theatre artist and actor Shernaz Patel; and Director of India Habitat Centre and President of the Delhi Music Society Sunit Tandon. The announcements come ahead of the week-long META and Festival to be held from March 23 to 28 in the Capital, during which ten-shortlisted plays will be performed. Over 400 entries representing languages like Assamese, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Marwari, and Tamil were received. This year's Lifetime Awardee, Sushma Seth started her career in the 1950s, and was a founder member of the Delhi-based theatre group Yatrik. Her first movie was 'Junoon' (1978) and is known for her role as 'dadi' in the TV soap 'Hum Log' that aired in the 1980s. Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts & Festival Producer, added, "META 2023 will present awards in 14 categories including the Lifetime Achievement Award. The 13 competitive categories are for Best Play, Best Director, Best Stage Design, Best Light Design, Best Innovative Sound Design, Best Costume Design, Best Actor in a Lead Role (Male), Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male), Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female), Best Original Script, Best Ensemble and Best Choreographer."

A SPARKLING START TO WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CRICKET IN INDIA

Yajurvindra Singh

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) should be complimented in organising the Women's Premier League. It was inaugurated by some dance sequences by young Bollywood stars, however, it sparkled through a dashing innings played by India's captain, Harmanpreet Kaur. This was the ideal beginning to a tournament that could change the face for the betterment of women's cricket in India, forever.

The WPL being played in the line of the fastest-growing sports event in the world, the Indian Premier League, is a platform that highlights professionalism to the core.

In India, cricket has always had a serious following, however, it was looked upon as just a sport to play and enjoy. 'Amateur' was the way in which it was perceived and professionalism came about once it was suitably commercialized. The early days of Indian cricket were a good example of cricketers going to England to play in various club and county leagues to earn money during the Indian off-season.

The great Indian all-rounder, Vinoo Mankad, opted out of an Indian squad that was to tour England in 1952, because of his commitment to play for a club in the then-famous Lancashire League. His retort to everyone was that he needed the money to live.

Fortunately for India, Mankad's club allowed him to represent India and they were compensated for the matches that he missed while doing so. After a serious and humiliating loss that India suffered at Old Trafford against England, Mankad was recalled to bolster the side. He stood out like a knight in shining armour, through his stupendous feat at the Lord's by his brilliant performance, the best-ever by an Indian cricketer.

Indian cricket still did not accept professionalism. Russi Surti and Farokh Engineer were both not considered for selection for India's tour to the West Indies in 1971, solely because they were playing in Australia and England, respectively.

One saw the gradual change of recognition and realisation that came about in Indian Men's cricket. They were seen as professional athletes and were being compensated for their efforts. The multi-media world gave them a



stardom image and Indian men's cricket grew exponentially. It is truly heartening, therefore, to see that the women cricketers too have finally made their mark. However, with such exposure, they need to completely change their mindset and approach to the game.

In the initial matches of the WPL, one can see that apart from a few top Indian players, foreign players are hogging the show. The issue that arises is that as paid professionals, the mental approach to how one plays changes quite significantly. Playing for one's country, state or club team is totally different from being paid to play. This is why in the earlier days, male cricketers went overseas to play professional cricket.

Unfortunately, the simplest calculation that arises is the money that one is paid vis-a-vis one's performance on the field. This brings about pressure which is quite different from what one normally encounters.

The Indian women players, apart from a few, are still in a nascent stage as regards the game of cricket and their mental approach to

it. The system in India has still not been fully put into place to deliver 57 quality players. The 30 foreign players have played franchise-based cricket before and are therefore more well-versed in how to approach their game. This is where many of the young, unknown and inexperienced Indian players are finding it difficult to cope.

A couple of areas that need significant improvement amongst the Indian cricketers are fitness and fielding. Playing under lights in a stadium full of loud energetic spectators can be quite unnerving. Furthermore, one is also aware of the millions watching one's every move on the multi-media platforms and this too can be frightening for one not yet at ease with it. One is, therefore, seeing plenty of fumbling while fielding as well as dropped catches. Nerves play a big part in it.

The WPL, like the IPL, will be superb for the growth of women's cricket in India. Parents, many of them reluctant to let their girls play the game because of various reasons,

may look at it as more acceptable. To see one's daughter or relative on television and earning while doing so, is in itself a wonderful feeling for ones near and dear ones.

The platform is now set for Indian women's cricket to progress by leaps and bounds. However, there is still a long way ahead for them to reach the quality of cricket which will make them proud. To do so, a proper structure of academies, tournaments and infrastructure needs to be put in place.

The BCCI have the capabilities and funds to make their dream come true.

The spark that has been ignited in Women's cricket through WPL needs to light a flame that will keep it burning for years to come. Cricket will now not be called a 'Gentleman's game' but one which is played by 'Gentleladies' as well.

(Yajurvindra Singh is a former India cricketer. The views expressed are personal)

international

UK WORKING ON A PLAN FOR TECH FIRMS AFTER SILICON VALLEY BANK COLLAPSE

London | Agencies

The UK government is working on a plan so that UK tech firms caught up in the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) won't run out of cash, it has said, the media reported.

The Treasury said it wanted to "minimise damage to some of our most promising companies in the UK" after the US bank's failure last Friday, BBC reported.

US regulators shut down the bank on Friday in what is the largest failure of a US bank since 2008.

The bank's UK subsidiary will be put into insolvency from Sunday evening, BBC reported.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey have been holding talks over the weekend in response to the collapse of SVB UK.

The Treasury said on Sunday morning that the issue is a "high priority".



It said the bank's failure could hit UK tech companies hard, and that it was "working at pace" on a solution.

It added it would "bring forward immediate plans to ensure the short term operational and cashflow needs of Silicon Valley Bank UK customers are able to be met", BBC reported.

More than 250 bosses of UK tech firms signed a letter addressed to Hunt on Saturday calling for government intervention.

SVB collapsed in the US after failing to raise \$2.25bn to plug a loss from the sale of assets, mainly US government bonds, that were affected by higher interest rates.

Its troubles prompted a run on the bank in the US and sparked investor fears about the general state of the banking sector, BBC reported.

SVB specialised in lending to early-stage businesses, and the company banked nearly half of US venture-backed technology and healthcare companies that listed on stock markets last year.

Iran unveils final prototype of indigenous jet trainer

Tehran | Agencies

Iran has unveiled the final prototype of a jet trainer that can help pilots learn tactics and techniques of air and air-to-surface combats, state media reported.

Dubbed Yasin, the aircraft can also be tasked with close air support, said Iranian Defence Minister Mohammadreza Ashtiani at a ceremony held to launch an aircraft assembly line in Tehran, according to official news agency IRNA.

Equipped with home-grown subsystems such as ejection seats, avionics, engines and landing gears, the final prototype is much upgraded and developed in tactical terms compared to the first one unveiled in October 2019, according to a report by semi-official Tasnim news agency. A domestically-



developed airborne weather radar has also been installed, said the report.

Ashtiani said the aircraft can accomplish a wide range

of missions and will help significantly reduce the length of training, while improving its quality, Xinhua news agency reported.

19 PEOPLE KILLED IN ATTACK IN DR CONGO

Kinshasa: At least 19 people were killed in an overnight attack in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), local sources said on Sunday.

The attack, which took place in the village of Kirindera in the territory of Beni of the eastern province of North Kivu, killed at least 19 civilians, Carly Nzanzu Kasivita, former governor of North Kivu, told journalists on Sunday morning, attributing the attack to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Several buildings in the village, including a health center, were set on fire by the rebels, he said.

The attack came two days after another attack blamed on the ADF rebels on Thursday in two villages of the Beni territory, where at least 44 people were killed. The ADF was founded in the 1990s by several opposition movements in Uganda. Defeated by the Ugandan army, these rebels remained active in eastern DRC, which led to joint operations between the DRC and Uganda to hunt down the ADF rebels, who are now also an affiliate of the Islamic State in central Africa.

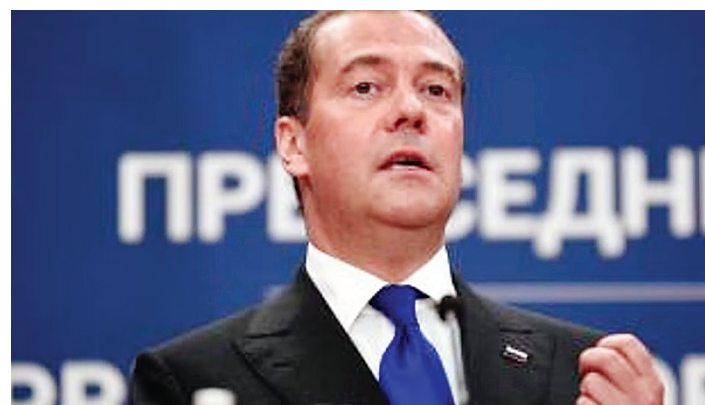
Putin's ally proposes renaming Ukraine after Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera

Moscow | Agencies

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has proposed renaming Ukraine after notorious Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. His suggestion came after Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky told his government to consider a proposal to change Russia's name, the media reported.

On Friday, Zelensky instructed authorities to "thoroughly study" the proposal to officially rename Russia to 'Moscovia'. He was reacting to an online petition, which argued that the name 'Russia' provided grounds for "further encroachment" on the history of Kievian Rus, a medieval state from which both Russia and Ukraine trace their origin, Russia Today (RT) reported.

Many Ukrainian nationalists claim that their homeland is the only true heir of Rus.



The name 'Moscovia' dates to the Grand Duchy of Moscow and was historically used by some authors to describe the Russian state, RT reported. On Saturday, Medvedev, who served as Russian president between 2008 and 2012, and currently serves as deputy chairman of the Security Council, fired back in a

post on his Telegram channel. "Our response?... Only the Schweinisch Bandera-Reich," he wrote. The word "schweinisch" means "piggy" in German.

Medvedev was apparently referencing the idolisation by some Ukrainian politicians of Stepan Bandera, a World War II-era leader

of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Bandera collaborated with Adolf Hitler's government during the early stages of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, RT reported.

He was later arrested and imprisoned by the Germans over disagreements about the future of Ukraine. After the war, Bandera fled to West Germany, where in 1959 he was assassinated by a KGB agent.

The Ukrainian Insurgent Army - the OUN's military wing founded in 1943 - positioned itself as a guerilla force fighting both Soviet and German troops. Its agents committed multiple atrocities against Polish, Jewish and Russian civilians, RT reported. Bandera and his followers are honoured as heroes in modern Ukraine, with streets and buildings named after them.

Nationalists hold annual torchlit processions on Bandera's birthday in Kiev and other cities, RT reported.

Iran arrests over 100 for involvement in students' poisoning

Tehran | Agencies

Iran's Interior Ministry has said that more than 100 people in 11 provinces have been arrested on charges of involvement in the recent incidents of student poisoning at the country's schools.

The Ministry announced the arrests in a statement on Saturday published on its website, listing the provinces as Tehran, Qom, Zanjan, Khuzestan, Hamedan, Fars, Gilan, West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Kurdistan and Khorasan Razavi.

The statement noted for some of the arrestees who used poisonous substances as a "mischievous" way to escape classes, and the authorities have given them necessary warnings and instructions, Xinhua news agency reported.

Some other arrestees are



individuals with "hostile motivations," the statement added, noting they sought to cause fear and anxiety among people and students. The authorities are investigating them to find out if they are connected to terrorist groups.

More than 700 students in over 30 schools across Iran have fallen victim to mysterious poisoning cases since November 30, 2022, when the first case was reported in the Qom province. Most of them were soon released from the hospital after receiving treat-



AHEAD OF G-20 MEET, BMC CRACKS THE WHIP ON DUST POLLUTERS, WARNS STRICT ACTION

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Taking serious cognizance of the dust pollution choking Mumbai ahead of the G-20 meet, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday set up a high-level committee to monitor and strictly implement pollution control measures.



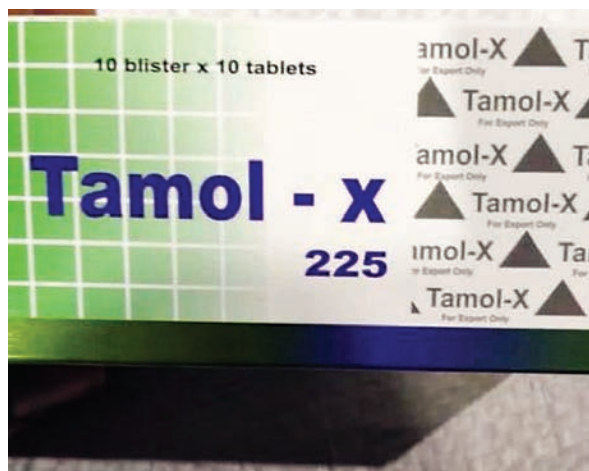
The city is currently experiencing bad air days due to changes in wind speed condition, and dust arising from over 5,000 development or construction projects at various sites underway.

On the Mumbai Beautification Project, 500 works taken up in December 2022 are nearing completion and another 320 works have been initiated, comprising revamp of electric poles, footpaths, etc., and top officials have been ordered to monitor and speed these works up.

Drugs detected in export consignment at Mumbai airport, 3 held

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Customs Officials at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport have intercepted an export consignment containing 10 lakh tablets of narcotics, valued at Rs 21 crore, an official said on Sunday.



"Tramadol" which is a psychotropic substance and whose export is restricted under Section 8(c) of NDPS Act. These contraband drugs worth \$2.6 million or over Rs 21 crore in international illicit market were seized. Searches were conducted at Bengaluru, Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) and Mumbai and three persons have been arrested so far," said the official. Further investigation is on.

US-NRI booked for smoking, rowdiness on AI London-Mumbai flight

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An unruly passenger flying on an Air India London-Mumbai flight was tied up on his seat for allegedly smoking in the aircraft toilet, misbehaving with passengers, attempting to yank open the door mid-air, and finally landed in the arms of the Mumbai Police, officials said here on Sunday.



The passenger has been identified as one Ratnakar Trivedi, 37, a US NRI and the shocking incident happened on the AI flight which landed here Saturday morning. As his behaviour seemed to go out of control, the AI flight crew managed to pin him down, dumped him on his seat and tied up his hands and legs for the remainder of his journey.

When the crew accosted him and threw away the cigarette, he started screaming and abusing at the flight crew and at one point, Trivedi tried to open the door of the aircraft mid-air, scaring other fliers. Later, as a precaution, the crew members managed to pin him down and tied him up on his seat where he remained till the flight landed here.

One of the co-passengers, who was a medico, came and examined him to ascertain whether he was misbehaving in a drunken state or had some mental condition, while the police have sent his samples to the lab and the test reports are awaited.

Meanwhile, the Sahar Police, which detained Trivedi, has lodged a case against him invoking various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Aircraft Act.

Tyre burst not act of god, pay compensation: Bombay High Court

Team Absolute | Mumbai

A tyre burst is not an act of God but human negligence, the Bombay High Court remarked while rejecting an insurance company's plea against compensation to the family of a man killed in a car accident.



A single bench of Justice SG Dige in its February 17 order dismissed the appeal filed by New India Assurance Company Limited against a 2016 ruling of the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal directing it to pay Rs 1.25 crore to victim Makarand Patwardhan's family.

the driver. The High Court, however, refused to accept this contention and said the dictionary meaning of "act of God" was "an instance of uncontrollable natural forces in operation." "It refers to a severe unanticipated natural event for which no human is responsible. The bursting of a tyre cannot be termed as an act of God. It is an act of human negligence," the court said. It added there are various reasons for tyre burst such as high speed, underinflated, overinflated or second-hand tyres, and temperature.

"The driver or owner of the vehicle has to check the condition of the tyre before travelling. The burst of tyre cannot be termed a natural act. It is human negligence," the order said. Merely stating a burst of tyre is an act of God cannot be a ground to exonerate the insurance company from paying compensation, the High Court added.

IRON ROD CRASHES ON MUMBAI AUTORICKSHAW, KILLS MOTHER-DAUGHTER

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: In a freak mishap, an iron rod fell from a building onto a passing autorickshaw below and killed a woman and her minor daughter travelling in it, the BMC Disaster Control said here late on Saturday.

The incident occurred near the Western Express Highway at Jogeshwari around 6 p.m. on Saturday. As the autorickshaw cruised by, an iron rod hurtled down from the seventh floor scaffolding of a 16-storey under-construction building on the three-wheeler, critically injuring the duo.

A passing private vehicle stopped and rushed them to the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital for treatment. Doctors later said that while the mother, Shamabano Asif Shaikh, 28, was dead before admission, her 9-year old daughter Aayat succumbed to her injuries during treatment.

Man accused of rape, blackmail of polish colleague over 6 years

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai man charged with sexually assaulting his colleague, a Polish national, allegedly sent her lewd photos, shot her private videos and threatened to leak them to her relatives and co-workers.



The accused Manish Gandhi is Chief Operating Officer of a Mumbai firm the woman joined in 2016, according to reports.

The FIR registered by Mumbai Police says that Manish, who is now on the run, sexually assaulted the Polish woman several times over a six-year period, starting November 2016.

The woman has alleged that her harassment started with Manish sending her his private photos.

Later, when the two travelled together for work to Germany and other parts of India for work, the accused allegedly raped her several times. He also shot her private photos and threatened to leak them to her relatives and others working in the company, she has alleged.

Manish has been charged with sexual assault, criminal intimidation and relevant provisions under the Information Technology Act. "The case has been registered against the accused Manish Gandhi in Mumbai's Amboli police station under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code," Mumbai police have said, adding that they are searching for the accused.

100 MINS, 12 BLASTS, 257 DEAD: MUMBAI'S FIRST TASTE OF TERROR, 30 YEARS ON

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Till March 1993, Mumbai (Bombay) was one big 24x365 party destination, a city that never slept and where all seemed obsessed with minting money -- from the poor pavement-dwellers to the wily politicians to the pompous tycoons, and even big bulls like Harshad Mehta and his cohorts, who had then shot into limelight.



One warm afternoon of March 12, 1993, 'terror' abruptly knocked in -- and knocked out the city's mega-ego a dozen times with 12 coordinated mega-blasts -- starting at around 1.30 p.m.

Barely 100 minutes later, the country's commercial capital was on its knees, the police launched investigations, politicians gave speeches and the final (official) bloodied body count stood at 257, another 1,400 injured and some others 'missing'.

Soon, it came to light that the Mumbai terror blasts were out of 'vendetta' for the barbaric two-phased communal riots of December 1992 - January 1993 that shook the city as a fallout of the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya.

The perpetrators were the city's dreaded mafia baddies, along with help from a variety of cops and customs officials, unknown Pakistanis, and even a prominent film star - all of whom orchestrated the country's deadliest and biggest (in terms of casualties) terror strike ever.

As things appeared to normalise, Mumbai was again caught napping on a cool evening of November 26, 2008 -- when it became the theatre of a dastardly terror strike that killed 175 (including nine terrorists) -- which ended after over 60 hours.

Though separated by 15 years -- and even a 'century' on the calendar -- the ultra-hits on Mumbai had glaring differences and similarities -- as comparisons between them became inevitable over the years.

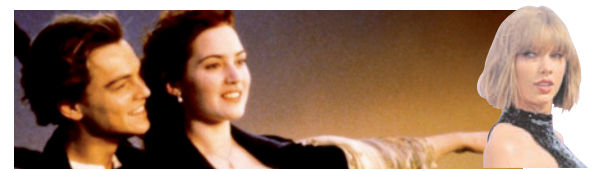
For instance, the two strikes came when the city seemed completely off-guard, one on a weekend-leading Friday afternoon and the other on a mid-week Wednesday evening, both saw the smuggling of explosives quietly and terrorists sneaking in unhindered from the unlikely and unguarded Arabian Sea route. In 1993 bombs were placed by hired foot-soldiers at 12 strategic locations spanning the length of the city and partly into the suburbs, but in 2008, sophisticated automatic weapons were used by the 10 Pakistani fideyees to spray bullets on the gullible people in a surgical manner covering a tiny area of south Mumbai.

The first one (1993) saw the perpetrators quietly planting the RDX bombs at 12 selected spots and scooting, with some lowly operatives later pressing the trigger in tandem with others, the second one (2008) witnessed the trigger-happy attackers coming headlong, randomly raining bullets or lobbing grenades at 12 targeted locations, often in direct 'encounters' with the Indian security personnel.

The ratty Mumbai mafia secretly, but allegedly supported by Pakistan, implemented the 100-minute-long 1993 blasts, but in 2008 10 heavily-armed Pakistani gunmen, knowingly or unknowingly helped by the Mumbai mafiosi holed up in that country, executed the 60-hour-long operation. After 1993, several of the prime movers-and-shakers like Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar and Ibrahim Mushtaq Abdul Razaq Memon, alias 'Tiger Memon', and other fearsome ones still elude the Indian laws, and post-2008, baddies like Lashkar-e-Taiba's Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi is at large and remains among India's 'Most Wanted'.

Both terror hits case trials -- 1993 and 2008 -- have practically ended and may be revived as and when the other absconding accused can be brought here and tried. Mumbai after 1993 remained vulnerable and faced another half-dozen strikes like -- two killed in a Ghatkopar BEST bus bomb blast (December 2002), one killed in a bicycle bomb explosion (January 2003), 10 killed in Mulund suburban train blast (March 2003), four blown up a bus bomb explosion in Ghatkopar (July 2003), 50 snuffed out in the twin bomb blasts at Zaveri Bazar and Gateway of India (August 2003), and the monstrous killer bombs planted in seven suburban trains killing 209 commuters (July 2006).

However, things seemed to have improved after 2008 terror strikes with only one major incident reported from Mumbai -- the killing of 26 people in the coordinated triple blasts one each at Opera House, Zaveri Bazar and Dadar (July 2011) in 10 minutes.



'THEY WERE INSEPARABLE!'

Leonardo DiCaprio hangs out with Gigi Hadid again

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio was "hanging out all night" with supermodel Gigi Hadid at a recent Hollywood party. The actor was first linked to model Gigi towards the end of last year and although the pair were said to have called it quits, a source has claimed that the pair were inseparable at Darren Dzienciel and Richie Akiva's Annual Pre-Oscar Party, which was held over the last couple of days, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

A source told UsWeekly: "Leo and Gigi were hanging out together all night. There was no PDA, but they never left each other's side. Tobey hung out with Leo and Leo hung out with Gigi. Leo was only flirting with Gigi and only had eyes for her!"

The Hollywood duo was recently spotted together in Milan, but a source has insisted that the relationship between the 'Titanic' star and Gigi is strictly platonic.

In February, an insider claimed that although the two "get along well", her priorities lie elsewhere.

The source said: "The two get along well and were enjoying time together with friends. Gigi's priority is her daughter and her business and that's what she's focusing on right now."



Gigi - who has Khai, two, with former One Direction star Zayn Malik - and Leonardo love spending time together.

However, they're not involved romantically. The source added: "Gigi and Leo spent time together in Milan but they are just friends and are not dating."

Another source said that Gigi and Leonardo's rumoured romance just "fizzled" out. The source said at the time: "She hasn't seen him for a while. She just decided that she was done with him. They are at very different places in life. She prioritises being a mom."



Priyanka recalls crying to Nick after being body shamed

Los Angeles | Agencies

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra was left in tears in front of her husband Nick Jonas after being body shamed for not being 'sample size'.

Taking part in a panel at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival, the actress revealed that a hurtful body shaming was the cause of her breakdown, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Priyanka sat down with Amazon Studios head Jennifer Salke at the kick off of the festival, and recalled what had happened to her one day before. "Someone told me yesterday that I wasn't sample-sized I was hurt and I discussed it with my family, and I cried to my husband, and my team," she confessed.

"... and I felt really bad about the fact that I'm not sample size," the actress continued sharing her thoughts on being body-shamed.

"And that's a problem, apparently, and most of us are not, and sample size is size 2."

Unfortunately, the incident was not a first

for Priyanka. "I've been told many things that are difficult to hear," she candidly stated. "In my job, the pressure is so intense you can't really show the chinks in your armour."

Aside from being body shamed, 'The White Tiger' actress pointed out other kinds of demeaning comments thrown at her.

"I have had times when I may have said something, and it's been misconstrued," she explained, "and you see people saying the meanest and nastiest things not just about me, about my child, about my family members, and I think sometimes people forget you are even human."

The 'Unfinished' author further gave advice on how to deal with hateful comments.

"I think what you have to do is surround yourself with people who love you and surround yourself with people who care about you, and not about what you can bring to the table and not about what you can do for me," she said. "People who want to see you smile and be enriched. It doesn't have to be a room full of people, I can count them on my hands."

'I DIDN'T EXPECT THE REACTION'

JENNA ORTEGA IS SHOCKED BY 'WEDNESDAY' HUGE SUCCESS

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Jenna Ortega never thought 'Wednesday' would be so popular. The actress takes on the title role of the Netflix series that serves as a spin-off to 'The Addams Family' franchise alongside the likes of Hollywood stars such as Catherine Zeta-Jones and Christina Ricci but admitted that she thought the show surpassed her expectations, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I didn't expect the reaction. The ('Wednesday') cast and I, I remember, we used to talk about it in Romania (where the show was filmed), we were like, 'Hey, what do you think will happen with the show?' That was it that was the most we ever really got into it."

"So I thought it wasn't going to be watched. That it will be a nice little gem that someone finds, but," she told The Sunday Times.

Jenna started her career on the Disney Channel series 'Stuck in the Middle' and went on to explain that the level of fame she experiences now as a result of playing Wednesday as "intimidating" as she admitted she was able to live a "normal life" before the Netflix hit propelled her to success.

She said: "I used to do a Disney show when I was younger. I was a little bit of a public figure, used to get recognised, or whatever."

"When I look back, I think I was so out of place. I didn't understand where I was and you start to see Hollywood for the first time, and it's a bit intimidating, a bit off-putting. I felt like I was a people's princess. I didn't really feel like myself. Then it started to slow down and I lived a pretty normal life!"

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Jason Derulo recently surprised a restaurant waiter with a tip of \$5000 (almost over Rs. 4 lakh) which was enough to cover the latter's college fee for the next semester. The waiter, whose name is Jordan Schaffer, shared a video of his and the musician's interaction at the restaurant on TikTok. "Jason Derulo tipped me \$5000 at Charleston's Restaurant in Omaha," Jordan wrote over the clip, reports aceshowbiz.com.

In the footage, Jordan could be heard saying: "Wow, my heart's beating really fast," while standing over Jason's table.

The 'Savage Love' crooner then praised him and his friend: "You guys are really awesome man." Jordan then personally thanked Jason by saying to the camera: "Hey Jason, thank you. You just paid for a semester at my college. I can't thank you enough."

He added: "I hope you and your family have a wonderful time in Omaha. And I hope you see us again. Thank you so much."

Jordan went on to unveil the receipt and it was written that Jason forked out \$795.99 for the outing. The total showed \$5,795.99 after the whopping tip. "Dude, check it out," the waiter said. "I can't believe this."

This arrived months after Jason opened up about his key to success. When speaking to E!'s digital series 'DRIVE!', he said: "My downfalls and when I have low moments, those moments really drive me. At my lowest lows, it's like, 'Dang, I gotta really sink my teeth in and just go for gold.'"

JASON DERULO TIPS WAITER WITH \$5,000, ENOUGH TO COVER HIS COLLEGE FEE



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Camila Morrone



'Gwalior boy at Times Square'

KARTIK VISITED NEW YORK FOR THE FIRST TIME & EVEN GOT FEATURED ON TIMES SQUARE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan visited New York for the first time and even got featured on Times Square. Kartik took to Instagram, where he shared a reel of him visiting the Big Apple. In the clip, a swarm of fans are seen greeting him and even performing his hooksteps from the songs picturised on Kartik. He captioned: "Gwalior Boy on Times Square Thank you New York city and to all the Fans for showering me with so much love and making my First Trip to the city memorable and full of surprises YY, You have my Heart. Thank you to the wonderful team for all the efforts."

On the work front, Kartik, was recently seen in 'Shehzada', will next be seen in a slew of films including 'Satya Prem Ki Katha' and the third installment of 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'. He also has 'Aashiqui 3' and Kabir Khan's untitled next film.

Radhika Madan shoots in home city Delhi for the first time

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Radhika Madan resumes shooting of her seventh film. However, what makes it special is that in nine years of her career, she is shooting in her hometown, New Delhi, for the first time.

Radhika did six projects last year, which are slated to release this year. Hopping on to her next, the 'Angrezi Medium' actor began shooting for her next earlier this year.

Beginning the next schedule of her film, Radhika Madan has reached her hometown Delhi and expressed her happiness of shooting in her city through an Insta story.

The actress said: "9 years in the industry and this is the FIRST time I'm shooting in MY CITY! dilli."

Looking forward to an incredible slate of releases this year, Radhika already had her first release of 2023 with 'Kuttey' and is looking forward to 'Kachhey Limbu', which premiered at TIFF.



'I never felt I'm a newcomer or outsider'

Monica Chaudhary praised Ranbir for making her comfortable on the sets of her Bollywood debut movie

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Monica Chaudhary, who is known for 'Apharan' and 'Dark 7 White', talked about her Bollywood debut with Ranbir Kapoor and Shradha Kapoor-starrer film 'Tu Jhooti Main Makkaar' and the kind of response she's getting for her role of Kinchi in the film.

Being a huge fan of Ranbir, she also found herself fortunate to get an opportunity to work with him.

She praised Ranbir for making her comfortable on the sets and said: "I'm such a huge fan of his work and all of a sudden he is my co-actor. I didn't know how to behave or act but honestly, once I was on set, this question didn't even come to my mind. Because I never felt I'm a newcomer or outsider and they are already stars." "Of course, I had that respect that they are my seniors but it was so comfortable. But having said that he would constantly make sure if I'm missing or forgetting something like camera angles, he would whisper in my ears and advise me

to face the camera in the right direction," she added.

Monica is playing the character of Kinchi Dabbas, who is Manu's (Anubhav Singh Bassi) wife. Sharing details of her role, she said: "I'm essaying the character of Kinchi and she is Manu's wife, and Tinni's (Shradha Kapoor) best friend. She keeps scolding these people and is very edgy. You can see many shades in her character when you watch the film, and she will make you giggle and laugh." "I knew at that moment that this film was going to be amazing. I really thanked God that day for making me a part of this team and giving me this opportunity."

She concluded with the kind of response she is receiving for the film and her role: "I am receiving a lot of positive feedback about my work. People are sharing videos from the theatre where audiences are laughing at my jokes. It's an overwhelming experience, and I feel grateful for the validation it brings to me as an actor as my jokes landed well. I have been getting a lot of calls for quite some projects, so fingers crossed that something amazing will happen soon."

Away from home for the Oscars, NTR Jr is missing his family

Hyderabad: Actor NTR Jr is known as a family man who prefers spending time with them over other things. During a recent interview, when the journalist showed him pictures of his sons, his reaction made the netizens go 'Awww!!'

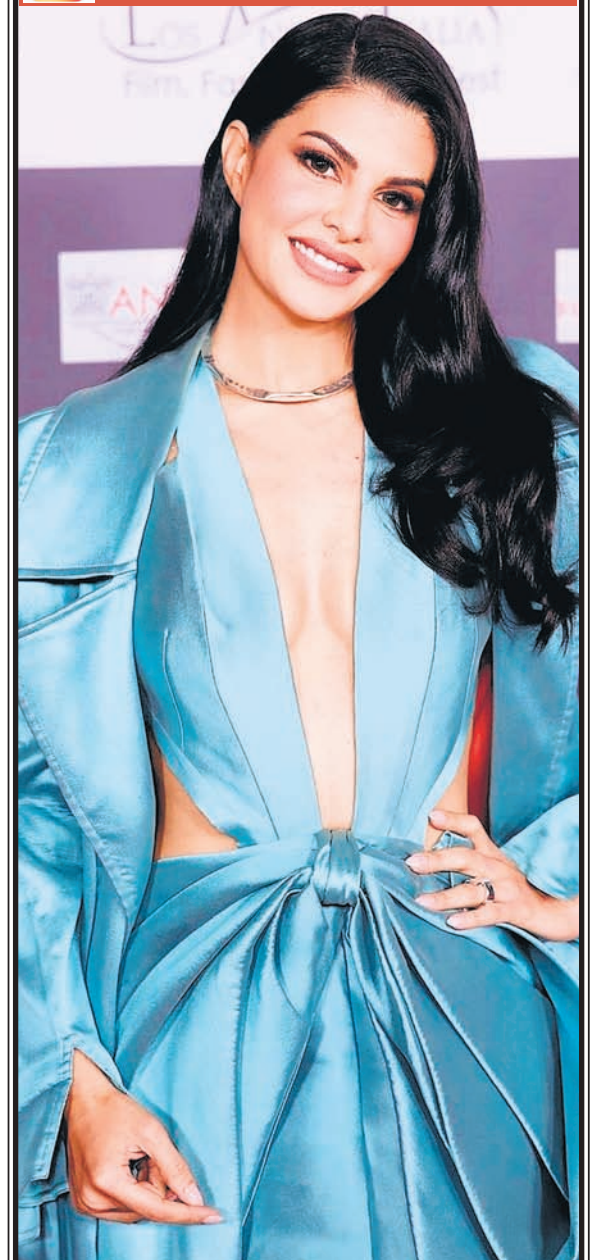
When the news anchor of KTLA News showed him an Instagram post with his sons and wife, his reaction was: "Oh my God! Look at them. I am already missing them"

When quizzed about whether his sons know he is attending the Oscars, the young tiger replied: "They know I am an actor but right now they are not aware that I have come to Oscar but yes I am excited to tell my kids one day that you know what I have been to the Oscar's and I have walked on Red Carpet and how it's a proud feeling to represent our country globally."

The actor is all set to walk the red carpet tonight at the 95th Academy Awards for RRR.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Jacqueline Fernandez



Team Absolute | Mumbai

After many speculations going around about the breakup of Tejaswi Prakash and Karan Kundrra, the 'Ishq Mein Ghayal' actor has said that with the blessings of fans, their bond is getting stronger with each passing day.

He tweeted: "Thank you for all the wishes love and prayers.. its because of you that we grow tenfold.. Stronger Each Passing Moment"

Although, he has not made any direct comment about the breakup rumours, fans have taken his post positively and wished for their long term relationship. The trolls and rumours around their breakup started with the earlier tweet of Karan in which he wrote a shayari.

"Na teri shaan kam hoti..na rubta ghata hota..jo ghamand mein kaha..wahi hass ke kaha hotaa." After his post, many started discussing their relationship and guessing what exactly has happened to him. In fact, Tejaswi also dropped a video in which she can be seen grooving on a song and she wrote in the caption: "Hold up".

However, Tejaswi in her recent

KARAN BREAKS HIS SILENCE ON BREAKUP RUMOURS WITH TEJASSWI

interview with Zoom TV, talked about their relationship and said: "I am in love. I am a little superstitious. I feel the more I talk about it, the more people tend to take the jinx off the beautiful things in your life."

Karan and Tejaswi started dating after their participation in 'Bigg Boss 15'. They keep sharing their posts and videos and fans call them TejRan. They are among the famous TV couples.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Karan is currently seen in the show 'Tere Ishq Mein Ghayal' which also stars Gashmeer Mahajani and Reem Shaikh in the lead. On the other hand, Tejaswi is part of Ekta Kapoor's 'Naagin 6'.

