

absolute india

VOL. 7, ISSUE 71, BHOPAL | THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022 | ₹5 | PAGE 08

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM BHOPAL, MUMBAI AND NEW DELHI

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'REACH OUT TO FAMILIES, DON'T WAIT FOR THEM TO FILE CLAIMS': SC TO STATES ON COVID COMPENSATION

COMPENSATE VICTIMS

▶ THE TOP COURT EXPRESSED DISCONTENT OVER THE DELAY IN PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO SUC-CUMBED TO COVID-19, AND ORDERED PERSONAL APPEAR-ANCE OF CHIEF SECRETARIES OF ANDHRA PRADESH AND BIHAR.

▶ THE TOP COURT WAS HEARING A PLEA, WHERE IT IS MONITOR-ING THE DISBURSAL OF COMPEN-SATION TO FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO DIED DUE TO COVID. THE SUPREME COURT HAS APPROVED THE COMPENSATION OF RS 50,000 TO VICTIM FAMILIES.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday told the state governments to reach out to the families who lost their loved ones to Covid-19, and emphasised, the governments should not wait for them to file applications to claim compensation. During the hearing, Justice Shah, expressing dis-content at the delay in Covid compensa-tion by various states, Justice Khanna noted that the gap between the Covid deaths recorded and the number of applications received, is a matter of serious concern. The bench noted that the number of applications seeking Covid compensation claims is less than registered death cases in many states, yet governments failed to take proactive steps. The bench asked the Gujarat government to produce

the documentation sample, stating the procedure followed while rejecting compensa-tion claims. The Haryana government counsel informed the top court that state officials are already reaching out to fami-lies, where it has recorded Covid death. The top court said it will take the help of the State Legal Services Authority to reach victim families for disbursement of compensation. The top court will pass the order later in the day.

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to examine a PIL against the validity of a provision of the Representation of People Act, which led to the use of electronic vot-ing machines (EVMs), replac-ing ballot papers, for elec-tions in the country. Advocate M.L. Sharma submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana that the mat-ter requires urgent listing against the backdrop of polls sched-uled in five states - Goa, Punjab, Manipur, and Uttar Pradesh. The elec-tions will be held between February 10 and March 10. Sharma, who filed the petition in his personal capacity, sub-mitted that the Section 61A of the

Representation of People Act, which allowed the use of EVMs, was not passed by the Parliament. He added that this cannot be imposed, and his plea sought declaration of the pro- vision as void, illegal, and unconstitutional. After a brief hearing in the mat-ter, the Chief Justice said: "We will see it...". He said that he may list the petition before some other bench. Sharma said: "I have filed the petition which is supported with the evidence on the record." He emphasised that judicial note can be taken note of the case. The petition has made the Law ministry as a party in the matter. "Let the election be held through ballot papers," he said.

SC AGREES TO LIST PIL SEEKING USE OF BALLOT PAPERS, INSTEAD OF EVMs

At 2.82L new Covid cases, India sees over 18% single-day rise

▶ THE ACTIVE CASELOAD HAS JUMPED TO 19,31,000 WHICH CON-STITUTES 4.83 PER CENT OF THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL POSITIVE CASES.

▶ THE OMICRON INFEC-TION TALLY HAS RISEN TO 8,961 ACROSS THE NATION, AN INCREASE OF 0.79 PER CENT FROM TUESDAY'S.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India reported 2,82,970 fresh Covid cases in the last 24 hours, which is a rise of over 18 per cent from the previous day's count. In the same time, 441 deaths were registered taking the toll to 4,87,202, said the Union ministry of health and family welfare on Wednesday.

The recovery of 1,88,157 patients in the last 24 hours has increased the cumulative tally to 3,55,83,039. Consequently, India's recov-ery rate stands at 93.88 per cent. Also in the same period, a total of 18,69,642 tests were conducted across the coun-try. India has so far conduct-ed over 70.74 crore cumula-tive tests. The weekly positiv-ity rate has climbed to 15.53 per cent amid a sudden spike in cases. The daily positiv-ity rate has declined to 15.13 per cent. With the administration of over 76 lakhs vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's Covid

OMICRON CAUSING HOSPITALISATIONS, DEATHS WORLDWIDE: WHO

New Delhi: In a fresh warning, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that Omicron variant of the coronavirus is causing hospitalisations and deaths the world over, and the narrative that it is a mild disease is misleading. Amid an ongoing resurgence across the world, the global coron-avirus caseload has topped 333.5 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 5.55 million and vacci-nations to over 9.68 billion, according to Johns Hopkins University. "Make no mis-take, Omicron is causing hospitalisations and deaths, and even the less severe cases are inundating health facilities," the WHO chief said late on Tuesday. "Omicron may be less severe, on average, but the narrative that it is a mild disease is misleading, hurts the overall response and costs more lives," he added.

FRANCE REPORTS RECORD OF OVER 400,000 NEW CASES

Paris: The Covid-19 situa-tion continues to worsen in France, with 464,769 new cases detected in a day, it was announced by the country's public health agency on Tuesday. This broke the previous daily record of 368,149 cases. The agency said that 3,881 Covid-19 patients were being treated in intensive care, accounting for over 70 per cent of the French health system's current capacity, Xinhua news agency reported.

inoculation coverage has reached 158.88 crore as of Wednesday morning. More than 12.84 crore bal-ance and unutilised Covid

vaccine doses are still avail-able with the states and UTs to be administered, accord-ing to the health ministry as of Wednesday morning.

Mulayam's daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav joins BJP



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law Aparna Yadav on Wednesday joined the BJP just three weeks ahead of the first phase of polling in Uttar Pradesh. She joined the BJP in presence of Uttar Pradesh state unit president Swatantra Dev Singh, deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, BJP media department head Anil Baluni, at party headquarters

here. Welcoming Aparna in the party, Singh said that Mulayam Singh Yadav's 'Bahu' (daughter-in-law) is joining BJP and she will work to strengthen the party. Deputy chief minister Maurya said, "Despite being Mulayam Singh Yadav's daughter-in-law, she always spoke in favour of BJP's work. Aparna thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Adityanath for giving an opportunity to join the BJP.

DGCA INITIATES PROBE INTO 'NEAR MISS' INCIDENT OVER BENGALURU

New Delhi: India's civil avi-ation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has com-menced investigation into an alleged incident of "mid-air near miss" involving two IndiGo flights. The purport-ed safety related lapse occurred on January 9 after the two flights took-off from Bengaluru airport. "Post the alleged safety breach, an investigation was launched by the DGCA," said a senior official with the regulator on Wednesday. The two IndiGo flights were headed for Kolkata and Bhubaneswar, respectively. According to industry insiders, the two aircraft had allegedly breached separation limits. Under safety regulations, aircrafts in Indian air space must maintain a distance of 5 nautical miles between them.

KOHLI SURPASSES TENDULKAR

Becomes India's highest run-scorer out of India in ODIs. Kohli (5057) needed just nine runs to go past Tendulkar's run tally (5065 runs in 147 innings) when he walked out to bat during India's chase of 297 and got the required runs quite comfortably.

Paarl | Agencies

Adding another feather to his cap, Virat Kohli on Wednesday surpassed Sachin Tendulkar to become India's highest run-getter in ODI cricket away from home during the first ODI of the three-match series against South Africa at Boland Park, here. With this, the star batter has now become the highest run-getter for India in Away ODIs. He is followed by former India captain MS Dhoni (4520 runs in 124 inns), Rahul Dravid (3998 runs in 110 inns) and Sourav Ganguly (3468 runs in 105 inns). The 33-year-old also had 1,287 runs against the Proteas ahead of the first ODI and sur-



passed two Indian batting stal-warts - Dravid and Ganguly, as he reached the 27th run in his innings. The former Indian

captain remains only behind Tendulkar, who has scored 2,001 runs against South Africa in ODIs. However, the wait for Virat's 71st international century continued as he got out after scor-ing 51 off 63 off the bowling of Tabraiz Shamsi in the 29th over of India's innings. Notably, Kohli has begun a new chapter in his career, play-ing as a pure batter for the first time in over five years in any format of the game. The batter had quit Test cap-taincy earlier this month, fin-ishing as the most successful skipper for India in the longest format of the game. He was sacked as ODI captain in December, months after he decided to give up captaincy in the T20I format of the game.

ROPEWAY LINKING MCLEODGANJ WITH DHARAMSALA OPENED

Dharamsala: Now a ropeway has linked this Himachal Pradesh town with McLeodganj, the abode of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Wednesday inaugurated the 1.8-km long ropeway constructed with an outlay of Rs 207 crore. The Chief Minister said the construction of the ropeway was started in 2018 and has been developed under Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DFBOT) mode as under public-private partnership by Dharamsala Ropeway Ltd and Himachal Pradesh Tourism and Civil Aviation Department. Thakur said the ropeway would go a long way in solving the traffic problem of McLeodganj and also prove as an added tourist attraction. The ropeway would carry 1,000 people per hour in one direction and the total time taken by a trolley to reach McLeodganj from Dharamsala is 5 minutes. It has 10 towers and two stations. Mono-cable detachable gondola technology has been used in the project.

NIA announces Rs 10L reward on SFJ's Jaswinder Singh Multani

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) which recently lodged a case of unlawful activities prevention act against Germany-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) member Jaswinder Singh Multani, has now declared a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh on him. Releasing two pictures of Jaswinder Singh, the NIA has urged the public to help them in the terror case against him. NIA sources have indicated that they are also probing his involvement in use of drones for smuggling activities across the border. An NIA official on Wednesday said that for quite a long time, drones are being used for the purpose of smuggling of arms, ammuni-tion, explosives and drugs. "Pakistan-based terrorists backed by ISI are involved in this. Jaswinder Singh Multani is in touch with them. He also has an Indian contact who receives smuggled arms, explosive and drugs.



By this, he is pumping drugs and arms into the Indian territory. We are probing this and are collecting evidence in this respect," said a source. Around 70 drone sightings cases were reported last year along the border in Punjab and Jammu. These drones were used by Pakistan-based elements to supply arms and narcotics in India. Few drones were shot down by Border Security Forces. Another drone was sighted by the BSF, and even as the personnel tried to shoot it down and it flew back to Pakistan after dropping six packets containing narcotics, these were seized by the agencies. Multani was booked by NIA for hatching conspiracy against India along with his associates.

Bookies now technically advanced, buying paid services to connect safely, hide locations

Bookies are using paid VAN (value-added network) service to hide their actual locations to prevent raids, as they say they are now interacting with thousands of new customers. The link/URL of the app is sent to trusted customers after taking the payments in advance.

Atul Krishan | New Delhi

Bookies running the "Satta Bazaar" have opted for secure digital and technical connections to meet new customers and elude police. They are hiring profes-sionals and buying different services from top companies abroad to run the "Satta Bazaar" through different mobile applications to keep ahead of police. Correspondent spoke to a few Hapur, Meerut, and Delhi-based bookies who are running betting rackets ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections and came to know how they have gone technically and digitally sound. Bookie 'Kapil' (name changed on request) said that



they are running their operations through different mobile applications and on social media. They provide specific URL for Rs 25,000 to their trusted users to download a mobile application through which their cus-tomers can place bets. New users need a reference from a trusted user. Speaking to correspondent, a bookie revealed that in the app, "we do betting on cricket, football, politics and on other things. Payment is instantly made once the result is declared be it politics or cricket. User can send the money to their bank account for which we charge 2 per cent extra". The bookies also keep changing the name of the applications.



'SERIOUS ISSUE': SC PULLS UP UP AS ACCUSED STILL IN JAIL DESPITE BAIL ORDER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government for not releasing an accused in the Rs 3,500 crore Noida "bike bot" Ponzi scheme, despite its month-old order which granted bail to him.

A bench, headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C.T. Ravikumar said: "We deprecate the conduct of the Investigating Officer and also express our serious reservation about the manner in which the Magistrate mechanically proceeded to direct remand of the applicant/petitioner disregarding the order passed by this Court on December 13, 2021." In December, the top court ordered the release of accused Vijay Kumar Sharma on bail, however a magisterial court sent him



to further custody, in violation of the top court order. The bench said it passed the bail order a month ago, and the man has not been released so far. "You will not release the person even after a month. It's a very serious issue," it told the UP government counsel. The top court, in its order, said: "We direct the Investigating Officer concerned with crime No. 817

of 2020 to forthwith take steps to release the applicant/petitioner on bail and comply with the order dated 13.12.2021 in connection with the stated offences (all the FIRs in the State of Uttar Pradesh) concerning Bike Bot project passed by this Court without any loss of time." It further added: "We further direct the concerned officials of the State of Uttar Pradesh to eschew from repeating such misadventure in future, disregarding the unambiguous order passed by this Court on December 13." The bench said the copy of this order should be forwarded forthwith to the Secretary, Home Department through email for information and necessary action and sought a compliance report by Thursday. Additional Advocate General for Uttar Pradesh Vinod Diwakar assured the top court that the man will be released on Wednesday only.

Bomb threat at CRPF HQ turns out to be hoax

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bomb threat call received by the Delhi Fire Service stating the presence of a bomb at the Central Reserve Police Force headquarters in the national capital turned out to be a hoax call, an official said here on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South District), Benita Mary Jaiker, confirmed that nothing suspicious was found at the spot.

The CRPF headquarters are located at the CGO Complex on Lodhi road in the national capital.

"The teams of Delhi Police, CISF and CRPF thoroughly checked the place, but nothing suspicious was found," said the official.

The DCP further said that



bomb disposal squads along with dog squads were also deployed to check the possibility of a bomb, however, they also didn't find anything suspicious.

Earlier in the day also, an unattended bag triggered panic in eastern Delhi, five days after an IED was timely defused from the same part of the national capital.

However, this time the bag did not contain any explosives, the police confirmed to reporter.

Boat capsizes in Bihar's West Champaran, 10 missing

Team Absolute | Patna

At least three persons were drowned and 10 others were missing after an overloaded boat, on which a tractor was also taken, capsized on the Gandak river in Bihar's West Champaran district on Wednesday, police said.

Police said there were around 20 people, mainly farmers, on the boat, as well as tractor. Nautan police station SHO Kundan Singh said



that the accident occurred

near Bhagwanpur village around 10 a.m. "We have rescued around 10 persons from the Gandak river and recovered three dead bodies. State Disaster Response Team personnel are doing search operations in the area," he said. Majority of the victims were from Nautan, while some of them were also from Vishambharpur and Kuchaikot in Gopalganj district. "The injured persons were admitted to health centres in Nautan," he said.

BJP ANNOUNCES ALLIANCE WITH APNA DAL, NISHAD PARTY

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Apna Dal and the Nishad Party on Wednesday officially announced their alliance to contest the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls together.

Addressing a joint press conference with the alliance partners, Apna Dal president Anupriya Patel and Nishad Party president Sanjay Nishad, BJP chief JP Nadda said: "BJP, Apna Dal and Nishad Party will jointly contest Uttar Pradesh assembly polls in all the 403 seats." "In the last two days, we had discussions with our NDA alliance partners and it has been decided to jointly contest all 403 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh. We all came together in 2019 Lok Sabha elections and in the 2022 assembly polls also," Nadda said.

Nadda said PM Modi's vision of; Sabka Sath,



Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Vikas' has been followed in letter and spirit in Uttar Pradesh by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. "The double engine government

in Uttar Pradesh has given a new momentum to development by taking along all sections of the society. A lot of work has been done in the state for improving connectivity, health, education including medical education, public and social welfare by Chief Minister Adityanath with the blessings of Prime Minister Modi," Nadda said.

He further pointed out that the law and order situation has improved in the state in the last 5 years and the mafia raj has ended. "Five years ago, the situation was completely different. People were scared of going out after 5 p.m. but today, everything has changed under the BJP government," Nadda said. Apna Dal's Anupriya Patel said the NDA government is committed for development and social justice for which the party is fighting.

She listed the union government policy and initiatives for the backward classes.

COVISHIELD, COVAXIN CLEARED FOR REGULAR MARKET APPROVAL

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's two main vaccines -- Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Serum Institute of India's Covishield -- on Wednesday got the nod for regular market authorisation.

An expert panel of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) -- India's regulatory body for pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics -- on Wednesday recommended granting regular market approval to Covishield and Covaxin, which are currently only authorised for emergency use in the country, subject to certain conditions.

"CDSCO has recommended for upgrade of Covishield and Covaxin's status from restricted use in emergency situations to grant of new



drug permission with conditions in adult population. The DCGI (Drugs Controller General of India) will evaluate the recommendations and

give its decision," CDSCO said in a tweet. Indian vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech had submitted applications to the DCGI seeking regular market authorisation for their respective Covid vaccines. Prakash Kumar Singh, director of government and regulatory affairs at Serum Institute, had submitted an application to the DCGI on October 25 last year on this matter. The DCGI had sought more data and documents from the Pune-based company following which Singh recently submitted a response along with more data and information. Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech had submitted complete information on chemistry, manufacturing, and controls, along with the pre-clinical and clinical data while seeking regular market authorisation for Covaxin.

Mother, four kids found dead in Delhi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A woman and her four children were found dead in the national capital's Shahdara area, an official said on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara district), R. Sathiyasundaram, said that a PCR call was received at around 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, stating that four to five people are lying unconscious on the fifth floor of a building in Old Seema Puri area. On reaching the spot, the police found four persons dead -- the woman and her three kids. As the police inquired, it was found that six persons -- Mohit Kalia, 35, his wife Radha, 30, two daughters

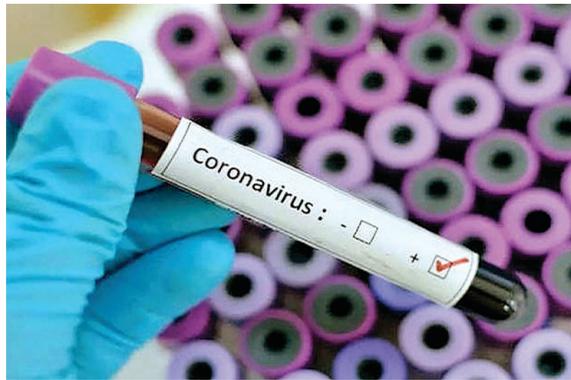


aged 11 and 4 and two sons aged 8 and 3 -- had shifted to the one-room rented accommodation just a day ago. When Mohit woke up in the morning, he found his wife and the three kids dead after which he rushed his youngest son to a nearby hospital where he was also declared brought dead. The officials told IANS that the prima facie it looks like the cause of the deaths was due to suffocation as a fireplace was found just next to the dead bodies. "There was no ventilation inside the room," said the officials. A forensic team has reached the spot to collect crucial evidences. "Further probe is on," the police said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem and the actual cause of the deaths can be ascertained once the reports are received, the DCP

Man kills wife, attempts suicide, tests positive

Lucknow | Agencies

A man allegedly murdered his wife and then tried to commit suicide by hanging himself in his residence in Alambagh in Lucknow. Thereafter, he called the emergency helpline UP 112 and said that he has killed his wife and was going to commit suicide. The Alambagh police immediately reached the spot and arrested Yadav before he could end his life. The accused, meanwhile, has been hospitalised since he tested Covid-19 positive in a rapid test during routine medical examination before being sent to jail. Sushil's samples have been sent for confirmatory RT-PCR test and further action will be taken after the report arrives.



According to the police, the accused, Sushil Kumar Yadav, 40, is a cab driver and killed his wife, Meera, 35, by hitting her with an

iron rod on the head on Tuesday. Brijesh Yadav, a relative of Meera, told police that the couple got married in 2009, but had no child from the wedlock. He said that Sushil's mother used to force him to divorce Meera and marry another woman. He said that Meera had lodged a complaint of harassment against her husband with the police earlier, but later compromised and the case was settled. Shobhawati Yadav, mother of the deceased, told police that Sushil was also flirting with the widow of her son Daya who had died six months ago. When Meera objected to this relationship, Sushil got enraged and took this action, she alleged. tation house officer (SHO) lambagh, Anil Kumar Singh, said that a case of murder has been lodged against Sushil.

Andhra govt employees threaten strike over pay revision

AMARAVATI | Agencies

Government employees in Andhra Pradesh have threatened to go on strike to press for their demand of roll back of the Government Order (GO) relating to implementation of the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) recommendations.

The employees on Wednesday attended the offices wearing black badges while some protesters among teachers set afire the copies of the GO. Leaders of Andhra Pradesh Joint Action



Committee (AP JAC) and AP JAC Amaravati will be holding a meeting later in the day to chalk out future course of action. They said if necessary, the employees will go on strike to press for their demands. Stating that the pay revision announced by the government is far below the Interim Relief (IR), AP JAC chairman Bandi Srinivasa Rao and AP JAC Amaravati chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu demanded that the government continue paying IR and also release the arrears of Dearness Allowance (DA).

They said there is no instance in the state's history of a pay revision being lower than IR.

AIR POLLUTION RISES IN MAHA, GUJ AFTER BRIEF LULL DUE TO LOCKDOWNS: CSE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Most cities in Maharashtra and Gujarat indicated a rising trend in annual PM2.5 levels with a drop through 2020 (during lockdowns) followed by a rebound and a rising trend visible in 2021, an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said on Wednesday.

Stating that the air pollution is rapidly becoming a matter of concern in the two western states, the new analysis of regional air pollution levels said cities in Gujarat are more polluted than those in Maharashtra.

The analysis covered 56 continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) spread across 15 cities in the two states.

Gujarat's Vatva and Ankleshwar have the most polluted air in the region with the 2021 average of PM2.5 at 67 microgram per metre cube. This is followed by Vapi and Ahmedabad with 2021 annual averages at 54 and 53 microgram per metre cube, respectively.



In Maharashtra, Chandrapur, an industrial city, has recorded levels marginally above the annual standard at 43 microgram per metre cube. Other stations have met the annual standard though all of them showed a rising trend in 2021 after the dip in 2020. Despite low annual levels, cities in Maharashtra experienced a high number of days with 'poor' and 'very poor' AQI compared to Gujarat.

With 102 days of poor and very poor AQI, Ankleshwar in Gujarat had the unhealthiest days in the region, followed by Kalyan (84 days), Vatva (75 days), and Navi Mumbai (54 days).

Vapi had 48 days of poor and very poor

AQI -- but its data is missing for 138 days (mainly for the winter months). Mumbai registered 42 days of poor and very poor AQI despite meeting the annual standard.

Levels during high weekly pollution episodes in winter can be more than double the annual concentration in several cities. During the worst weekly pollution episodes in winter, the PM2.5 concentrations can increase significantly higher than the annual PM2.5 average -- about two times higher in several cities. "This analysis of real-time air quality data for the period 2019-2021 shows that the downward dip in pollution that was induced by the lockdown phases of the pandemic in 2020 is changing. Pollution levels are threatening to bounce back. In many cases, the levels are even higher than in 2019. This underscores the urgency of scaling up action across all sectors to prevent further worsening and to arrest the trend in this region," said Anumita Roychowdhury, Executive Director, Research and Advocacy, CSE.

आम सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि जिला दलिया (म.प्र.) ने दलिया निर्द अन्तर्गत मेरी भूमि खसरा संख्या 13/17/213/17/3 एवं 13/18/2-13/18/3 के मूल दस्तावेज, नामान्तरण, खसरा खतोनी की सत्यापित नकल की प्रतियाँ व स्काॅपियों वाहन क्रमांक MP32D0189 की आपसी व आचार कार्ड एवं पेन कार्ड आदि के मूल कागजात से भरा बैग कहीं गुप्त हो गया है। अगर किसी सज्जन को मिले तो कृपया उपरोक्त पते व मोबाइल नम्बर पर सूचित करने का कष्ट करें।

सूचनाकर्ता
मुनेन्द्र सिंह
पुत्र श्री ओमप्रकाश सिंह नरवरिया
पता-पंचशील नगर, सिविल लाईन्स
दलिया (म.प्र.) मो. नं. 9425403492



VACCINATION OF TEENAGERS IN THE STATE GAINS MOMENTUM

► MORE THAN TWO-THIRD OF TARGET ACHIEVED, CHIEF MINISTER CHOUHAN CONGRATULATED

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has congratulated while expressing happiness for completing more than 33 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccination in Madhya Pradesh for the age group of 15-18 years today. Madhya Pradesh has achieved more than two-third of the total target in this category.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that while Madhya Pradesh has been a leader in the vaccination of persons above 18 years of age, in the same way, now the work of protecting adolescents from corona is going well. The Chief Minister said that we have completed an important step in protecting the entire people



of Madhya Pradesh from corona. Due to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister S Modi, free vaccine has been made available to the countrymen today.

Mega campaign and public participation important

Mega campaigns have also been conducted from time to time for vaccination in Madhya Pradesh.

Wide public participation has been seen in these mega campaigns. This is the reason that till the evening of January 19, 33 lakh 60 thousand vaccine doses have been completed in the state in the age group of 15 to 18 years. Chief Minister Chouhan said that administrative officers and staff members of all the districts including public representatives,

religious leaders, all frontline workers, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and officers and employees of health department deserve congratulations for this success. Madhya Pradesh ahead of national average The vaccination work in the country has completed one year. An encouraging environment was created in Madhya Pradesh from 16 January 2020 on the first day of vaccination. Health workers went to the fields and barns and did the vaccination. Adolescents are also benefiting from the vaccination. Madhya Pradesh has made 20 percent more achievement than the national average of 50 percent in the work of vaccination of adolescents started from January 3rd. Madhya Pradesh has achieved the target of 70 percent vaccination of eligible teenagers of this category. Madhya Pradesh is ahead of other states in the vaccination of pregnant women. Vaccine doses have been administered to about 7 lakh pregnant women of the state.

'Mask hi hai zindagi' campaign in urban bodies from January 20

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has directed to launch 'Mask Hi Hai Zindagi' campaign in all urban bodies from January 20 to make citizens aware of wearing masks to avoid corona. This campaign will run for 20 days.

Singh said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided free vaccine to the entire country to prevent Corona. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has ensured elaborate arrangements for prevention from Corona along with vaccination. As a result of this, Madhya Pradesh is among the leading states in vaccination.

Singh has told that the objective of the campaign is to promote the use of masks in urban areas, to make masks available in an accessible manner with public cooperation and to set up a mask bank besides informing about the proper way of wearing masks and its safe disposal.

The cooperation of non-government organizations, institutions and youth will be sought in the campaign. Various awareness activities will be carried out along with personal public relations. Those who wear masks will be encouraged and those who do not will be advised to do so. The roko-toko campaign



will continue. The benefits of wearing masks will be told through various media. Challan action will also be taken after consultation for not applying the mask. Challan will be made after advising people who fail to wear mask.

Continuous monitoring of the campaign will be done at the ministerial and directorate level.

New liquor policy triggers political controversy

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, a political struggle has erupted over whether the State Council of Ministers approved the Composite Excise Policy 2022-23 and Heritage Liquor Policy 2022 for the coming financial year. The BJP has approved a new liquor policy in the state which will come into effect from April 1. Under this, the prices of liquor will not only be reduced, but the rich will also have the freedom to open a bar at home. The government claims that with the new policy, there will be effective control on illegal and non-standard liquor manufacturing, transportation, storage and sale.

The Congress has raised questions on the provisions



made by the government in the new policy. Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath says that the love of liquor of Shivraj government has been exposed once again. Liquor will now be cheaper, duty reduction in Madhya Pradesh, while on the other hand petrol-diesel is expensive, no tax relief, while the public has

been demanding reduction in taxes for a long time. The government has given its priority. He further said, Shivraj government wants to deliver liquor from door to door, so that everyone remains intoxicated. On the other hand, the liquor mafia continues to wreak havoc in the state, now four people have died due to

alcohol in Bhand. The government has no control over the liquor mafia, illegal business of illegal and poisonous liquor continues in the state. Those who used to talk about prohibition at the time of elections have become the biggest supporters of alcohol today. This is their reality.

On the other hand, BJP leader Rajneesh Agarwal said that we are in favor of alcoholism. For this, awareness campaigns are being run continuously. Responding to the allegations of the Congress, he asked that the Congress should tell where their government is, that is, what is being done in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Maharashtra regarding the prohibition of liquor.

THREE SIBLINGS BOOKED FOR COW TRAFFICKING IN REWA

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Three siblings have been booked on the charges of cow trafficking in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district, police said on Wednesday.

A group of people (all belonging to Hindu community) were found transporting nearly six cows in a vehicle. The vehicle carrying cows was spotted by a group of locals at a village under Baikunthpur police station in Rewa district. Noticing that locals have cornered them, cow traffickers stopped the vehicle and fled from the spot.

Shivanand Dwivedi, a local activist told reporter that legs of cows were tied with ropes. "Leg of a cow was chopped off. The injured cow was taken to a veterinary hospital for treatment. However, when locals informed the police about the incident, police refused to register a case."

Dwivedi further claimed



it's not the first such incident of cows smuggling in the district.

"A similar case had occurred two years back in the same Baikunthpur area but no action was taken by the local police. This incident had occurred on the intervening night of January 13-14, however, the case was registered on January 17 after the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India informed the wildlife department and the Superintendent of Police, Rewa," he further said.

FIR copy stated that three persons involved in alleged trafficking and cruelty of cows have been booked under Sections 411, 414, and 429 of the IPC, Section 11(1)(d) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960, and Sections 4 and 9 of the Madhya Pradesh Govansh Vadh Pratishedh Adhiniyam, 2004.

All three accused in the case have been identified as Ashok Gupta, Prince Gupta and Dashrath Gupta, residents of Baikunthpur area. Now, activists alleged that

the local police have not arrested any of the accused involved in the matter.

However, Town Inspector (TI) Baikunthpur police station told reporter over phone on Wednesday: "Action has been taken as per the Madhya Pradesh Govansh Vadh Pratishedh Adhiniyam, 2004, according to which, offence liable to punishment less than seven years will be issued notices and will not be arrested. Therefore, we have issued notices to them and the case will be heard in the district court."

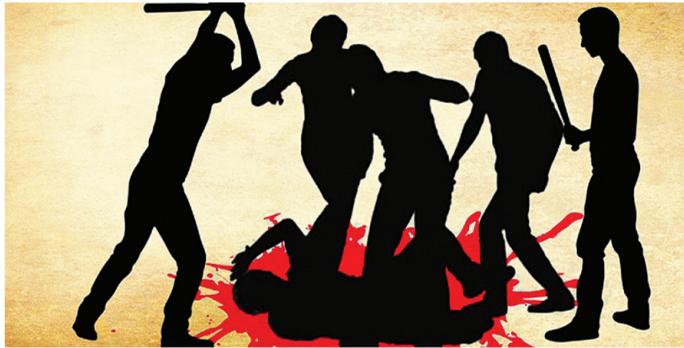
BAJRANG DAL WORKERS ALLEGEDLY BEAT MUSLIM MAN IN UJJAIN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A group of Bajrang Dal workers allegedly beat a Muslim man, who was travelling with a married Hindu woman, in an Ajmer-bound train and was forcibly picked up from the train at Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain railway station.

Bajrang Dal members assaulted the Muslim man, accusing him of being involved in 'Love Jihad' and they (woman and man) were made to sit for several hours at the Ujjain railway police station until their family members reached there from Indore and said that they were family friends known to each other.

The man and the woman were let off by the police after parents' statements that the Muslim man was travelling with Hindu woman because they were known to each other and there was no angle of alleged 'Love Jihad'. Bajrang Dal workers not only boarded both friends forcibly from the train but thrashed the man in the name of 'Love Jihad' and after handing him over to the railway police, one of the Bajrang Dal workers briefed the local media.



In one of the videos of the incident, which went viral on social media, three men who identified themselves as Bajrang Dal workers are seen dragging Asif Shaikh out of the train coach. As they take him to the police station, the woman is seen walking behind them. In another video recorded inside the police sta-

tion, the woman is seen screaming at the Bajrang Dal men. "Your one misunderstanding can spoil my life. I am an adult and work as a teacher in a school, I teach children," the woman was heard saying in one of the videos. One of the Bajrang Dal men identified as Pintu Kaushal is seen telling her that he was

not talking to her.

They (Hindu woman and Muslim man) have not lodged any complaint against Bajrang Dal members. The incident had occurred on January 14, said the railway police. While the man was identified as Asif Shaikh, owner of a small electronic shop, the woman is a private school teacher.

Government Railway Police (GRP) Superintendent of Police (SP), Nivedita Gupta said Shaikh and the woman were family friends and had known each other for years.

"Bajrang Dal members had brought the man and woman alleging Love Jihad, however, when questioned it was found that they were family friends and both adults, and there was no offence. They were let scot-free after the statement of their parents were recorded," Gupta added. Railway Police said they were not aware that the man was beaten up while being brought to the police station.

"Neither man nor the woman said that they were thrashed during the interrogation, hence no case was registered. It was just an incident that occurred due to misinformation," the GRP SP said.

Chief Minister Chouhan Congratulates on NDRF Foundation Day

► CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN HAS EXTENDED WARM WISHES TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE FORCE AND THEIR FAMILIES ON THE FOUNDATION DAY OF NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE (NDRF).

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Chouhan has said that the entire country is proud of all the soldiers of Disaster Response Force, who selflessly defended the country and life and property by facing natural calamities and adverse situations with indomitable courage and bravery. During the last monsoon in the state, NDRF personnel and senior officers had played a commendable role in bringing the villagers out of calamity in the event of floods in some districts. The specialties of this force include the operation of relief operations in a short time by reaching the affected areas promptly as soon as information is received.

Chief Minister Chouhan Plants Lemon Sapling at NDMC Park in New Delhi

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan planted sapling in NDMC Park during his stay in New Delhi today morning. Chief Minister Chouhan planted a lemon sapling today and also offered Shramdaan. It is noteworthy that Chief Minister Chouhan has been planting a sapling every day since last Narmada Jayanti. Chief Minister Chouhan plants saplings even during his stay outside Bhopal.

Importance of lemon

Lemon is rich in Vitamin C, energizing and disease-preventing fruit. Lemon is a great source of vitamin C and thus helps in the production of white blood cells and antibodies in the blood, which prevent infection by attacking invading microorganisms and builds immunity. Lemon juice is beneficial in prevention of cold. India is a major lemon producing country. India produces one-sixth of the world's lemon production.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan's again suspended two officers

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's stance has remained strong when the matter of bureaucracy came to the fore. He has suspended two more officers for negligence in work. State Chief Minister Chouhan directed to suspend two officers SDM Shahdol and Assistant Commissioner, Khargone, who were negligent in redressal of complaints while reviewing the Samadhan online program. Earlier, in Rajgarh, two officers were suspended from the stage for disturbances in the public distribution system.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that it is good governance to give benefits of schemes and maintain the systems. The departments



which have more problems should be reviewed. There should be continuous review of complaints at district and state level. There is no pendency of complaints in the CM Helpline. The ranking of districts is being done on the basis of redressal of these complaints. Chief Minister Chouhan directed the Public Works Department to com-

plete the incomplete construction works. He directed the Medical Education Department to provide benefits of all facilities required in cases of maternity aid, medical colleges and hospitals. The Chief Minister asked for early redressal of complaints regarding payment of wages and material purchase in the Forest Department.

CM CHOUHAN REMEMBERS MAHARANA PRATAP ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Bhopal : Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan remembered Maharana Pratap on his death anniversary. Chouhan said that 'the earth has been blessed with his unparalleled patriotism. The saga of bravery and national pride, the saga of Maharana Pratap will always inspire the people of India to serve and love their motherland. Chief Minister Chouhan said that the valour, courage and bravery of Maharana Pratap, the brave son of Maa Bharati, was appreciated by his enemies as well. To such a brave warrior, I pay my obeisance on his death anniversary.



EDITOR'S SPECS

The climate is warming

Although average global temperatures were temporarily cooled by the 2020-2022 La Nina events, 2021 was still one of the seven warmest years on record, according to six leading international datasets consolidated by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels. 2021 is the 7th consecutive year (2015-2021) where global temperature has been over 1 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, according to all datasets compiled by WMO. Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one. This is expected to continue. The warmest seven years have all been since 2015, with 2016, 2019 and 2020 constituting the top three. An exceptionally strong El Nino event occurred in 2016, which contributed to record global average warming. Global warming and other long-term climate change trends are expected to continue as a result of record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the WMO said in a global release. WMO uses six international datasets to ensure the most comprehensive, authoritative temperature assessment. The same data are used in its annual State of the Climate reports, which inform the international community on global climate indicators. La Nina refers to the large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, coupled with changes in the tropical atmospheric circulation. It usually has the opposite impacts on weather and climate as El Nino. La Nina has a temporary global cooling effect, which is typically strongest in the second year of the event. WMO also uses reanalysis datasets from the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts and its Copernicus Climate Change Service, and the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA). Temperature is just one of the indicators of climate change. Others include greenhouse gas concentrations, ocean heat content, ocean pH, global mean sea level, glacial mass and sea ice extent.

Vinod Kumar Shukla

With Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) led by former chief minister Mayawati is more or less giving a walk over to her political rivals in Uttar Pradesh, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lapped the occasion to reap benefit out of it, which was already working on its plans to win over Dalit votes. However, the BJP was working from long among Dalit community from length and breadth of Uttar Pradesh with its plans to extend its support base further from 2017 Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

After 2017 Assembly elections, the NDA has fielded a Dalit Ram Nath Kovind as President of India who belongs to Kanpur and is from the most unrepresented Dalit community. The BJP government at the Centre has given proper representation to Dalits in the council of ministers including Nishith Pramanik, who is Union minister of state for Home. But the real strategy of the BJP for 2022 Assembly elections started with the resignation of Dalit leader Baby Rani Maurya as Governor of Uttarakhand.

Maurya was immediately appointed as national vice president of the BJP and was touring the entire state since then. She has now been fielded from the Agra (Rural) Assembly constituency of Uttar Pradesh. A Dalit Jagpal Singh has been fielded from a general constituency Saharanpur to send a message to the community. Maurya belongs to the Jatav sub caste of Dalits from which former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati belongs to. By fielding her from Agra (rural), the BJP not only aimed to enter into the solid vote bank of the BSP but women voters will also be influenced by her. There is a need to understand that Dalits constitute around 21 per cent of the state of which over 50 per cent are Jatav votes. They are very strong in western Uttar Pradesh.

The BJP has been trying to woo Dalit voters from very long and it succeeded in winning them over in Uttar Pradesh in sizable number at least in the last three consecutive elections. But if the party manages to garner support of Jatav voters with the help of Baby Rani Maurya, it will really be a big achievement and electoral success for the BJP. She has been made part of the election management committee of the BJP in of Uttar Pradesh and it is likely that some more Dalits will be accommodated by fielding them as BJP candidates. The BJP had organised several programmes after appointing Maurya as National



vice president of the party and ensured attendance of people from Dalit community. For these functions, the party highlighted Maurya's Dalit identity, by adding Jatav to her name in hoardings and formal communications. This makes the strategy of the party quite clear.

The BJP has managed to create a vote bank of over 40 per cent of which Dalits are an important constituent. Now, the party wants to take that number to 50 per cent and its leaders are repeatedly saying so. This is only possible with a big support from the Dalit community. Moreover, the way Mayawati is conducting herself, the spark as a fiery leader that she used to carry is completely missing from her. This is the reason that disheartened and disillusioned support base of the BSP has started leaving the party which is the reason for its gradual shrinking vote base in the state. Political analysts say that she has now turned into a drawing room politician with couple of advisors working on old social engineering strategy. But the most important thing that goes against her is that Dalits are finding that she has not done anything to empower the community. They have gone to the extent of saying that she was busy managing her own good fortunes and neglected the community that had brought her to the chair of the CM for four times. So, a big section of Dalits has already relinquished her but people belonging to her own community, the Jatavs, are still having full faith in her and are hanging around her. But if the strategy of the BJP works for it, then that aura of Mayawati will also vanish and supporters of Mayawati may switch

sides to the BJP or the SP.

The conspicuous absence of Mayawati from Uttar Pradesh politics even during elections and despite having an alliance with Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab, the BSP is literally invisible in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in terms of election campaigning. No programme schedule of Mayawati either in Punjab or in Uttar Pradesh is causing doubt in the minds of her supporters. This is emboldening other political parties to poach from her support base. Despite all odds, the BSP managed to keep its vote share intact to 22 per cent but how long will she be able to do this with this kind of inertia is really doubtful.

But this is certainly giving the Samajwadi Party a chance to make a dent in the BSP vote bank. Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party is trying to woo Dalits and many Dalit leaders from the BSP joined the party recently. Samajwadi Baba Saheb Ambedkar Vahini has been launched by the Samajwadi Party on October 16, 2021 to reach out to Dalit vote bank especially in Poorvanchal area of Uttar Pradesh. A former BSP leader, Mithai Lal Bharti has been appointed as its chief who has good influence in the Poorvanchal region. So, the SP is trying to win over Dalit votes and may field sizable number of Dalit candidates. But the gameplan of the SP is spoiled by the new kid in the block Chandrashekar Azad 'Rawan' who has quite a sizable following among Dalit youths in western Uttar Pradesh. But the SP has humiliated him by offering 2 seats while he was insisting on minimum

five. This has infuriated his supporters. However, gauging the anger of Dalits, SBSP chief issued a statement that he would try to keep him with the alliance if he would have to offer some seats to him from his own quota.

To counter the Samajwadi Party's game plan to win Dalit votes, the BJP which has already won over a section of non-Jatav Dalit votes to its fold is trying to win over Jatav votes by utilizing services of Baby Rani Maurya in Uttar Pradesh's elections. The former mayor of Agra has been appointed as National vice president of the party. She is part of the election management committee and if the BJP forms the government in Uttar Pradesh, in all likelihood she would be appointed as the third deputy chief minister in the BJP government.

Appointing her third deputy chief minister will help the BJP not only to reach out Dalits but also women constituencies. She belongs to Agra and the region around has the concentration of Jatav voters. The strategy of the BJP will not only work for it in 2022 Assembly elections but also for 2024 Lok Sabha elections in view of the importance of Uttar Pradesh that sends 80 members in the Lok Sabha. All these factors have made Dalit votes not only important but floating. They are up for grab, let's see, whose strategy works to make a dent into this sizable vote bank.

(The writer is freelance journalist based in Delhi.)

international

US introduces privacy bill to ban online 'surveillance advertising'

Washington | Agencies

The US has unveiled a new privacy bill that would ban targeted advertising on digital platforms by social media giants like Meta (formerly Facebook), Google and others.

The bill allows users to sue platforms like Facebook and Google if they break the law, granting up to \$5,000 in relief per violation.

Titled 'The Banning Surveillance Advertising Act', the bill seeks to limit the ways that Big Tech serve ads to their users.

It, however, makes some small exceptions, like allowing for "broad" location-based targeting and "contextual advertising", reports The Verge. "The 'surveillance advertising' business model is premised on the unseemly collection and hoarding of personal data to enable ad



targeting," Anna Eshoo (D-CA), the bill's lead sponsor, said in a statement.

"This pernicious practice allows online platforms to chase user engagement at great cost to our society, and it fuels disinformation, discrimination, voter suppression, privacy abuses, and so

many other harms. The surveillance advertising business model is broken," Eshoo said late on Tuesday.

"Any targeting based on protected class information, such as race, gender, and religion, and personal data purchased from data brokers" would not be allowed.

KENYAN SECURITY FORCES KILL 15 AL-SHABAB MILITANTS IN COASTAL REGION

Lamu: Kenyan security forces have killed 15 al-Shabab militants following a successful operation in the Bodhei area within the vast Boni forest in the coastal county of Lamu. The Kenya Defense Force (KDF) commander involved in the operation said on Tuesday that an unknown number of militants were also injured in the raid after their camps were bombed on Monday evening.

The KDF official who declined to be named revealed that the ground troops were supported by attack helicopters and artillery fire to raid the militants' bases which were located just about 40 kms from a local shopping centre, Xinhua news agency reported. He said some of the slain militants are suspected to be part of the gang behind the recent attacks in the Lamu region that left over 15 people dead. "We believe the militants were part of those who attacked villagers here recently. Our officers have successfully conducted a raid and destroyed two al-Shabab command and logistics bases in Bodhei," the KDF commander said. The militant group is believed to have fighters operating in the area's Boni forest that has a poor communication network and terrain slowing down police operations. The security forces involved in the overnight raid are part of the multi-agency team conducting the Operation Amani Boni that was launched in 2015 with the major objective being to flush out al-Shabab militants believed to be hiding inside the Boni forest. Security sources privy to the operation said improvised explosive devices (IEDs), communication equipment, several uniforms, AK 47 rifles, two machine guns and bullets were recovered during the raid. Another group of security teams has been deployed in Taksile, Mangulo, Hadhi and across the border in pursuit of 10 militants who escaped after the raid.

GLOBAL COVID CASELOAD TOPS 333.5 MN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid an ongoing resurgence across the world, the global coronavirus caseload has topped 333.5 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 5.55 million and vaccinations to over 9.68 billion, according to Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Wednesday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and the death toll stood at 333,596,115 and 5,553,993, respectively, while the total number of vaccine doses administered has increased to 9,685,515,903.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 67,581,992 and 853,951, according to the CSSE.

The second worst hit country in terms of cases is India (37,618,271 infections



and 486,761 deaths), followed by Brazil (23,229,851 infections and 621,803 deaths).

The other countries with over 5 million cases are the UK (15,501,850), France (14,284,535), Russia (10,682,826), Turkey (10,682,826), Italy (9,018,425), Spain (8,518,975), Germany (8,140,498), Argentina (7,318,305) Iran (6,227,849

and Colombia (5,596,917), the CSSE figures showed.

The nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are Russia (316,168), Mexico (301,469), Peru (203,550), the UK (153,017), Indonesia (144,183), Italy (141,825), Iran (132,113), Colombia (131,268), France (128,629), Argentina (118,420), Germany (115,916), Ukraine (105,059) and Poland (102,686).

Heavy rain kills 10 in Madagascar



Antananarivo | Agencies

Ten people died after heavy rain in Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar, and its surrounding areas on Monday night, the risk and disaster management office reported.

About 500 people were displaced and two people were injured, according to the office's latest report. The heavy rain also caused material damage including collapsed houses and flooded fields, Xinhua news agency

reported.

The heavy showers began on Monday night and continued into the early hours of Tuesday morning in the region.

The authority for the protection against floods also issued on Tuesday a notice of danger in the plain of Antananarivo crossed by the river Sisaony.

Madagascar is in the midst of the rainy season that often results in casualties and widespread damage.

MAJOR AIRLINES CANCEL US FLIGHTS DUE TO MEGA 5G ROLLOUT

Ahead of the mega 5G rollout in the US, major airlines like Emirates, Air India, ANA and Japan Airlines have announced to cancel some flights over concerns that it could potentially interfere with some instruments and may put flyers' safety at risk.

San Francisco | Agencies

Emirates said it's "suspending flights to the following US destinations from 19 January 2022 until further notice," listing Boston, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Miami, Newark, Orlando, San Francisco, and Seattle.

The airline will continue to fly to New York JFK, Los Angeles (LAX), and Washington, DC (IAD), reports The Verge.

Air India will also not be able to operate a number of US-bound flights.

Airline operators in the US warned that the rollout could cause "catastrophic disruption" to their flight schedules.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the concern is that the C-band 5G signals could interfere with the radar altimeters used in some planes, creating a safety issue.

Boeing has announced flight restrictions on all airlines operating the Boeing 777 aircraft.



Japan Airlines also cites a notification from Boeing, saying that it was told that "5G signals for US mobile phones, which will begin operating in the US on January 19,

2022, may interfere with the radio wave altimeter installed on the Boeing 777."

However, both AT&T and Verizon have announced that they would voluntarily

delay 5G antenna upgrades near certain airports.

Verizon said that it will launch its 5G Ultra Wideband network on Wednesday which will enable more than 90 million Americans to experience the transformative speed, reliability and power of this game-changing network on the go or in their homes or businesses.

"As the nation's leading wireless provider, we have voluntarily decided to limit our 5G network around airports. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and our nation's airlines have not been able to fully resolve navigating 5G around airports, despite it being safe and fully operational in more than 40 other countries," Verizon said in a statement.

US President Biden has thanked the carriers "for agreeing to delay 5G deployment around key airports and to continue working with the Department of Transportation on safe 5G deployment at this limited set of locations".



SC ASKS MAHARASHTRA TO SUBMIT OBC DATA TO STATE COMMISSION

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to submit data on Other Backward Classes Commission to examine its correctness and make recommendations on their representation in elections for the local bodies.

The top court also directed the SBCC to submit the interim report to the authorities concerned in two weeks of receiving information from the state government.

"Maharashtra has asked this court to permit elections based on data already available to the state concerning other backward classes. Instead of examining the data, the appropriate step would be to present this data before a state appointed dedicated commission which can examine the correctness..."

"If it deems it appropriate, make recommendations to the state based on which further steps can be taken by the state or State Election Commission... The commission may submit the interim report if so advised to concerned authorities in two weeks from receipt of information/data from the state government," a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said.

The apex court clarified, however, that the list to be prepared by the



state government concerning socially and educationally backward classes would be independent of the census carried out by the Centre.

"The information and data available to the state can be furnished to the dedicated commission which can take decisions about efficacy thereof and make recommendations to state government as may be necessary. This obviously would not complete the triple test exercise which has to be completed (as per 2010 judgment) before providing reservation of seats in local government for OBC category," said the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T

Ravikumar.

This observation must also govern different states which are to proceed for elections of local govt, the top court, adding that until the triple test is complete, these seats will be treated as open category.

Senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, appearing for Maharashtra, submitted that the state has some data on the basis of which reservation can be sustained.

He said there are elections in March and the data is already before the commission.

In March last year, a three-judge bench of the apex court had said the reservation in favour of the OBCs in

the local bodies in Maharashtra cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total seats reserved for the SCs, STs and OBCs taken together.

It had referred to the three conditions noted in the constitution bench verdict of 2010.

The conditions included specifying the proportion of reservation required to be provisioned local body-wise in light of the recommendations of the commission so as not to fall foul of overbreadth and in any case, such reservation shall not exceed an aggregate of 50 per cent of the total seats reserved in favour of the SCs, STs and OBCs taken together.

Accidental death case filed after 3 killed in ship explosion in Mumbai

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai Police has registered an accidental death case in connection with the explosion onboard Indian Navy's destroyer ship INS Ranvir the day before in which three naval personnel died and eleven people were injured.

The injured are being treated at a naval hospital and no one is critical.

A board of inquiry has been ordered by the Navy to investigate the cause of the explosion.

The explosion, say sources, occurred around 4:30 pm on Tuesday and had nothing to do with weapons or ammunition explosion.

In a statement, the Indian Navy said it extends condolences to the families of Master Chief Petty Officer 1 (MCPO) Krishan Kumar, Surinder Kumar MCPO II and AK Singh MCPO II, who died due to injuries caused by the unfortunate incident onboard INS Ranvir.

INS Ranvir was on cross-coast operational deployment from the Eastern Naval Command since November 2021 and was due to return to base port shortly.

INS Ranvir, the first of the Ranvir class destroyers, was commissioned into the Indian navy on April 21, 1986. The role of Ranvir class ships



involves protection such as anti-aircraft and anti-submarine warfare for carrier task

force defense against submarines, low-flying aircraft, and cruise missiles.

ADMIRAL R. HARI KUMAR MOURNS INS RANVIR VICTIMS

Mumbai: The Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar on Wednesday termed Tuesday evening's accident aboard warship INS Ranvir as "unfortunate".

"The Indian Navy and all personnel extend heartfelt condolences to the families of those who succumbed to injuries caused by the unfortunate incident. We fully stand by them in this difficult time," said Admiral Kumar. They are: Arvind Kumar Mahatam Singh, 38, Signal & Communications, Surendrakumar S. Waliya, 47, Sports PT Master and Krushnakumar Gopirav, 46, Anti Submarine Instructor.



Shiv Sena, NCP announce alliance ahead of Goa polls

Panaji | Agencies

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Shiv Sena on Wednesday announced a pre-poll alliance between the two parties for the February 14 Goa Assembly polls.

Addressing a joint press conference in Panaji, Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut and NCP's senior leader Praful Patel said that the two parties had approached the Congress to extend Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance to Goa, but added that they did not receive a favourable response from the Congress leadership. "We had thought that we should extend the MVA from Maharashtra to Goa. Congress should play the major role and we (NCP and Shiv Sena) would contest on some seats," Patel said, adding that the Congress did not accept the proposal presented to it by Shiv Sena and NCP leaders. According to Raut both parties would contest between "10-12 seats" each out of the 40 which go to polls next month.



"In Goa there is a lot of confusion on the ground. There's BJP, Congress, TMC, AAP other parties and in this overall confusion, NCP and Shiv Sena though we may not be in a position to form a government, we will have a respectable number of seats where we will have important role to play in formation of like-minded government," Raut said. The alliance is expected to announce its candidates over the next few days. The Assembly polls in Goa will be held in a single phase on February 14. The counting of votes will take place on March 10.

Congress blames NCP, Sena's "Unreasonable Demands" for no goa alliance

Panaji (Goa) | Agencies

Talks with Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party for an alliance with Congress for the upcoming Goa assembly elections failed due to their unreasonable demands, Congress sources said on Wednesday.

"Maha Vikas Aghadi (the trio of NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra) cannot be formed in Goa and NCP and Shiv Sena both hold Congress responsible for the failed talks," sources said.

However, Congress party sources said that both NCP and Shiv Sena made unreasonable demands following which the talks failed.

"Both NCP and Shiv Sena were demanding a certain seat share which the party cannot afford," sources said. Congress is currently only in



alliance with Goa Forward Party. An important functionary of Goa Congress told ANI on the condition of

anonymity, "NCP feels that it has lost its hold in the state as NCP's lone Goa MLA Churchill Alemao went to TMC.

NCP tried to negotiate with us. Shiv Sena has a hold in North Goa but the seat sharing formula couldn't be formed with them."

"Alliances differ from state to state. We are in an alliance in Maharashtra but not in Goa due to differences in strategy. NCP and Shiv Sena want to support Utpal Parrikar, son of the late BJP leader and former Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar. Reports suggest that he is likely to contest as an independent candidate from Panaji. But, Congress may fight election on the seat," sources said.

Earlier, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) also claimed that they offered an alliance with but Congress rejected it. Congress has announced candidates on 25 seats out of 40 seats for the assembly elections. The polls will be held on February 14 and counting of votes will take place on March 10.

AT 6032 NEW COVID CASES, MUMBAI SEES A SLIGHT DIP

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai on Wednesday reported 6,032 new coronavirus positive cases, 117 less as compared to the previous day, and 12 fresh fatalities, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said.

With this, the city's infection tally rose to 10,17,999 and death toll to 16,488, while the recovery count rose to 9,66,985, it said in a bulletin. The city witnessed a dip in the number of cases, after reporting 6,149 cases on Tuesday. The daily fatality count, however, climbed to 12 after seven on Tuesday. In the last 24 hours, 60,291 tests were conducted in the city as against the over 47,700 tests on Tuesday. The positivity rate dipped to 10 per cent from 21.89 per cent. The overall test count has reached 1,47,78,095, the BMC said. Mumbai has 31,856 active Covid-19 cases, while the case doubling rate is 66 days. A total of 18,241 patients recovered in the last 24-hours and Mumbai's recovery rate stands at 95 per cent. Out of the total number of new cases, nearly 84 per cent, means 5,067 cases, are asymptomatic. Only 538 new patients



have been hospitalised, while just 103 are on oxygen support, the bulletin added. It also said that 5,058 of the total 38,109 hospital beds, which is around 13.3 per cent of the total hospital beds, are occupied in the city. The overall growth rate of Covid-19 cases in Mumbai is 1.03 per cent for the period between January 12 and 18, it said. As per the bulletin, Mumbai has 54 sealed buildings, but zero containment zones in slums and chawls. Mumbai had logged 20,971 daily Covid-19 cases on January 7, 2022, the highest since the pandemic broke out in March 2020. Last year, Mumbai had reported the highest 11,163 daily cases on April 4, while the highest 90 fatalities were witnessed on May 1.

SALESMAN FLEES WITH RS 3.4L CASH FROM KANDIVALI SWEET SHOP TO FUND HIS MARRIAGE

Mumbai: The Kandivali police arrested a man who escaped with Rs 3.4 lakh cash from a sweet shop where he was working in.

The accused, identified as Rohit Manoj Mishra, was working as a salesman in the Jain sweet shop located near Kandivali west railway station. According to police sources, Mishra was one among the fifty employees working at the shop. Mishra, who was working at the shop for almost five years, had built trust with the shop owner. Placing trust in Mishra, on December 27, the shop owner asked Mishra to deposit the daily cash amount in the bank. He was handed over Rs 3.4 lakh cash to deposit in the Eco Bank, Dahanukar Wadi Branch in Kandivali West.

When Mishra did not return for a long time, Jain tried calling him multiple times, but his mobile number was found blocked. After enquiring at the bank, the shop owner found that money was not deposited in his account. Convinced that Mishra had escaped with the money, he approached the police station and registered a complaint against Mishra, an officer from the Kandivali police station said. The police launched a hunt to locate Mishra by setting up two teams in Uttar Pradesh and in Madhya Pradesh. PSI Suryakanth Pawar got information that Mishra was hiding in his future father-in-law's house. Following this, the police reached the spot and arrested Mishra.

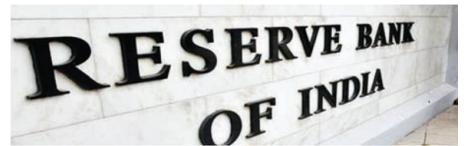
Digital payments adoption accelerating: RBI-DPI

Team Absolute | Mumbai

There has been a significant growth in adoption as well as deepening of digital payments across the country, showed the Reserve Bank of India - Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) on Wednesday.

Accordingly, the index reading for September 2021 rose to 304.06 (index value) from 270.59 in March 2021.

"The RBI-DPI Index continues to demonstrate significant growth in adoption and deepening of digital payments across the country," the RBI said in a statement. Starting from March 2018,



the index stood at 153.47 in March 2019, 173.49 in September 2019. This improved to 207.84 in March 2020, 217.74 in September 2020 and further increased to 270.59 in March 2021. Earlier, the RBI had announced construction of the composite index with March 2018 as a base to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country. The RBI-DPI com-

prises of five broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods. Notably, these parameters are 'payment enablers', 'payment infrastructure -- demand side factors', 'payment infrastructure -- supply side factors', 'payment performance' and 'consumer centricity'. Each of these parameters have sub-

Sena, allies win Maharashtra local polls, BJP takes most seats

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Election results for 106 semi-urban local bodies - nagar panchayats, or government bodies for areas with a small population - in Maharashtra are being declared.

Overall trends indicate Sharad Pawar's NCP will form the panchayat in 25 areas, with the BJP in 24, the Congress in 18 and the Shiv Sena in 14. The NCP (Nationalist Congress Party), the Congress and the Shiv Sena are part of Maharashtra's ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi. They are contesting jointly in some areas and independently in others, but combined they look set to defeat the BJP by a huge margin - winning control of

over half of the panchayats. The BJP has emerged with the most seats across, having won 416 of 1,802 seats.

The BJP's state unit chief, Chandrakant Patil, claimed the party was therefore the single-largest political force in the state. Despite being out of power for nearly 26 months, the BJP had been successful, and this shows we can deliver good results without any government support, he said. The NCP has won 378 seats, the Sena 301 and the Congress 297, meaning that combined the Maha Vikas Aghadi - with 976 seats - has again defeated the BJP by a massive margin. The coalition has won 57 semi-urban local bodies while the BJP has won 24. Last month the Supreme

Court was approached by the Maharashtra government seeking a recall of the court's December 15 order that stayed 27 per cent reservation for OBC in local body elections. The Supreme Court had directed the State Election Commission to revert the 27 per cent reservation for OBC back to 'general category'. In March 2020 the court had said reservation in favour of OBCs in local bodies in Maharashtra cannot exceed a total of 50 per cent of all seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Tribes and OBCs. A nagar panchayat is a form of urban local self-government established in towns that are not classified as either 'urban' or 'rural', and not have a functional municipality.

AIR INDIA CURTAILS US OPERATIONS DUE TO 5G ROLL-OUT

Mumbai: National carrier Air India will not be able to operate a number of US-bound flights on Wednesday, the airline said. Accordingly, the airline informed passengers via its official Twitter handle that it will not be able to operate the Delhi-JFK-Delhi and Mumbai-EWR-Mumbai flights amongst other on Wednesday. The deployment of 5G communications in the US has been cited as the cause for flight cancellations. However, in another tweet the airline said that it will operate the flight to ashington DC from Delhi by AI103 on Wednesday. "#FlyAI: Due to deployment of 5G communications in USA, our operations to USA from India stand curtailed/revised with change in aircraft type from 19th January 2022," the airline tweeted.

499 cops found covid positive in last 24 Hours in Maharashtra

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As many as 499 police personnel were found infected with coronavirus in Maharashtra in the last 24 hours, an official said on Wednesday. The infected personnel include 95 police officers.

He said 821 police officers and 3,269 police personnel (total 4,090) currently remain admitted at various facilities, including home isolation, in Maharashtra.

The total number of infected police officers in Maharashtra is 5,854 since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020. A total of



40,959 police personnel, ranging from the rank of the constable to assistant sub-inspector, were found infected in the state, he added. "Until now, 46 officers and

459 personnel of the Maharashtra police force have succumbed to COVID-19," he said.

In Mumbai, a total of 10,666 police personnel were

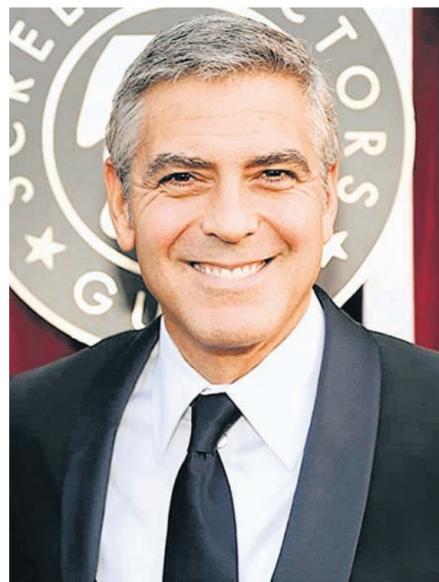
infected with coronavirus so far, of whom 126 died.

Currently, the number of active cases in the Mumbai Police force stands at 1,273.

Maharashtra has been witnessing a surge in new COVID-19 cases, including patients with highly-transmissible Omicron strain.

The state on Tuesday recorded 39,207 new coronavirus infections, 26 per cent more than Monday, and 53 pandemic-related deaths, as per the health department.

The overall coronavirus caseload in Maharashtra stood at 72,82,128, while the death count was 1,41,885 as of Tuesday.



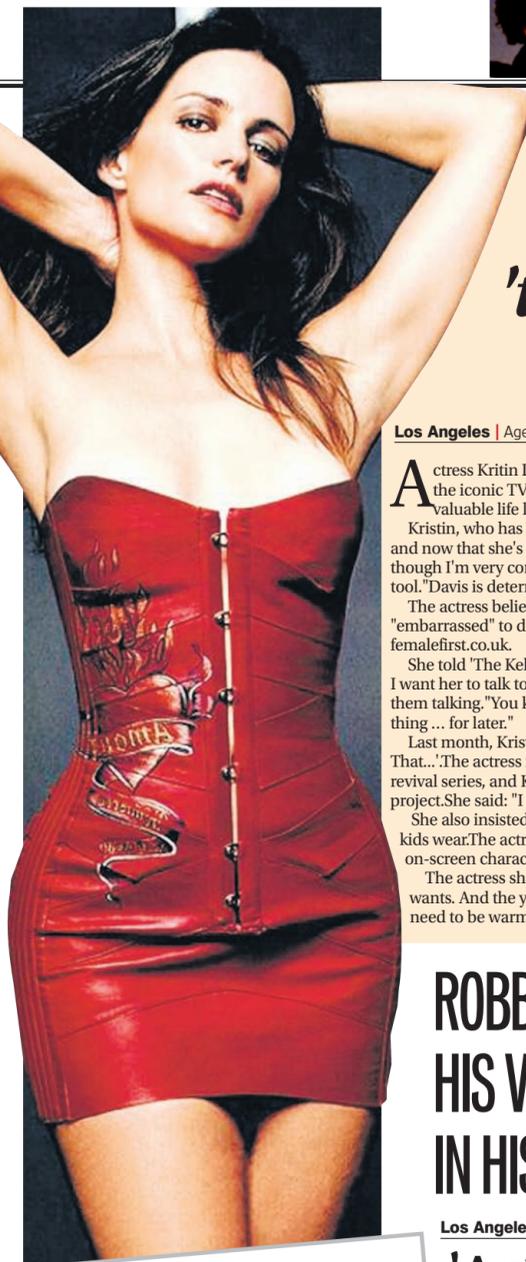
George Clooney, Julia Roberts romantic comedy halts production due to Covid

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actors George Clooney and Julia Roberts-starrer romantic comedy titled 'Ticket to Paradise' has halted filming in Australia due to a serious Covid outbreak in Queensland state, according to sources close to the movie. Because of the production pause, stars Clooney and Roberts have reportedly flown back to the US, reports variety.com.

'Ticket to Paradise' began production last year in multiple locations in Queensland and had been only two weeks from completion. Local reports say the film will be shut down for three months, but it's not clear exactly when cameras will be able to roll again. Directed by Ol Parker of 'Mamma Mia' fame, 'Ticket to Paradise' follows two divorced parents who rush to Bali to stop their teenage daughter from rushing into an unwise marriage, like their own. The production would make use of the Whitsunday Islands, standing in for Bali, while other

locations would include Brisbane and the nearby Gold Coast. According to Daily Mail Australia, Clooney had shaved off the beard that he had grown specially for the movie, departed on a flight for Honolulu and later caught another plane to California. Universal had initially scheduled 'Ticket to Paradise' to release in theaters on September 30, 2022, but the studio has since moved it to October 21, 2022. However, a three-month production halt could put the new date in doubt.



'Sex and the City' can be a 'teaching tool': Kristin Davis

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Kristin Davis, who played the part of Charlotte Goldenblatt in the iconic TV series 'Sex and the City', thinks it could provide some valuable life lessons for her own children.

Kristin, who has Wilson, 3, and Gemma, 10, said: "Now that she's older and now that she's getting exposed from her friends to all this stuff, even though I'm very controlling... I'm thinking I'm going to use it as a teaching tool." Davis is determined to be open and honest with her kids.

The actress believes it's "super important" that her children don't feel "embarrassed" to discuss potentially awkward issues, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She told 'The Kelly Clarkson Show': "I don't want her to feel embarrassed. I want her to talk to me. I'm a single mom, it's super important... gotta keep them talking." You know, Sex and the City is kind of a good educational-type thing... for later.

Last month, Kristin revealed that she didn't hesitate to join 'And Just Like That...'. The actress reprised the role of Charlotte for the 'Sex and the City' revival series, and Kristin had no hesitation about committing herself to the project. She said: "I didn't think twice."

She also insisted she's "not Charlotte" when it comes to policing what her kids wear. The actress admitted to being "pretty loose" in comparison to her on-screen character, who is much more strict.

The actress shared: "I let my older child, especially, wear whatever she wants. And the younger boy, you know, sometimes it's more about 'You need to be warm.' Like the basics, right? But I'm pretty loose."

ROBBIE WILLIAMS 'LOST HIS VIRGINITY IN SECONDS' IN HIS MOTHER'S BED

Los Angeles | Agencies

Angels' hitmaker Robbie Williams has recalled that he lost his virginity in "seconds" in his mum's bed.

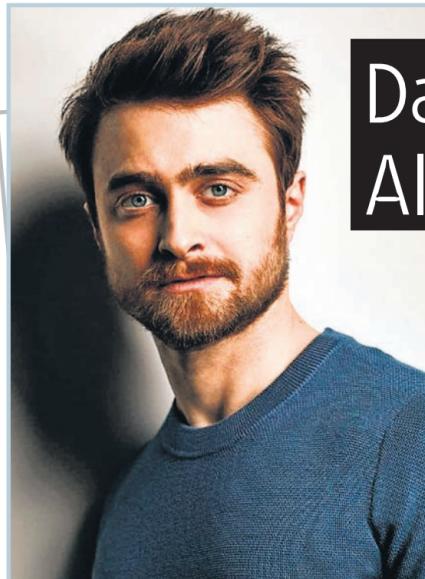
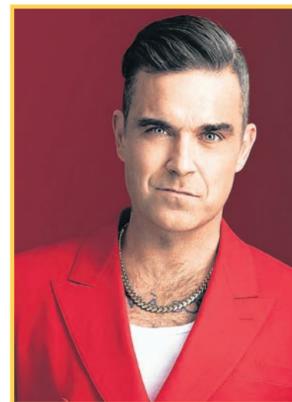
He told the 'This Past Weekend' podcast: "I took the girl back to mine and then I got scared, I was like, 'I can't do this.'"

"And then as she was leaving I saw all of my friends' faces pointing and laughing at me and I was like, 'No, I must do this.' They were laughing because I wasn't going to do it." So I go upstairs and go into my room and it's a single bed and we can't fit on it, so I go into my mum's. It was over in seconds." The 47-year-old singer shared he still remembers the girl fondly, and he even referenced her in one of his songs, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He added: "I put her name in a song of mine, perhaps I shouldn't have done that because she'll be a mum."

The musician joked he later discovered a technique to help his performance in the bedroom.

"I'd have to have sex with people I didn't fancy just to have long sex."



Daniel Radcliffe to play 'Weird Al' Yankovic in biopic movie

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Daniel Radcliffe is set to star as Grammy-winning musician 'Weird Al' Yankovic in the Roku original movie 'Weird: The Al Yankovic Story'. The film is Roku's first original biopic and will be available to stream exclusively on The Roku Channel. The project is produced by Funny Or Die and Tango. Yankovic co-wrote the film's script with Eric Appel, who is also set to direct the project, reports variety.com.

The official 'Weird: The Al Yankovic Story' synopsis from Roku reads: "The biopic holds nothing back, exploring every facet of Yankovic's life, from his meteoric rise to fame with early hits like 'Eat It' and 'Like a Surgeon' to his torrid celebrity love affairs and famously depraved lifestyle." 'Weird: The Al Yankovic Story' takes audiences on a truly unbelievable journey through Yankovic's life and career, from gifted child prodigy to the greatest musical legend of all time.

"When my last movie UHF came out in 1989, I made a solemn vow to my fans that I would release a major motion picture every 33 years, like clockwork. I'm very happy to say we're on schedule," said Yankovic in a statement.

"And I am absolutely thrilled that Daniel Radcliffe will be portraying me in the film. I have no doubt whatsoever that this is the role future generations will remember him for."



'Jacket or no Jacket...?'

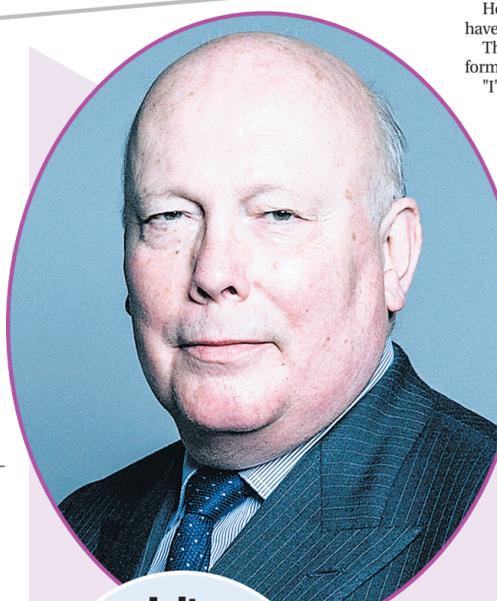
Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez paid homage to her iconic 2000 Grammys gown as she wore a jungle print silk robe before slipping into ab-baring vinyl top in sexy snaps posted on on Tuesday.

The singer, 52, took to Instagram to employ the help of her 192million followers as she curated an outfit for the day. J-Lo looked glamorous in her green dressing gown which was inspired by her plunging jungle-print gown that she wore 20 years ago at the Grammys. She paired the barely-there top with some white draw-string trousers. Jennifer's flowing honey toned tresses were slicked back and styled in a sleek ponytail.

The Selena actress layered a myriad of gold chains with turquoise pendants around her neck while fastening a pair of hoops to her ears.

Jennifer Lopez pays homage to iconic 2000 Versace Grammys gown as she wears jungle print silk robe before slipping into ab-baring vinyl bra top in sexy snaps



Julian Fellowes hints at third 'Downton Abbey' film

London | Agencies

Creator and screenwriter Julian Fellowes has suggested that a third 'Downton Abbey' movie could follow after the release of the sequel.

The hit period drama returns to the big screen with the sequel 'Downton Abbey: A New Era' which is slated for release in March and the show's creator Fellowes claims that another movie could follow, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 72-year-old screenwriter told the Radio Times magazine: "We were lucky to reassemble our cast. I think for them it's become a sort of club. They say goodbye, everyone cries and two years later, we're back at it!"

Julian added: "I think each time it's goodbye, but whether it is or not, who knows?"

The first 'Downton Abbey' film was released in 2019 and proved to be a box-office hit and stars Hugh Bonneville, Michelle Dockery and Dame Maggie Smith are all reprising their roles in the latest project.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Joy Corrigan



1ST ODI:

SOUTH AFRICA BEAT INDIA BY 31 RUNS, TAKE 1-0 SERIES LEAD

Paarl | Agencies

South Africa produced a clinical all-round performance to beat India by 31 runs in the first ODI to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series at Boland Park, here on Wednesday.

After winning the toss and opting to bat first, South Africa were in a spot of bother at 68-3 but fighting centuries by Temba Bavuma (110 off 143) and Rassie van der Dussen (129 not out off 96) helped South Africa post a challenging 296/4 in



50 overs. Jasprit Bumrah (2/48) and Ravichandran Ashwin (1/53) were the main wicket-takers for India. Chasing a competitive total, Shikhar Dhawan (79 off 84), Virat

Kohli (51 off 63) and Shardul Thakur (50 off 43) hit fifties but other batters failed to contribute much as India were restricted to 265-8 in 50 overs, losing the match by 31 runs. Andile Phehlukwayo (2/26), Tabraiz Shamsi (2/52) and Lungi Ngidi (2/64) were the top wicket takers for Proteas.

Brief scores

South Africa 296-4 in 50 overs (Rassie van der Dussen 129, Temba Bavuma 110; Jasprit Bumrah 2/48, R Ashwin 1/53) beat India 265-8 in 50 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 79, Virat Kohli 51; Andile Phehlukwayo 2/26, Tabraiz Shamsi 2/52) by 31 runs

INDIA U-19 CAPTAIN YASH DHULL, FIVE OTHERS TEST COVID POSITIVE: BCCI

Mumbai: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Wednesday said that India U-19 squad currently taking part in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2022 have reported Covid-19 positive cases following RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Tests. Ahead of their second Group B clash against Ireland U19, six members out of the 17-member squad were ruled out of selection. "The medical status of the six members is: Sidharth Yadav - RT-PCR Test result has returned positive, Manav Parakh - Has shown symptoms. His RT-PCR test result is awaited. Rapid Antigen Test result has returned negative, Vasu Vats - Has shown symptoms. His RT-PCR test result is awaited. Rapid Antigen Test result has returned negative, Yash Dhull - Rapid Antigen Test result has returned positive, Aaradhya Yadav - Rapid Antigen Test result has returned positive, SK Rasheed - Rapid Antigen Test result is awaited. BCCI said in a statement. The Board is monitoring the situation closely and is in touch with the management and the coaching group. "The players will remain in isolation but will be under the constant supervision of the BCCI Medical Team," it said. India opened their campaign in the ICC Under 19 World Cup 2022 with a win against South Africa.

Syed Modi International: PV Sindhu advances to round of 16

Lucknow | Agencies

Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu advanced to the second round of the 2022 Syed Modi International in the women's singles at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium, here on Wednesday.

The two-time Olympic medalist defeated 18-year-old shuttler Tanya Hemanth 21-9, 21-9 in a one-sided 27 minute clash. The match started evenly with both players tied 5-5 at the opening stages. However, Sindhu snatched the momentum with nine consecutive points and then pocketed the game in 14 minutes. She continued to dominate Hemanth and sealed the contest in straight



games. Former world champion Sindhu will next face USA's Lauren Lam in the round of 16. Meanwhile, Thailand's Supanida

Katthong, who defeated Sindhu in the India Open semis, beat India's Sri Krishna Priya Kudaravalli 21-13, 21-13 in 31 minutes. Both Sindhu and Katthong are pitted in the same half of the draw and are expected to clash in the quarter-finals.

In another contest of the day, fifth seed Evgeniya Kosetskaya from the Badminton Federation of Russia defeated Vaidehi Choudhari 21-16, 21-10 in a 28 minute clash.

Earlier, HS Prannoy, Aakarshi Kashyap and the pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila were some of the top Indian players to have progressed to the second round on Tuesday. The finals will be played on January 23.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Barty, Badosa and Azarenka cruise into third round

Melbourne | Agencies

Jan 19 World No.1 Ashleigh Barty sealed a second win at the Australian Open in under an hour, defeating Italian qualifier Lucia Bronzetti 6-1, 6-1 to secure a spot in the third round of the opening Grand Slam of the year here on Wednesday.

Barty, who is aiming for her maiden Australian Open crown, had dropped just one game in her opening round win against former top-30 player Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine, and the top seed lost just two to reach the third round. Barty's 54-minute victory against qualifier Tsurenko was bettered on Wednesday by a 52-minute performance against Bronzetti, as the Rod Laver Arena was treated to a full array of shots by the home favourite, who hit 21 winners and eight aces. The young



Italian couldn't match Barty's power off the ground or her slice. The world No.142 had qualified for her first Grand Slam draw by defeating Russia's Varvara Gracheva and Nao Hibino of Japan. "I felt like I wanted to try to use my experience a little bit today, get off to a quick start. I felt like I was able to do that. I served well. I was able to find plenty of forehands and control the match quite well, so pleased with that one," Barty

was quoted as saying by wta-tour.com. Barty will face another Italian, Camila Giorgi, in the next round. The No.30 seed sealed a 6-2, 7-6(2) win over Tereza Martincova of the Czech Republic to reach the third round in Australia for the third time. She's never reached the fourth round.

The Aussie has won all three of her prior meetings. Paula Badosa of Spain and two-time champion Victoria Azarenka of Belarus scored swift victories in the second round, with the latter booking a third-round clash with Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

Badosa cruised past Italian qualifier Martina Trevisan 6-0, 6-3 in an hour and 11 minutes. The Spaniard is on a seven-match winning streak, having claimed her third career WTA singles title last week in Sydney.

Bangladesh, Scotland register wins on day two of ICC CWG Qualifier 2022

Kuala Lumpur | Agencies

On day two of the ICC Commonwealth Games Women's Qualifier 2022 at the Kinrara Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, Bangladesh and Scotland registered wins. While Bangladesh romped to an 80-run victory over Kenya, Scotland overcame Malaysia by 31 runs. Bangladesh were aided by an unbeaten partnership of 75 for the seventh wicket between Salma Khatun (33 off 32 balls) and Ritu Moni (39 off 34 balls) to reach 125 before

Play of the Match Nahida Akter broke the back of the Kenyan run chase with impressive figures of 5/12, the best by a Bangladesh bowler in women's T20s. After Kenya won the toss and elected to bowl, Lavendah Idambo leaked 16 runs in an expensive opening over, including two boundaries and three wide deliveries. However, she bounced back with the wicket of opener Shamima Sultana before Mercyline Ochieng trapped Nigar Sultana in front and dismissed Rumana Ahmed first ball.

Murshida Khatun struck a few boundaries to the off-side fence before getting a leading edge to Queenor Abel who made no mistake, taking the catch off her own bowling. In her very next over, Abel picked up the scalps of both Sobhana Mostary and Fargana Hoque to leave Bangladesh reeling at 50 for six at the end of nine overs. A period of consolidation followed as Ritu and Salma opted to rotate the strike and play out Abel's remaining overs. After getting their eye in, they accelerated the run rate with Ritu lofting Sarah Bhakita into mid-wicket for a boundary. They picked up 30 runs in the final three overs to lift Bangladesh to a respectable 125. In reply, Kenya's innings never got going. Veronica Abuga edged Salma Khatun through to keeper Shamima Sultana in the first over. Bowling the second over, Suraya Azmim trapped Queenor Abel in front for nine. A brilliant direct hit from Murshida Khatun caught Sylvia Kinyua short of her crease before Kenyan skipper Margarte Ngoche was trapped in

front by a Nahida Akter arm ball. Akter was able to extract turn from the wicket squaring up Venasa Ooko with a delivery that spun in before straightening to clip her off stump. Amidst the chaos, Sharon Juma's 24 off 20 balls was the only resistance of note from Kenya's batting line-up as they fell 80 runs short of Bangladesh's total. In the second match, Kathryn Bryce's unbeaten 62 helped Scotland post 148 before Katherine Fraser took four for 19 to deliver a 31-run win over Malaysia. After winning the toss and electing to bat, Sarah Bryce clipped a couple of boundaries off her toes with fellow opener Abbi Aitken-Drummond joining in the party. However, left-arm spinner Arianna Natasya dismissed Sarah in her very first over to put a lid on the scoring. Bryce then walked in at three, putting on a 63-run partnership with Aitken-Drummond. Just as it looked like Scotland was pushing a total in the region of 160, they lost four quick wickets. Nik Atiela had both Aitken-Drummond and the aggressive Katie McGill stumped

before Mas Elysa chipped in with a pair of wickets for herself. Bryce, however, held strong, and continued to pepper the leg side boundary. Her seventh delivery came off the final delivery of the innings as Malaysia were set a target of 149. In reply, Malaysia came storming out of the blocks. Three cover drives from Winifred Duraisingam set the tone for the innings with Wan Julia joining in the fun, wallopping left-armer Rachel Slater for four down the ground. However, the tide turned when off-spinner Katherine Fraser was introduced into the attack. Wan Julia chipped a catch to Aitken-Drummond before Duraisingam played inside one to lose her off stump in the very same over. Soon after, Yusrina Yakop was trapped in front before Mas Elysa lobbed a catch to Kathryn Bryce for Abtaha Maqsood's first wicket. Leg-spinner Maqsood grabbed her second wicket when she trapped Nur Ilya in front for a duck. When Ainna Hamzah was dismissed by Hannah Rainey, Malaysia were reeling at 69 for seven.

'My body is wearing down': Sania Mirza to retire after 2022 season

Melbourne | Agencies

Ace Indian tennis player Sania Mirza on Wednesday announced that 2022 will be her final season on the WTA tour after her first-round loss in women's doubles at the Australian Open.

The 35-year-old Mirza and her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok, seeded 12th, lost 4-6, 6-7 to the unseeded Slovenian pair of Kaja Juvan and Tamara Zidansek in one hour and 36 minutes. "There's a few reasons for it. It's not as simple as 'okay I'm not going to play'. I do feel my recovery is taking longer, I'm putting my three-year-old son at risk by travelling so much with him, that's something I have to take into account. I think my



body is wearing down. My knee was really hurting today and I'm not saying that's the reason we lost but I do think that it is taking time to recover as I'm getting older," Sania told broadcasters after the match at Melbourne Park. "Also for me to find that motivation everyday to come out. The energy is not the same anymore. There are more days than there used to be

where I don't feel like doing that. I've always said that I will play until I enjoy that grind, the process which I'm not sure I'm enjoying as much anymore," she added.

Sania is a former world No. 1 in doubles and had a career-best ranking of 27 in singles. She is currently ranked 68th in the world. Mirza, the first Indian woman to win a Grand Slam, has won Majors in doubles along with medals at Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Her last Slam came at the 2016 Australian Open with Martina Hingis. "I have a bit of a meniscus issue going on my right knee, I woke up with wrist pain a couple of days ago. At 35, I am waking up with a couple of things that I don't know where they're coming

from! I want to finish the season, to at least play until the US Open, that is my goal. But I still have to take it week-to-week," Sania said. Mirza is now set to play mixed doubles with fellow Grand Slam champion Rajeev Ram of the USA. "If this is my last Grand Slam, it is a great way to go out to play with someone who I've known since I was 12 years old and we'll just try to have fun on the court," she said. The Indian has not played on the WTA tour as regularly in the last few years, first due to her maternity break in 2018 and then due to the pandemic right after her comeback in 2020. Her last title came in September 2021, when she won her 43rd doubles trophy at the Ostrava Open with Shuai Zhang.

Cameron Boyce makes BBL history by claiming double hat-trick for Renegades

Melbourne | Agencies

Jan 19 Australia leg-spinner Cameron Boyce made history in the Big Bash League (BBL) by claiming a double hat-trick for the first time in the tournament. Boyce, turning out for Melbourne Renegades against Sydney Thunder at the Melbourne



Cricket Ground (MCG), also became just the 10th bowler in T20 cricket to take four wickets in four balls. Boyce's astonishing effort was spread across two overs of Thunder's innings and it began from the final delivery of the seventh over when he dismissed Thunder opener Alex Hales, who miscued the loft to long-off. Returning to bowl in the ninth over, Boyce deceived Jason Sangha with flight on the first delivery as the right-hander got stumped while dancing down the pitch in order to hit the leggie for the big shot. On the very next ball, Alex Ross tried to

play a reverse sweep and was trapped lbw in front of stumps as Boyce completed his hat-trick. The double hat-trick was completed quickly as Daniel Sams played the ball from Boyce all around and was in front of leg-stump, which was good enough for the umpire to raise his finger in

Boyce's favour, completing a double hat-trick. Boyce's four-in-a-row wickets meant Thunder fell from 80/0 to 85/4 in 8.3 overs. "We still can't believe this happened!! A double hat-trick from Cameron Boyce!!" tweeted the BBL. Boyce, who took eight wickets in seven T20s for Australia, then completed his five-wicket haul as Matthew Gilkes spooned a catch to cover in the 11th over to finish with figures of 5/15 in three overs. Six overs later, Boyce got his hand on an on-drive from Usman Khawaja to run-out Ben Cutting from the non-striker's end.

Opener Smriti Mandhana named in ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year

Dubai | Agencies

India opener Smriti Mandhana on Wednesday was named in ICC Women's T20I team of the year for 2021. The team of the year announcements by the International Cricket Council acknowledges the best players in women's cricket who entertained one and all with their performances in a calendar year. With 255 runs at an average of 31.87, Smriti was India's highest scorer in the format in 2021. She scored two fifties in the nine matches she played this year, and got her team off to rapid starts regularly, as evident by her strike-rate of 131.44. It is also the third time Smriti has made the cut for the T20I team of the year after 2018 (opener) and 2019 (number three). Interestingly, Smriti is the only Indian player in the eleven in which England's Nat Sciver has been made the captain with no players from Australia -- the reigning T20 World Cup champions -- making the cut for the playing

eleven. Nat, the experienced England all-rounder produced many impactful performances throughout the year. Batting in the middle-order, she scored a total of 153 runs, including one fifty, and backed it up by picking 10 wickets at an excellent average of 20.20. Other England players include wicket-keeper-batter Amy Jones, left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone, openers Tammy Beaumont and Danni Wyatt. The eleven announced by the ICC also has three South Africa players in batter Laura Wolvaardt and pacers Shabnim Ismail and Marizanne Kapp apart from off-spin all-rounder Gabby Lewis of Ireland and off-spin bowler Loryn Phiri of Zimbabwe. ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year: Smriti Mandhana, Tammy Beaumont, Danni Wyatt, Gaby Lewis, Nat Sciver (captain), Amy Jones (wicketkeeper), Laura Wolvaardt, Marizanne Kapp, Sophie Ecclestone, Loryn Phiri and Shabnim Ismail.

WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP: India's quest for glory starts against Iran

B. Shrikant | Mumbai

In nine appearances in the AFC Women's Asian Cup so far, India have finished runners-up twice and ended third once. But all those results came in the three editions between 1979 and 1983. In the remaining 11 editions, India could qualify only for six editions and failed to progress past the group stage. Their last appearance in the event was in 2003 when they finished third in their group.

Now as hosts of the 20th edition of the premier football competition for women in Asia, India, ranked 55th in FIFA Rankings, will be hoping to bring back those glory days and at least reach the quarter-finals -- the target set by head coach Thomas Dennerby. On Thursday, they start their quest for glory against Iran, probably the easiest match in the four-team Group A in which the other teams are eight-time champions China (ranked 19) and three-time winners Chinese Taipei (ranked 39). Iran, ranked 70th and making their debut in the event, are the lowest-ranked team in Group A. If Dennerby's side has to achieve its



target of reaching the quarter-finals then it will have to beat Iran in their first match in Group A at the Dr. DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Thursday evening. Both China and Chinese Taipei are quite strong and the win against Iran will put India in competition to be the two best-placed third-placed teams to make it to the quarter-finals in the championship in which 12 teams have been divided into three groups of four

each with the top two teams from each group getting a direct berth into the last-eight stage. "We aim to get into the quarter-finals which is our primary target. If we qualify for the last-eight -- anything, and everything can happen. The quarter-finals are a knockout stage, and all teams will be under pressure. Looking ahead, we feel it's a realistic target that we can achieve. But let's take it step by step," the head coach said. However, beating Iran

may not be as easy as it looks on paper as they are an unknown commodity and could pose some challenges. "Iran is going to be a real tough game. We have followed them through videos and they are really a fighting (team)," coach Dennerby said in a virtual media interaction. "They (Iran) have a strong defence, they defend very well around their box. It is going to be a challenge for us to score. It is not going to be an easy game. We are hoping that with some creative and good passing game, we can break down their defence," he added. Another issue confronting Dennerby is that India go into the event without senior players Sangita Basfore, and Bala Devi, the striker from Manipur who has scored 44 goals for India so far and plays for Rangers in the Scottish League. In her absence, India may struggle to score goals. But Dennerby said he will have to make do with whoever is available for selection. "It's sad for the individuals, but we cannot be thinking much about it. We have a lot of players that can create chances and score goals. We have to be good all through the match," said

the coach. The contingent has been in preparatory camps under Dennerby since August 2021 in Jamshepur, and have been training in Kochi since the first week of December 2021. The Indian women have, in the process, also travelled to six countries in 2021 which included exposure tours to Brazil, Sweden, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, and the UAE. In comparison, the Iranian team started playing in international football only in 2005 and made it to Asian Cup 2022 by winning a three-team qualifier that included Jordan and Bangladesh. "Despite our lack of experience, the team is motivated and works hard. We have reached this level and we are ready," said head coach Marayam Irandoost. "We have analysed the Indian team, and are aware that they are strong and fast. The opener is one for everyone to look forward to." The Iran women hope to make up for their lack of experience with enthusiasm towards the sport and eagerness to gain experience. Dennerby's side will have to quell Iran's strong challenge to keep its hopes of reaching the quarter-finals alive.



VAANI KAPOOR WANTS HER FILMOGRAPHY TO BE AS DIVERSE AS POSSIBLE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Vaani Kapoor, who recently essayed a trans woman in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui', is consciously working on shaping up her filmography by choosing scripts and characters that are different from the league.

She hopes that her work in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' and her upcoming release 'Shamshera' where she will be seen opposite Ranbir Kapoor, will incite the confidence in film-makers about her craft.

Talking about the same, she says, "I would like my filmography to be as diverse as possible and after showing my range as an actor in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' and 'Shamshera', I can only hope that film-makers would feel extremely confident to approach me with any challenging role. I have always wanted to win over their trust and be a part of interesting cinematic visions of powerful film-makers."

She adds, "I know that I will give it my everything to pull off any character that I'm approached with to play on screen."

Stating her opinion on the best thing about the profession of acting, the actress says, "The best thing about our profession is that one can get to become so many characters and live so many lives. I want my journey in cinema to be filled with varied films and genres and characters that light up the screen to entertain audiences."



I WILL GET TO LEARN A LOT FROM REMO: MOUNI ROY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Popular actress Mouni Roy has been roped in to join renowned choreographer Remo D'Souza in the panel of judges on dance reality show 'Dance India Dance Li'l Masters Season 5'.

She says it is surely going to be a learning experience for her.

Mouni says: "I am sure I will get to learn a lot from Remo sir since this is my first show as a judge, and I am very eager to meet the contestants. I know for a fact that judging talented kids won't be

an easy task, but I will try my best and I hope I will be able to do justice to the responsibility."

The actress started her acting career with TV shows like 'Kyunki... Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' and 'Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev'. She finally rose to fame with her performance in the supernatural thriller 'Naagin'.

Mouni adds in her new role as a judge she has to be careful while making comments on the contestants.

"I am very excited to meet the super talented Li'l Masters who are known to

floor everyone with their unimaginable dancing prowess at such a tender age. One really needs to take care of their emotions and I personally love kids a lot. So, I will be extra careful with my words while making my comments."

The auditions for 'DID Li'l Masters Season 5' have already started.

Participants between the age group of 3 to 13 years will compete against each other to become the ultimate Li'l Master.

'DID Li'l Masters Season 5' will be

Salman Khan, Pragya Jaiswal star in Guru Randhawa, Iulia Vantur's music video



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and south actress Pragya Jaiswal are going to feature in the love track 'Main Chala' sung by Guru Randhawa and Iulia Vantur.

It is going to be a treat for music lovers and Salman fans. Guru Randhawa is all parise for singer Iulia Vantur.

He says: "I'm very excited that I could share this song with Iulia Vantur, who is not just a wonderful artiste but also a warm person. Her

tone is very distinct and takes the song to the next level. The track has turned out to be beautiful and I'm confident people will love it."

Starring Salman Khan and Pragya Jaiswal, the love song has been directed by Shabina Khan. It has been composed and penned by Shabbir Ahmed.

Adds Iulia Vantur about her experience of working with Guru Randhawa: "Main chala' is a very soulful song, written with a lot of love. We've put our hearts in it and I hope it will touch people's souls. I'm grateful for it, I'm grateful to Guru for believing in it, for making this song special, in his voice. He is an amazing artiste, I appreciate him very much as a singer and as a person as well. I believe love will be welcomed in everyone's hearts with 'Main Chala'."

Produced by Salman Khan and Bhushan Kumar, the song will be released on T-Series' YouTube channel on January 22.

MANOJ BAJPAYEE ON UPCOMING PROJECTS: IT CONTINUES TO BE HECTIC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Acclaimed actor Manoj Bajpayee has a busy year ahead as he has back-to-back work commitments.

He says with the commitments he has in hand, it is going to be like this till the end of 2023.

The year 2022 has been a very hectic one for the national awards winner as is shooting back-to-back for his new projects such as Ram Reddy's yet-untitled film, Kanu Bhel's 'Despatch', Abhishek Chaubey's film and a Rahul Chitela's film.

Manoj Bajpayee has recently finished his two upcoming projects, one with Reddy's yet-untitled film, which also has actor Deepika Dobriyal. The film was shot in beautiful places of Uttarakhand and got completed before the second wave hit. And then, he finished RSVP's 'Despatch', directed by Kanu Behl, which is an investigative thriller set in the world of crime journalism.

Talking about his upcoming projects, Manoj said: "It continues to be hectic. With the commitments I have in hand, it is only going to be like this till the end of 2023. I am supposed to finish all the films I have committed to, it is exhausting."

"But I can't help it. Only for this reason, I have stopped reading new scripts and taking narrations. At this point of time, I don't have any dates."

Now Manoj is shooting for Abhishek Chaubey's film which also has star cast like Konkana Sen Sharma.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



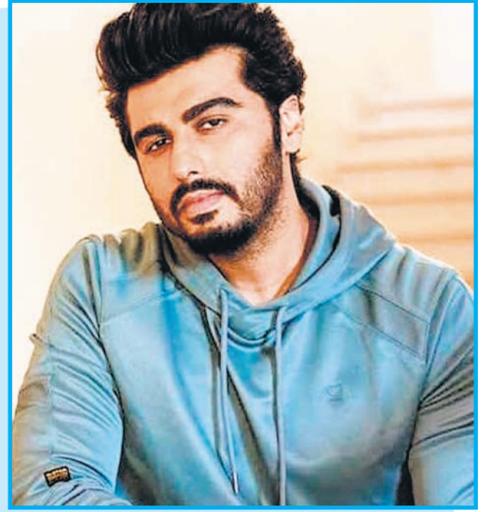
Paayal Rajput

Never wanted to do horror comedy: Arjun Kapoor

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor was never really keen on exploring horror comedy but the story of 'Bhoot Police' pushed him to try his hand at the genre. The actor said, "It's not a genre that I was looking for, script-wise. When I heard it, when I read it, what worked for me was the camaraderie between the brothers, the friction and the banter between them. So I quite liked the friction, the brotherhood and at the same time the love-hate relationship and the witty tone." He further said, "There was a certain canvas and a certain colour created in the script itself, so my decision to say yes to the film came from the director's vision, and thankfully it came at a point where I knew the passion Saif had, also because everybody knew in the industry he is so bullish on the script."

On his camaraderie with Arjun in the film, Saif mentioned, "Arjun and I have a relationship off-camera too; he is a family friend and we have known each other for ages! On camera, we don't take each other for granted and bring out the best we can. We had a good time working together and that shows in the movie." The 'Ishaqzaade' actor added, "'Bhoot Police' is an ideal family watch. Usually, horror-comedies are not children-friendly. But Bhoot Police is the kind of film the whole family can watch together over dinner. It is not often that you get a film that is mildly frightening and can be watched with the whole family. The kids will definitely enjoy watching the movie with their family!"



SUNNY LEONE: I TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN MY SONGS BECOMING RAGING HITS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sunny Leone, who had incredible dance number hits with tracks like 'Auntiyaan Dance Karengi', 'Machli' and 'Panghat', for which she reunited with Baby Doll singer Kanika Kapoor, is in a happy space. The actress maintains that all the songs pushed her to do her best as all of them were very different from each other. Elated with the love pouring her way, she says, "I see myself as an entertainer and I take great pride in my songs becoming raging hits. People have been loving the number. It's so overwhelming that my hard work has paid off."

Considered among the industry's most effortless dancers, Leone says she remembers training for most part of November to make sure each of these numbers have a different vibe to them.

She adds, "Sometimes there is a tendency to replicate steps but each of these songs were designed so differently. It meant working on a different track every few days but I consciously wanted each of these to stand out. I am so happy with the response."

Ask her if there's a favourite and she signs off with a smile, "Why pick when you can groove to all?"

