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India, B'desh to set up 6 more 'Border Haats' to boost trade

COMMERCIAL HARMONY

▶ The first "Border Haat" started functioning on July 23, 2011 at Kalaichar (India)-Kurigram (Bangladesh) in the West Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Three other such border markets followed at Balat (Meghalaya, India)-Dolora (Bangladesh) in 2012, Srinagar (Tripura, India)-Chhagalnaiya (Bangladesh) and Kamalasaagar (Tripura, India)-Kasba (Bangladesh) in 2015.

▶ These "Border Haat" in around 5,625 sq. metre areas of two countries' territories or 'no-man's land' operate once in a week on a fixed day. In the weekly market day, on an average, at least 25 vendors including women from both sides of the borders from the two countries participate at "Border Haat" and sell their various products comprising agricultural, cottage and small enterprises and domestic products.



approved by the Indian and Bangladesh governments to promote the local business and livelihood of the people living alongside the frontiers while four "Border Haats", were set up along borders of the two countries -- with Meghalaya and Tripura in between 2011 and 2015, officials said.

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi laid the foundation stone for Kamalpur (India) - Kurmaghat (in Moulvibazar district of Bangladesh) "Border Haat" in eastern Tripura on Thursday. Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh, Vikram K. Doraiswami was also present on the occasion.

The official said that the Kamalpur (India) - Kurmaghat

"Border Haat" would be set up at an estimated cost of Rs 5.30 crore of which the Central government would provide around Rs 2.50 crore.

The official, on the condition of anonymity, said that the Indian and Bangladeshi government also approved to set up another "Border Haat" in Raghna (India)-Batuli (Bangladesh) along northern Tripura.

These four "Border Haats", however, have remained closed since March 2020 as precautionary measures against the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown, causing immense loss to the people living bordering villages.

The Tripura and Meghalaya governments on a number of occasions have urged the Central government to take up the matter with the

Bangladesh government to reopen the "Border Haats" maintaining the Covid protocols as the pandemic situation has been declining.

According to government records, before the Covid-triggered lockdown period, on an average, each "Border Haat" registered an annual business of Rs 3 crore.

India's Jaipur-based think-tank and international NGO -- CUTS International, which have done several studies on the border trade and "Border Haats" had also recommended to the Indian government to resume these border markets maintaining necessary precautions against Covid-19, including social distancing as these markets boost the economy, fortify ties among the people of the two neighbours and also check illegal trades.

The four Northeastern states of Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Assam share a 1,880-km long border with Bangladesh.

"The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industries on an average sanctioned Rs 2.50 crore against the project cost of around Rs 5.30 crore for each of the 'Border Haat'. We have to build up the necessary infrastructure including roads leading to the site of the 'Border Haat'."

An official of the Tripura's Industries and Commerce Department.

Agartala/Shillong | Agencies

Six more "Border Haats" (markets) -- four in Meghalaya and two in Tripura -- have been

Melting Heights

Mount Everest's Highest Glacier Rapidly Losing Ice

Himalayan glaciers are a critical water source for nearly two billion people living around the mountains and river valleys below. They feed 10 of the world's most important river systems and also help supply billions of people with food and energy. The water-related impacts of climate change are already experienced daily by millions of people worldwide, according to UN climate scientists.

KATHMANDU | Agencies

Ice on a glacier near the summit of Mount Everest that took millennia to form has shrunk dramatically in the last three decades due to climate change, a new study has shown.

The South Col formation may already have lost around 55 metres (180 feet) of thickness in the last 25 years, according to research led by the University of Maine and published this week by Nature.

Carbon dating showed the top layer of ice was around 2,000 years old, suggesting that the glacier was thinning more than 80 times faster than the time it took to form, the study said.

At that rate, South Col was "probably going to disappear within very few decades", lead scientist Paul Mayewski told National Geographic.

"It's quite a remarkable transition," he added.

The South Col glacier is around 7,900 metres (26,000 feet) above sea level and a kilometre below the peak of



the world's highest mountain.

Other researchers have shown that Himalayan glaciers are melting at an accelerating rate. As the glaciers shrink, hundreds of lakes have formed in the foothills of Himalayan mountains that could burst and unleash floods. Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa, who has

climbed Everest a record 25 times since 1994, told news agency on Saturday he had witnessed changes on the mountain firsthand.

"We now see rock exposed in areas where there used to be snow before. Not just on Everest, other mountains are also losing their snow and ice. It is worrying," Sherpa told news agency.

Listen the music in totality: Durga Jasraj

Sukant Deepak | New Delhi

While listening to music, how many of us think about what actually goes into making a career in music? What are the struggles, what is the kind of infrastructure does this field need? What needs to be done for instrument makers, and how can the music makers who enable the magic to reach us flourish?

These are questions posed by musician and actor Durga Jasraj, who recently launched the Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation along with Neeraj Jaitley in memory of her late father.

Stressing that the core values of the foundation are the ones she imbibed from her late father Jasraj, Durga, who has been running her company 'Arts & Artist India Private Limited' for the past 25 years, says the foundation will help remember not just the late maestro's contribution to music, but for what he did to the sector in totality.

"He was probably the only person of his generation who promoted the next generation



in a manner that they didn't need to be his disciples or belong to his gharana. Musicians across genres were encouraged by him in every way," she says.

For someone who also co-founded the Indian Music Academy decades back, she says that at that time she felt that a body for the musicians, of the musicians, and by the musicians would help the music industry.

HEAVY SNOWFALL THAWS FROZEN MEMORIES OF SIMLA

Shimla, once a village that served as the summer capital of British India between 1864 and 1939 and as the seat of the Himachal Pradesh government subsequently, is known as the 'Queen of Hills' -- the moniker given to the hill station by the British colonial rulers and the town still has 91 British-era heritage buildings.

SHIMLA | Agencies

Heavy snowfall thawed the frozen memories of Shimla -- the erstwhile capital of British India, as a thick quilt, and not blanket, of white covered the Queen of Hills, now called Shimla, in the past two days -- the highest spell in one and a half decades.

Old-timers recalled on Saturday that for almost two decades Shimla, which was planned for a maximum population of 16,000 and now supports over 2.50 lakh, has not recorded this kind of heavy snowfall.

As heavy snow has elud-



ed this erstwhile summer capital of British India in recent times, the "snow manual" of the administration, followed since the

British Raj, has virtually been lying in cold storage, admit officials. The local administration, before the onset of winter every year,

holds a meeting to review measures and assign duties to handle any emergency in case of heavy snow. Officials admit that for the past sev-

eral decades, this meeting -- called the snow manual meeting -- had become a mere ritual. This time the electricity, landline phones and cable television were snapped in several localities of Shimla owing to falling of trees on supply lines. Water supply was also hampered. Officials say it will days for the restoration of essential services. However, Shimla woke up to a sunny morning on Saturday after three days of snow. According to the local Met office, in the past two days certain areas of Shimla like the Ridge, the US Club and Jakhu hills received more than 60 cm snowfall.

94-YEAR-OLD WOMAN SOCIAL ACTIVIST TO FIGHT TN URBAN POLLS

Chennai: 94-year-old Kamakshi Subramanian filed her nomination papers as an independent candidate from Chennai's ward 174 comprising Besant Nagar and Adayar area, it is an extension of the long-drawn battle she had undertaken for several civic issues in and around Besant Nagar for the rights of people. Kamakshi Patti (Grandmother), as she is fondly called is a fierce civic activist and fighter whose relentless fight has led to the restoration of Karl Schmidt Memorial at Elliot's beach. She co-founded an organisation SPARK which is a civic forum to tackle the issues in the area and the organisation conducted several relentless fights for the restoration of Karl Schmidt Memorial. She is also known for conducting 'secret inspections' during any corporation activity using public funds and her main area of concern is tarring of roads. The 94-year-old was in New Delhi as her husband was with the President's secretariat and had lived in the Rashtrapathi Bhavan campus all her life in Delhi. She said that her husband had narrated the tales of bureaucracy to her and hence she understands properly how the officialdom works in the country.



Rising global temperatures ups river basins' flood risk

Team Absolute | New Delhi

River basins around the world, including in India, are vulnerable to increased flood danger from rising global temperatures, according to new research.

The study from the University of East Anglia (UEA) shows even a modest temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius will spell significant risks for parts of India, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, Brazil and Egypt.

The findings are published in the journal Climatic Change.

The team looked at fluvial flood risks for six global warming levels between 1.5 and 4 degrees Celsius by 2100.

The study examined six countries all considered to be vulnerable to climate change, selected from different continents, spanning different levels of development and ranging considerably in size.

Daily time series of precipitation, temperature and monthly potential evapotranspiration were generated by combining monthly observations, daily reanalysis data, and projected changes in the five CMIP5



(Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5, Global Climate Models).

These series were then used to drive the hydrological and hydrodynamic models to simulate river discharge and flood inundation. "Our results indicate that return periods of one-in-100-year floods in the late 20th century are likely to decrease with warming, meaning an increased number of people will be exposed to flood risks, particularly with 4 degrees Celsius warming," said Dr Yi He, Associate Professor in UEA's School of Environmental Sciences.

"Exposure in the major river basin areas in the six countries increases significantly, ranging from a doubling in China to more than 50-fold in Egypt. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would decrease the risks, resulting in increases ranging from 12 per cent in China to around 13-fold in Egypt," he said.

A one-in-100-year flood event is defined as an event of a size that will be equalled or exceeded on average once every 100 years. That is, over a period of 1,000 years, a one-in-100-year event would expect to be equalled or exceeded ten times. However, that doesn't mean such floods only occur at that frequency, and experts believe climate change is leading to more frequent large floods, the likes of which have struck parts of Britain, Germany, the United States, Australia and China in recent years, due to record-breaking or heavy, sustained rainfall. With global warming heating the oceans and the atmosphere, the hydrological cycle intensifies. With the atmosphere holding more water as temperatures rise, researchers expect increasingly intense and sustained rainfall events.

Foundation stone of world's third largest cricket stadium laid in Jaipur

JAIPUR | Agencies

The foundation stone of the world's third largest cricket stadium was laid on the Jaipur-Delhi bypass on Saturday.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, vice-president Rajiv Shukla and secretary Jay Shah attended the ceremony virtually.

Expressing his delight, Chief Minister Gehlot said, "Today is a golden opportunity for Rajasthan cricket. As 7 out of 10 big stadiums in the world are in India, this stadium of Rajasthan shall be in third place in the world which is a matter of pride for the players of Rajasthan and the people of the state."

Meanwhile, Ganguly said, "The SMS stadium here is wonderful. But now the world's third largest stadium is being built here in Jaipur which is a matter of happiness." An International Cricket



Stadium is being built on 100 acres of land in Jaipur. It will be the second largest stadium in the country and the third largest in the world. In this, the seating capacity of 75,000 spectators will be developed. The stadium will be constructed in 2 phases. This stadium will have 11 cricket pitches, 2 practice grounds, a cricket academy besides hostel, parking, sports club, hotel and gym facilities, which will be of international level.

The world's largest stadium is Motera stadium in Ahmedabad which has a capacity of around 1.10 lakh spectators. Second largest stadium is Australia's Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) which has a capacity of one lakh spectators.



'SIVASANKAR HELPED ME ESCAPE FROM KERALA', SAYS GOLD SMUGGLING ACCUSED SWAPNA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM | Agencies

The gold smuggling case which was the main plank of the Congress-led opposition in the 2020 local body polls and the 2021 April 6 Assembly elections though failed as the LDF led by Pinarayi Vijayan returned to power with a huge mandate, is back to haunt the ruling Left with prime accused in the case Swapna Suresh claiming that she then principal secretary to Vijayan. M. Sivasankar was aware of all the developments.

The 2020 local body polls and the 2021 April 6 Assembly polls, the single biggest campaign point of the Congress-led Opposition was Kerala gold smuggling case, thanks to Covid also, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan came out clean by winning both the polls and until Friday, the ruling Left often used to ask, what happened to the the allegations levelled against him, the people have dumped everything and gave him the thumbs up. Now it remains to be seen after the explosive revelations of prime accused in the case Swapna Suresh, where she says, the then principal secretary to Vijayan- M. Sivasankar knew everything. She broke her silence after an autobiography of



Sivasankar, written in Malayalam, said he was cheated by Swapna by gifting him an iPhone that was purchased using bribe money. He also said that he had no role in getting her a five figure monthly salary in the IT department of the Kerala government. After remaining away from the media glare following her release from jail on bail, Swapna hit back at the once blue eyed boy of Vijayan-Sivasankar, revealing he was behind

everything which includes her escape from Kerala by road to Bangalore, when the entire state was under heavy lockdown in July 2020 on account of Covid restrictions where inter district travel was banned.

In her interview to a TV channel, Friday night, she made no bones about her closeness with Sivasankar and said that it was with his help that she, along with her husband and children and their friend Sandip Nair,

managed to sneak out of Kerala.

On the two audio clips of hers, one which came out on the day she and her family was on the run to Bangalore and another while in custody, she said, it was all stage managed and directed by him and others.

In both these clips, she was speaking in a manner giving a clean chit to Vijayan. "I was made to say that," said Swapna and added that only master brains can work like this.

PM Modi unveils 216-foot tall statue of equality in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD | Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday unveiled a 216-foot tall statue of equality commemorating the 11th-century Saint Ramanujacharya.

At an elaborate ceremony held at Tridandi Chinna Jeer Swamy's ashram at Muchintal on the outskirts of Hyderabad, he dedicated to the world the giant statue which commemorates Ramanujacharya's teachings promoting equality in all aspects of living including faith, caste and creed.

Modi visited the 45-acre temple complex housing the statue and the identical recreations of 108 Divya Desams or ornately carved temples. Earlier, he also participated in puja and other rituals as part of the ongoing 12-day Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi 'Samaroham', the 1000th birth anniversary celebrations of Ramanujacharya.

The statue is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc and is among one of the tallest metallic statues



in sitting position, in the world.

The statue is mounted on a 54-feet high base building, named 'Bhadra Vedi', has floors devoted for a Vedic digital library and research centre, ancient Indian texts, a theatre, an educational gallery detailing many works of Ramanujacharya.

In the presence of Chinna Jeeyar Swami who presided over the event, the Prime Minister watched a 3D presentation on the life journey and teaching of Ramanujacharya.

The Prime Minister, in his speech, underlined the importance of the teachings of Ramanujacharya. He emphasised that development and social justice should reach all

sections of society without any differences and those who were victimised for generations should be made partners in development.

He said the transforming India was making all out efforts in this direction. Modi said the statue of equality will inspire the future generations and strengthen Indian philosophy. He said the freedom struggle is not only a fight for demonstration of strength but also an expression of love and let live, an ancient Indian philosophy. Recalling that Dr BR Ambedkar also supported the views of Ramanujacharyulu on equality, Modi said his government's vision is for Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas, Sab Ka Viswas and Sab Ka Prayas.

Narco-militancy module busted, contraband worth Rs 18 cr seized in J&K's Baramulla

SRINAGAR | Agencies

Jammu and Kashmir police said on Saturday that it has busted a Narco-Militancy module by arresting two people along with contraband worth Rs 18 crore in Baramulla district.

In a statement the police said, "Today police party of Police Station Uri and Police Post Kamalkote headed by SHO Police station Uri were patrolling the area from Dachi towards Basgran.

"During the patrolling two vehicles Celero-X bearing registration No JK09C-1584 and Alto bearing registration No JK05G-0247 were found on a link road towards Dachi in a suspicious condition.

"Police patrolling party moved towards the vehicles,



but the drivers of both the vehicles seeing the Police patrolling party tried to flee from the spot, however, due to the timely action, both the persons were apprehended tactfully. "During the search three packets of contraband apparently Heroin was recovered from Celero vehicle and Five packets of contraband apparently Heroin was recovered from Alto vehicle. "In total 8 packets of contraband weighing approxi-

mately about 9 kg was recovered. The cost of the contraband in black market is above Rs 18 crore.

"Both the persons were questioned on the spot during which the driver of the Alto car revealed his name as Mohd Sabir Barwal, son of Faqeer Ali, resident of Jabda Kamalkote, Tehsil Uri and Driver of the Celero car revealed his name as Parvaiz Ahmad Tantray, son of Ghulam Nabi Tantray, resident of Reban Rafiaband Sopore," they said.

"During their personal search mobile phones, one cheque to the tune of rupees (Rs 5,00,000) five lacs and one Aadhaar Card was recovered from the possession of Mohd Sabir Barwal," they said.

Rahul calls Modi '21st-century king'

HARDWAR | Agencies

Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of leaving protesting farmers on roads for a year amid the pandemic, Rahul Gandhi termed him a '21st-Century king' and pledged the Congress would form a government in Uttarakhand that would never shut out people.

Addressing election rallies in Haridwar and at Kichcha in Udhham Singh Nagar district, the former Congress chief alleged that Modi only cared for his billionaire friends and left the rest to fend for themselves.

The Congress, on the other hand, intends to give a government that will work taking the people along, he said.

In Haridwar, where he performed 'Ganga Aarti' at the famous Har Ki Pauri Ghat, Gandhi said, "We will give you a chief minister who comes to you, listens to your problems and



runs the government accordingly. The government's doors will always be open for you we will work in partnership with you." He described the farmers as the country's backbone and alleged that the purpose of the

agri laws was to 'enfeeble the farmers and strengthen the hands of a few billionaire industrialists at their expense'.

"Narendra Modi is a 21st-century king who thought it below dignity to talk to farmers," Gandhi alleged.

Accompanied by the Congress' Uttarakhand campaign committee head Harish Rawat, the party's state unit chief Ganesh Godiyal, in charge for Congress in the state Devender Yadav and Leader of Opposition Pritam Singh, he performed 'Ganga Aarti' in Haridwar.

He then posted on Twitter three videos of himself participating in the 'aarti' amid 'Har Har Gange' chants by the huge crowd present there.

With one video of himself offering prayers, Gandhi tweeted in Hindi, 'Salutations to Ganga ji! Praying for the bright future of Uttarakhand.'

Assembly polls in Uttarakhand are slated to be held on February 14.

DELHI LAW GRADUATE HELD FOR DUPING OVER 200 PEOPLE

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested a man, a law graduate, for duping over 200 people on the pretext of investing in different schemes to earn high profit.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The accused identified as Himanshu Singh, alias Rishu, was running the racket along with three others -- Praveen Kumar Singh, Veenu Singh and Deepak Kumar Singh. The three had already been arrested by the police and charge sheeted in the case.

Furnishing details, DCP (EOW) Mohd Ali said it was alleged that Praveen, Veenu, Deepak and Himanshu were operating a society in the name of Jai Maa Laxmi Co-Operative Thrift & Credit Society Ltd. and running a shop in the name of Arpit Cloth Store at Mandawali, Fajalpur, Delhi.

"They had induced and cheated approximately 200 innocent people in the area of Mandawali, Delhi on the pretext of investing in different schemes to earn high profit," the DCP said.



During the course of investigation, it came to the notice that said society was not registered with RBI and hence, they were not authorised to collect the money from the public directly in any scheme. As the accused Praveen and Veenu were absconding

since the registration of the case, they were declared Proclaimed Persons (absconders) in February, 2020 and accused Himanshu was declared absconder in September, 2021 by a Delhi Court.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the

accused induced innocent people in the local area of Mandawali, Delhi who used to visit their shop to invest in various schemes like interest-earning schemes, loan schemes, flat booking schemes, and lucky draw schemes.

TERRORISTS KILLED IN SRINAGAR ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: Two terrorists killed in the encounter with the security forces at Zakura area in Central Kashmir's Srinagar district have been identified, officials said here on Saturday.

Police said, based on a specific input generated by the force regarding presence of terrorists in Rangpora Zakura area of Srinagar, a cordon and search operation was launched. "During the search operation, as the search party proceeded towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the search party which was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter," police said. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the gun battle.

SIT gives clean chit to Jarkiholi in K'taka sex CD case, say sources

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) has submitted a 'B-report' (closure of case) in connection with the sensational alleged Sex-CD scandal to the Court of Magistrate in Bengaluru giving clean chit to former BJP minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, the main accused in the case, according to high level sources.

BENGALURU | Agencies

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday consented for the submission of the charge sheet in this connection. The SIT has submitted the final report to the Magistrate court as per the instructions of the High Court. The charge sheet submitted by the SIT has acquitted Ramesh Jarkiholi of the charge of rape for want of evidence, police sources said on Saturday.

However, the High Court asked the victim's counsel to raise objections regarding submission of the charge sheet in the Magistrate court. Political circles in the state are abuzz with the news of acquittal of Ramesh Jarkiholi, one of the main leaders



behind installing of the BJP government in the state in 2019 after the collapse of JD(S)-Congress coalition government. Ramesh Jarkiholi was given a cabinet portfolio of his choice by then Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

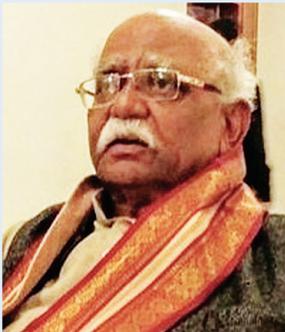
However, he was asked to resign following the leak of alleged private videos. Soon, the case turned into a scan-

dal and hit national headlines. Jarkiholi, one of the prominent leaders of backward classes from Belagavi, has suddenly become active. Sources say he is lobbying for plum cabinet post once the report of SIT on Sex CD scandal is made public. He met former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Phadnavis in Goa on Thursday.

BJP'S FIRST TORCHBEARER IN LOK SABHA C JANGA REDDY PASSES AWAY

Hyderabad: Senior politician, former MP, and one of the BJP's pioneer leaders from Telangana, Chandupatla Janga Reddy passed away on Saturday morning. He was 87.

Braving the Congress wave in the 1984 parliamentary elections following Indira Gandhi's assassination, C Janga Reddy stood out as one of the only two BJP candidates who won their way to Parliament. It was also the BJP's debut in the Lok Sabha. Incidentally, the BJP leader had trounced former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao of the Congress, from the Hanumakonda parliamentary constituency in those elections. Reddy who was born in 1935, had his early grounding as a Jan Sangh worker. Between 1967 and 1984, he also had stints as an MLA representing the Parakal and Sayampet Assembly segments in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh Assembly.



Illegal immigration agent held in Gujarat over firing incident

GANDHINAGAR | Agencies

The police in Kalol in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district on Saturday arrested one person and filed a complaint against two others in an incident of firing over payment for illegal entry into America.

Notably, this is the same region from where a family of four froze to death recently near the US-Canada border while trying to illegally sneak into the US. According to the police report, Vishnubhai Maneklal Patel, who runs a grocery shop in Kalol, had struck a deal with two agents - Rutvik Vijay Parekh and Devam Gopalbhai



Brahmbhatt -- for sending his nephew Vishal and his wife Rupali to the US. The deal was finalised for Rs 1.10 crore, of

which Rs 10 lakh was to be shown to the agents while sending the couple off on Friday. According to the deal, half of the payment was to be made when the couple reaches the US, while rest of the payment was to be made in one-and-a-half months' time after that. It was also decided that the couple will be emigrated via Delhi in one-and-half months along with a group of other immigrants from Delhi and the process would cost Rs 1.1 crore. But the departure dates kept on changing, before February 4 was finalised. Rutvik had dropped the couple to the airport while Devam had accompanied them to Delhi.

KASHMIR YOUTH SHOT DEAD INSIDE HIS HOUSE



Jammu: A youth was shot dead by unidentified gunmen inside his house on Saturday in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district. Reports said the shots were fired from outside the window of the victim's room while he was sleeping at around 4 a.m. One of the shots hit the youth, identified as Ikram Hussain Shah, on the head, killing him on the spot. The reports also said a bullet was fired at the house of another person, some 20 metres from the residence of the victim in Targayi village of Budhal area. Official sources said a police party headed by SHO Budhal, Mushtaq Ahmed visited the spot immediately and the area was been cordoned off.

PUBLIC NOTICE

BEFORE THE
ADJUDICATING
AUTHORITY NATIONAL
COMPANY LAW
TRIBUNAL INDORE
BENCH, AHMEDABAD
COMPANY PETITION (IB)
NO. 19(MP) 2021

Shobhit Ram Sahu & ors ..petitioner
versus
Sai Prakash Properties
Development Ltd. ... Respondent
Notice for intimation of the
next hearing date according to the
order dated 06.01.2022 passed by
the Hon'ble NCLT, Indore Bench,
Ahmedabad. Accordingly, by
present paper publication, the
Petitioners wish to inform the
Respondent Company that the
Hon'ble NCLT, Indore Bench,
Ahmedabad, will take up the matter
mentioned above on February
18,2022. Further, the Petitioner
also wishes to inform the
Respondent that the Hon'ble
NCLT, Indore Bench,
Ahmedabad, would proceed
Ex-Parte against the Respondent
Company if it fails to appear on
February 18,2022.

Date: 27.01.2022
Shobhit Ram Sahu & Others

Arrogant men show desperate determination to deny even the evidence to prove their prejudice.



Amit Kalantri

MAJORITY OF INDIANS SAY UNION BUDGET WILL PUSH UP MONTHLY EXPENSES

UNSATISFIED & DESPERATE

The IANS-Cvoter BUDGET INSTAPOLL was conducted right after the live telecast of the presentation of the 2022-23 Union Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman; interviewing approx 1,200+ randomly selected respondents across all demographics. Data weighted to known population profile. Margin of error is +/- 3 per cent at national level and +/- 5 per cent at regional level.

Some 44.1 per cent respondents said quality of life in the next one year will deteriorate and 12.4 per cent said it will remain the same, while a healthy 39.7 per cent said quality of life will improve.

Some 46.6 per cent respondents said that in the last year the overall quality of their life has deteriorated and 25.5 per cent said their quality of life has remained the same while 24.5 per cent said quality of life has improved.

To another question, 44.1 per cent respondents said that prices (inflation) will not at all come down after this budget.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indicating dim prospects, 60 per cent respondents in the IANS-CVoter Post Budget survey said this Budget will push up monthly expenses. However, 25.5 per cent respondents said it will them to save



more, while 9.8 per cent said it will make no difference. Some 26.7 per cent respondents said that prices may come down a little bit, while 22.6 per cent said prices will come down by a large extent, as per the survey. The Union Budget did not have any changes in personal income tax disappointing the middle class which has been struggling with lower incomes and higher inflation in the pandemic era.

Measures to boost private consumption are limited in the Union Budget. Personal income tax relat-

ed measures such as tax cuts, hike in standard deduction, and higher MGNREGA spending would have made an immediate positive impact on consumption, Morningstar Investment Adviser India said in a report.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has refused to succumb to electoral pressures as the Union Budget had no mention of populism or playing to regional galleries.

Elections to five states are slated this month but a Budget perusal will leave you wondering as the

Capitalists are still favoured

New Delhi: According to the IANS-CVoter Post Budget survey conducted across India, a majority of Indians continue to think that the Union Budget 2022-23 tends to favour capitalists over others. This opinion has been prevalent since the pandemic struck despite massive welfare schemes like free food for 800 million Indians. When asked if the Budget was pro-poor, 50.7 per cent of the respondents said not at all, while about 25 per cent of the respondents said it was pro-poor to a large extent. Interestingly, more than 50 per cent of higher income respondents felt the Budget was not pro-poor. Most critical were the middle-income respondents with 57.4 per cent disagreeing with the proposition. The answers moved in the other direction when Indians were asked in the survey if the Budget was pro-capitalist. More than 45 per cent of

the respondents felt that the Budget was pro-capitalist to a large extent, while close to 43 per cent said it was to some extent. Interestingly, over 47 per cent respondents in the higher income group felt the same, more than the national average. As mentioned earlier, it has been a few years since this sentiment has prevailed, which only got magnified after the pandemic. Most Indians in the survey think that the middle class continues to get a raw deal from the government in its budgets. Close to 56 per cent of the respondents felt that the Budget was not at all favourable to the middle class, with about 60 per cent of the lower income and middle class respondents thinking the same. This could be because the expected increase in the no income tax bracket or additional exemptions was not offered in the Budget.

Finance Minister has focussed on the economy imperatives and there is no hint of populism or giveaways

for even the largest state of Uttar Pradesh which is headed for the polls.



FEES OF 50% SEATS IN PVT MEDICAL COLLEGES TO BE AT PAR WITH GOVT COLLEGES: NMC

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Medical Commission (NMC) on Saturday issued guidelines that the fees of 50 per cent seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities should be at par with the fees in government medical colleges of that particular state or UT. "The benefit of this fee structure would be first available to those candidates who have availed government quota seats, but it will be limited to the extent of 50 per cent of the total sanctioned strength of the respective medical colleges and deemed universities," read the guidelines issued by NMC.

The fees in the private medical colleges presently are fixed by the state regulatory authority for the merit seats. However, after the implementation of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, the NMC has mandated framing guidelines for determi-

nation of fees and other charges in respect of 50 per cent seats in private medical institutions as well as deemed universities.

If the government quota seats are less than 50 per cent of total sanctioned seats, the remaining candidates would avail benefits of fee equivalent to the government medical college fees, based purely on merit, the guidelines read.

The NMC said the decision was taken after extensive consultation. Earlier, an expert committee constituted by the NMC recommended a total of 26 broad guidelines for fixing fees at private medical colleges and deemed-to-be universities.

"A reconstituted expert committee examined 1,800 responses and submitted the revised draft guidelines. The recommendations of this expert committee have been accepted by the NMC at its meeting on December 29, 2021," the guidelines read.

Hijab row: Clothes that 'disturb harmony' banned in edu institutions

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

Aspiralling controversy over hijabs or headscarves worn by Muslim women in schools and colleges in Karnataka, including a march of Hindu students wearing saffron scarves and shouting slogans, prompted the state government on Saturday to ban clothes "which disturb equality, integrity and public order".

"Invoking 133 (2) of the Karnataka Education Act-1983, which says a uniform style of clothes has to be worn compulsorily. The private school administration can choose a uniform of their choice," the government order said, adding that students have to follow a dress code chosen by authorities.

"In the event of the administrative committee not selecting a uniform, clothes which disturb equality, integrity and public law and order should not be worn," the order said.

"The education department has noticed that in some education institutions, the boys and girls have started behaving according to their religion,



which hurts the equality and unity," it added.

Karnataka has seen an escalating row over religious attires since last month with right-wing groups in Udupi and Chikkamagaluru objecting to Muslim girls attending classes wearing hijabs.

The controversy quickly spread to other parts of the state with groups of Hindu students showing up to class in saffron scarves.

On Saturday, videos from Kundapur in the Udupi district showed boys and girls wearing the scarves over their college uniforms and raising slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram (praise Lord Ram)'. With the issue now set to come up before the high court, Chief Minister Bommmai on Friday held a meeting with Law and Education departments - which seems to have led to the new order.

CM FACE SHOULD BE CAPABLE TO WIN 60 SEATS IN PUNJAB: SIDHU

Chandigarh: Ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to announce the chief minister's face in his virtual address from Ludhiana city in Punjab on Sunday, state president Navjot Sidhu on Saturday said the chief minister face should be the one who can win 60 seats in the 117-member Assembly. This will be Gandhi's second visit to the state in a week. In his previous visit, Rahul Gandhi had assured workers that the party will decide CM candidate well ahead of the February 20 polling. "This election is for the betterment of Punjab, this election is for the future of Punjab. Shri Rahul Gandhi ji will announce the next CM face of Punjab via a virtual rally from Ludhiana on Feb 6, 2022," the Punjab Youth Congress said in a tweet.



A day ahead of the announcement, party state President Navjot Sidhu said the CM's face will decide whether 60 contestants of the party become MLAs or not. "The CM will be elected if there are 60 MLAs. Nobody is talking about 60 MLAs. Nobody is talking about the roadmap for a government to be formed," Sidhu told the media in Amritsar.

Meanwhile, Asha Bhosle has assured anxious fans that Lata Mangeshkar is stable. The veteran playback singer, who is Lata's younger sister, visited Lata at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai on Saturday. Lata was admitted to the hospital last month after she was tested positive for Covid-19. She was reported to have mild

Lata Mangeshkar critical, string of VVIPs call on her

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar's health condition deteriorated again on Saturday, prompting the doctors to put her back on ventilator support after 10 days.

Medicos attending on her have indicated that the 92-year-old Lata - who was taken off the ventilator on January 27 - is again responding to her ongoing treatment at the Breach Candy Hospital.

The entire Mangeshkar clan, including Asha Bhosale, Usha Mangeshkar, sole brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar and other family members are present at the hospital.

Meanwhile, Asha Bhosle has assured anxious fans that Lata Mangeshkar is stable. The veteran playback singer, who is Lata's younger sister, visited Lata at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai on Saturday. Lata was admitted to the hospital last month after she was tested positive for Covid-19. She was reported to have mild

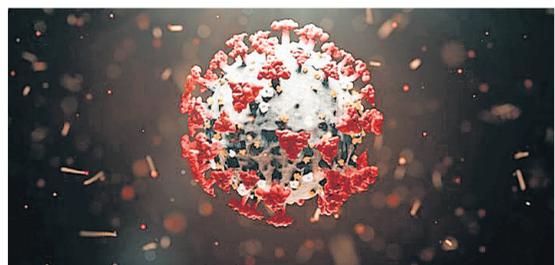


symptoms and was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

A string of VVIPs, including Rashmi Thackeray, the wife of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena President Raj Thackeray, film personalities like Madhur Bhandarkar, Union Minister Piyush Goyal, BJP leader M.P. Lodha, and others visited the hospital to enquire after her health.

Lata was admitted to the hospital on January 9 following various health issues, including Covid-19, and has remained there for the past nearly four weeks.

TACKLING ROOT CAUSE OF PANDEMICS IS KEY THAN CURBING SPREAD: SCIENTISTS



LONDON | Agencies

Finding the root cause of pandemics is key rather than focusing only on preventing the spread of new viruses once they have infected humans, scientists have warned. According to a new analysis by Harvard University researchers, 3.3 million people are expected to die each year from viral zoonotic diseases. The estimated value of these lost lives is -- at a minimum -- \$350 billion with an additional \$212 billion in direct economic losses.

This amount is based on lives lost from every new viral zoonosis -- diseases that "spillover" into humans -- since 1918 that killed at least 10 people. In the analysis, published in Science Advances journal, a team of 20 experts criticised policymakers

and multilateral organisations for rarely addressing preventing spillover at the source. They also criticised approaches that focus only on preventing once the virus outbreaks have begun, rather than tackling the root cause. The analysis recommends increasing global surveillance of viruses in wildlife, better control of hunting and trade in wildlife, and stopping the razing of forests. These actions would also pay huge dividends in fighting the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis, they said. This would cost about \$20 billion, just 10 per cent of the annual economic damage caused by zoonoses and 5 per cent of the value of the lives lost. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, experts have repeatedly warned that the root causes must be tackled.



MINARET OF FAMOUS KASHMIR SHRINE TILTED BY EARTHQUAKE

Srinagar: A moderate intensity earthquake that jolted Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday led to the tilting of a minaret of the famous Sufi saint's shrine at Chrar-e-Sharief in Budgam district. Management of the Sheikh Nuruddin Wali's shrine said that besides the tilting, there was no apparent damage to the main building which is now being inspected to detect internal damage. Revered equally by the Muslims and local Pandits, the Sufi saint is called Nund Rishi by his Kashmiri Pandit devotees. The shrine building was gutted on May 11, 1995 when a foreign terrorist, Mast Gul along with other terrorists converted it into a fortified bunker while being challenged by the security forces.

Foggy conditions to prevail over NW India for next 4 days

The Met department further informed that under the influence of another western disturbance, scattered/fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall/snowfall is very likely over the western Himalayan region during February 8-9 and isolated light rainfall is likely over northern parts of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh on the same dates.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Northwest India, including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh, will continue to witness foggy conditions for the next four days. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), apart from fog, cold to severe cold day conditions will likely prevail over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh for the next two days.

However, the weather agency also said that "gradual rise in minimum temperatures by 3-5-degree Celsius is very likely over most parts of Northwest India during the next 4 days and fall thereafter".



Meanwhile, the pollution levels have come down slightly as the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi was 150 for PM10 and 89 for PM2.5.

As the PM10 was on a high scale, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) has issued a moderate health advisory stating that sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion and heavy outdoor work.

"Air quality is acceptable for the general public but moderate health concern for sensitive people," it said. The PM2.5 level was also under the 'moderate' category.

Usually, the air quality is categorised as 'good' when the AQI is between 0 to 50; 'satisfactory' between 51-100; 'moderate' between 101-200; 'poor' between 201-300; 'very poor' between 301-400; 'severe' between 401-500; and 'hazardous' at over 500.



AFTER 'FAKE-KHADI SCAM', KVIC BLACKLISTS MUMBAI'S FAMED KHADI EMPORIUM

In a shocker, the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has cancelled the 'Khadi Certification' of Mumbai's 68-year-old and famed 'Khadi Emporium', and banned it from sale of khadi products henceforth, an official said here on Saturday.



khadi products, duping the gullible customers who were under the impression that the Khadi Emporium was run by the KVIC.

The once venerable Khadi Emporium was the top destination for buying khadi products from locals, domestic and international tourists, including many celebs and VVIP lovers of the comfy fabric created by Mahatma Gandhi, which has attained global popularity.

In its tough drive against fake khadi products, in the past few years, the KVIC has served legal notices to over 1,200 individuals and firms across the country.

This includes a reputed one like FabIndia accused of misusing the 'Khadi India' trademark brand to sell non-khadi products, and the KVIC has sought damages of Rs 500 crore with the case pending before the Bombay High Court.

Last year, the KVIC targeted online shopping portals like Amazon, Flipkart and Snapdeal to take down 140 weblinks that were hawked non-khadi products and misusing the official brand name.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocker, the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has cancelled the 'Khadi Certification' of Mumbai's 68-year-old and famed 'Khadi Emporium', and banned it from sale of khadi products henceforth, an official said here on Saturday. The development came after the KVIC detected that fake and non-khadi products were being sold from the Khadi Emporium located in the prime area near Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, in the heritage building

Metropolitan Insurance House, on Dr D.N. Road.

During a routine inspection, the KVIC officials took away samples from Khadi Emporium that were found to be fake/non-khadi products being passed off to the customers as 'genuine khadi'.

The KVIC slapped a legal notice to the Mumbai Khadi & Village Industries Association (MKVIA), its approved distributors, for flouting norms of the 'Khadi Certificate' and 'Khadi Mark Certificate', which now stand cancelled. "With cancellation of the registration, Khadi Emporium ceases to be a genuine Khadi Outlet

and is no longer permitted to sell Khadi products," the KVIC said.

It has also warned the MKVIA - which reportedly runs other branches in Mumbai and outside - of legal action for criminal breach of trust, cheating the people at large by misusing the credibility and popularity of the Khadi brand.

The KVIC had handed over the management of the Khadi Emporium to MKVIA in 1954 with the strict condition to sell only genuine khadi products.

However, in recent years, the MKVIA allegedly indulged in unfair trade practices like selling fake

'WILL GO ON INFINITE STRIKE' ANNA HAZARE'S WARNING TO MAHARASHTRA GOVT OVER DECISION ON WINE SALE

▶ LAST MONTH, THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT ALLOWED THE SALE OF WINE IN SUPERMARKETS AND WALK-IN STORES IN THE STATE, DRAWING IMMENSE FLAK FROM THE OPPOSITION BJP.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Social activist Anna Hazare has written to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray opposing the state government's decision to allow the sale of wine in supermarkets and walk-in shops.

In the letter, Hazare also warned the state government that he would go on infinite strike if the decision is not revoked. The social activist had earlier said that the decision was unfortunate and could result in liquor addiction.

"It's the duty of Govt to work towards de-addiction, but I'm saddened to see that it is taking decisions, for financial benefits, that would result in liquor addiction," he added. Last month, the Maharashtra government allowed the sale of wine in supermarkets and walk-in stores in the state, drawing immense flak from the Opposition BJP.

A statement from the Chief Minister's

Office said "self-in-shop" method will be adopted in supermarkets and walk-in-stores which have area of 100 sq mt or more and which are registered under the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments Act. However, the supermarkets which are near places of worship or educational institutions cannot sell wine.

Criticising the decision, the BJP said that the state government was promoting liquor.

BJP leader Devendra Fadnis said that the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government did not help people during two years of the pandemic but its "priority is promoting the sale of liquor."

"We will not allow Maharashtra to become a Madya-rashtra ('liquor state')," the former chief minister said.

Reliance hospital to screen 2-lakh poor for cancer in Mumbai

The Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital (HNRFH) and Karkinos Healthcare have launched an ambitious drive to detect cancer early among the under-privileged communities in Mumbai, an official said here.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital (HNRFH) and Karkinos Healthcare have launched an ambitious drive to detect cancer early among the under-privileged communities in Mumbai, an official said here.

The drive was launched on Friday, the World Cancer Day (February 4), and would cover around 2,00,000 people free of cost along with cancer care.

The potentially life-saving Cancer Screening facilities will benefit those who need it most but either lack awareness or financial resources, and would help detect certain types of cancer before signs/symptoms arise.

CEO of HNRFH Dr Tarang Gianchandani said that in partnership with Karkinos Healthcare, the primary objective of the cancer screening would be to save lives and ultimately prevent cancer deaths with early detection.

"The people shall be screened for different types of cancers, like oral, breast,

cervix, colorectal, prostate and lung, for people between the age group of 30-65," Dr Gianchandani added.

Karkinos Healthcare CEO R. Venkataraman this was the start of the company's 'community outreach programme' to those who are deprived or unable to receive these life-saving facilities, and would be expanded across India in the future to help save many lives by early cancer detection.

The duo added that the goal is to ensure a care continuum for those unable to afford such cancer screenings due to financial constraints, besides follow-ups for further treatment to those needing it in the entire Mumbai and later expanding to the rest of the country.

RAILWAY FINE RECEIPT HELPS POLICE FIND DEAD MAN'S RELATIVE

Palghar: The body of the unidentified person was found at around 10:45 pm on January 31 near the railway tracks in Palghar, Maharashtra, said officials.

A dead man's relative was traced by police after a railway fine receipt was found on his body in Palghar, Maharashtra, an official said on Saturday.

The body of an unidentified person was found at around 10:45 pm on January 31 near the railway tracks between Umargaon and Gholwad stations, he said.

"Based on 12 numbers found on a railway fine receipt on the corpse, we managed to trace the man's relative using technical inputs," he added.

INDUSIND BANK MOVES NCLT AGAINST ZEE ENTERTAINMENT

▶ LENDER INDUSIND BANK HAS MOVED NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL (NCLT) AGAINST ZEE ENTERTAINMENT OVER AN ALLEGED DEFAULT OF JUST OVER RS 83 CRORE.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Lender IndusInd Bank has moved National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) against Zee Entertainment over an alleged default of just over Rs 83 crore.

According to a regulatory filing by Zee Entertainment, an application has been filed against the company under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

"An application has been filed against the Company, under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016



read with Rule 4 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Rules 2016, by IndusInd Bank Limited, claiming to be a 'Financial Creditor', before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench for initiation of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process against the Company, claiming a default of Rs.83,08,00,000," the filing said. According to the filing, the company is a party to the 'Debt Service Reserve Account Guarantee Agreement' entered into with IndusInd Bank for the term

loan facility advanced to 'Siti Networks'. "The issue of the Company's alleged default under the 'DSRA Guarantee Agreement', is sub-judice before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court;½ filed by the Company against IndusInd Bank Limited." "Filing of the said CIRP Application is in breach of the order dated 25th February 2021 as modified by the order of 3rd December 2021 passed;½ in the said suit." Besides, the filing said the company will be adopting appropriate legal steps.

MAHARASHTRA STUDENT PROTESTS: YOUTUBER 'HINDUSTANI BHAI' IN JUDICIAL CUSTODY

▶ VIKAS FHATAK'S LAWYER HAS MOVED THE MAGISTRATE COURT FOR BAIL, THE HEARING FOR WHICH HAS BEEN SCHEDULED ON MONDAY.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Social media influencer Vikas Fhatak (41) alias 'Hindustani bhai' was on Saturday afternoon produced before a magistrate court in Bandra and remanded in judicial custody. He was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly provoking students of classes 10 and 12 to protest against the offline board exams to be held in Maharashtra. Fhatak allegedly orchestrated riots outside the Dharavi residence of Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad on Monday. His lawyer Mahesh Mule has moved the magistrate court for bail,



the hearing for which has been scheduled on Monday. Till then, Fhatak will remain in jail.

An FIR has been registered against Fhatak and several others under IPC sections 353 (obstructing public servant from discharging duty), 332 (causing hurt to public servant), 427 (mischief causing damage), 109 (abetment) and 114 (abettor present



when offence committed), 143, 145, 146, 149 for unlawful assembly and rioting and 188, 269, 270 for violating Covid-19 guidelines. The police have also booked them under section 3 (mischief causing damage) of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act 1984.

A large number of students across various cities in the state, including

Mumbai, had held protests on Monday demanding the cancellation of offline board exams for classes 10 and 12 in view of the pandemic. The protests took a violent turn in Mumbai and Nagpur, with some students damaging private and police vehicles by pelting stones and blocking roads. While the protests at Jalgaon and Aurangabad remained peaceful, in Mumbai and Nagpur, local police had to resort to lathi-charge to disperse the mob of students, most of whom were minors.

On the day, around 1,000 to 1,500 students had gathered outside the residence of minister Gaikwad. The police said the crowd gradually swelled around 3 pm, when many students from far-off places like Thane, Kalyan, Badlapur, Vasai, Virar and places in Navi Mumbai reached the spot. A senior citizen woman and a cop were injured in the rioting. Another FIR has been registered against Fhatak in Nagpur for orchestrating riots involving approximately 200 students in Ajni.

From Nagpur to Jaipur, demand for upskilling grows in tier 2 cities

■ With the rise of remote working and online hiring, small-towns have jumped on the bandwagon and Nagpur, Ernakulam, Mysore, Jaipur and Indore now shine as the fastest-growing cities for upskilling courses, according to a new report.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With the rise of remote working and online hiring, small-towns have jumped on the bandwagon and Nagpur, Ernakulam, Mysore, Jaipur and Indore now shine as the fastest-growing cities for upskilling courses, according to a new report. While profes-

sionals from top metros such as Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad showed the highest intent to upskill in 2021 and 2022, tier 2 cities are now the hotspots for upskilling courses.

IT, banking, education and training, healthcare and consulting are the top five industry backgrounds amongst professionals who want to upskill this year, reports edtech platform Great Learning. "The increasing traction and adoption of upskilling amongst smaller Indian cities is an indicator of how geographical barriers are being broken," said commenting on the report, Hari Krishnan Nair, Co-founder, Great Learning.

Nearly 79 per cent professionals among those surveyed are looking to upskill in 2022, surpassing 2021 levels. "Data science, artificial intelligence

and software development are the most preferred domains and 62 per cent people feel that going back to the office won't affect their plan to upskill," the findings showed. As jobs in newer domains soared high in 2021, more than 70 per cent of people chose to upskill to grab new opportunities. An even higher intent towards upskilling is being seen in 2022 with the emergence of newer domains like web 3.0, metaverse, NFTs etc. 79 per cent people still plan to upskill in 2022 with another 11 per cent people on the fence. Even though the intent to upskill is equal among men and women, 81 per cent of the women cited being busy with family and household work as a barrier in upskilling, the findings showed.

Maharashtra HSC, SSC question banks released, check details

Candidates appearing for the exams can now download the question banks from maa.ac.in.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra has released question banks for SSC and HSC students. Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) will soon be conducting Maharashtra 10th, 12th Board Exams 2022 in offline mode.

Candidates appearing for the exams can now download the question banks from maa.ac.in. "To help students of class Xth & XIIth prepare for the state board exams,

@scertmaha will be providing subjectwise question banks. These will be available at maa.ac.in. Students should avail themselves of the benefit," State Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad tweeted. "These question banks will help students in their self study, understand the exam pattern and better their preparations for the upcoming exams."

These question banks have been released with the objective of helping students plan and have better resources for their self study before the exams. This will also help the students understand

exam pattern and help them in time management.

Students have been raising their voices about offline exams as many claim that conducting offline exams during a Covid outbreak is not safe for students or the authorities. However, Maharashtra Board has made it clear that there will be no changes in the exams dates and it will be conducted in offline mode.

The SSC exams are scheduled to take place from March 15 to April 4, 2022 and HSC theory exams will be held from March 4 to March 30, 2022.

UNEP signs MoU with Mah govt for implementing climate change actions

■ The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government to support its 'Majhi Vasundhara' campaign, an initiative with regard to the energy and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government to support its 'Majhi Vasundhara' campaign, an initiative with regard to the energy and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

"The beginning of a new partnership between UN Environment Programme and the Government of Maharashtra will support the state in the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures," said a statement from UN office on Saturday. The MoU was signed



on Friday. 'Majhi Vasundhara' (literally, My Earth) is an initiative of the Government of Maharashtra's Environment and Climate Change Department to empower citizens with knowledge on the impacts of climate change and environmental issues and to encourage them to make a conscious effort towards improvement of the environment.

Speaking for the government of Maharashtra, Cabinet Minister of Tourism, Environment and Protocol, Aditya Thackeray said: "We should start to consider all possible avenues to get to Net Zero at the earliest. Over the next few months, Maharashtra will evaluate the investment prospects that will be required to steer

Maharashtra's economy towards net zero. We have an imperative to act now." UNEP will support the state in educating and mobilising youth on plastic pollution and marine litter through UNEP's Tide Turner Challenge across all educational institutes in the state of Maharashtra. Under the partnership, UNEP will support the Maharashtra government on various clean energy initiatives and in its efforts to develop a strategy for carbon neutral development in line with the Government of India's vision. "The time is right for Maharashtra to lead the drive in a clean energy transition with its recent renewable energy policy being an important step." This can pave the way for industry to make this shift, alongside the financing opportunities that are coming in tandem. Clean energy, and sustainability as a whole, is growing as an opportunity for industry. "There is a global trend in which frontrunners are occupying a niche in different markets, not just in the energy sector, but in sectors such as transport, agriculture, electronics, chemicals, buildings and construction, textiles, to those taking advantage of what a circular plastics economy can offer. Maharashtra is well placed to take advantage of



STARTUP POLICY OF MADHYA PRADESH WILL COME SOON: CM

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that startups started by youth with entrepreneurial spirit are bringing a revolution in the country. Madhya Pradesh will soon prepare and implement a new startup policy. Apart from this, the idea of Global Startup Investors Summit will also be given shape soon.

Chouhan said that youth power has emerged as a result of the encouragement given to startups in the country in the last seven years by Prime Minister Modi. Startup activities are increasing in Madhya Pradesh. Through this expo, the work of providing guidance to the youth in the age group of 17 to 25 years to increase entrepreneurship and establish startups is commendable.

Chouhan was addressing the inaugural session of the two-day Startup Expo-2022 virtually from his residence on Saturday. Union Minister of State for Steel Paggan Singh Kulaste was also present.



The expo was organized by the Entrepreneurship Cell of Maulana Azad Institute of Technology, MANIT Bhopal. This cell has been created to connect MANIT students, entrepreneurs, investors and promoters from home and abroad. Chouhan said that we want to develop Madhya Pradesh as a startup hub. A policy is being prepared for startups in the state. If you have any suggestion for this, please share it. The youth of Indore want Indore to be made the capital of startups. Bhopal is also not lagging behind in this area. This year, efforts will be made to give Unicorn Startup status to at least two startups out of the startups established in

Madhya Pradesh. Unicorns are made with a market value of over one billion dollars. At present, more than 80 unicorns have been made in the country and our country is moving towards its century very soon. Going a step further, Decacorn companies have also started to be established. Decacorn is made possible by a market value of over \$10 billion. The state government is ready to extend all possible help to the youth. Chouhan said that it is surprising to see the startups of the children of Indore. Their startups are doing amazingly well. Some are generating Rs 700-800 crores, some have made a company worth Rs 2 thou-

sand crores. When this is possible in Indore, then youth of other cities of the state can also do the same. Chouhan said that he realized that the youth has immense potential at the startup summit in Indore on January 26 last. Children from ordinary families of small towns and cities in the state are working on new ideas. Innovate, invest and incubate with similar ideas has been considered essential to create a startup ecosystem. Chouhan said that youth should dream big. Big dreams give strength to the resolve to make them come true. About 1800 startups have been established in Madhya Pradesh. It is remarkable that 40 percent of these have been established by our women. The new National Education Policy also emphasizes on innovating from childhood. Atal Tinkering Labs have been established in the country for this purpose. It is helping to foster curiosity, creativity and scientific aspects among the youth.

NCC Organisation Boosts the Spirit of Service to Nation, Makes Better Human Beings

■ CM Rise Schools of the State Will Also Have NCC Wing
■ Chief Minister Chouhan Gave Medals to NCC Cadets

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the NCC organisation boosts the spirit of service to the nation among the students and makes them better human beings. By joining this organisation, students follow the path of virtue and establish high ideals including social service. NCC cadets move ahead with the determination to serve the nation through hard work, training, National Cadet Corps i.e. NCC means patriotism, discipline, character building, development of personality, dedicating life to society and country.

Chouhan was addressing the NCC students of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh at the Chief Minister residence premises today. In the programme, he honoured the students of the two states who had participated in the Republic Day Celebration 2022 held in New Delhi by giving them medals. The programme was organised by NCC Directorate of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Chief Minister said that



expansion of NCC is necessary, so we have decided to start it in CM Rise Schools. We are going to open 360 CM Rise Schools in the state this year, these schools will have NCC.

Chouhan said that my faith in NCC is so strong that its name first came to mind in the battle against Covid-19. NCC cadets have set an excellent example of dedicated service in saving lives of people from corona infection. The state is proud of the achievements of NCC. He thanked the officers who trained the youth. Earlier, Additional Director General in-charge of NCC Directorate Rajiv Gautam, while giving

information about the activities of NCC organisation, said that the participation and performance of 57 students in Republic Day Parade was commendable. Prime Minister Modi also congratulated the students. Samuel David of Madhya Pradesh received the award for the second best cadet for the Naval Wing. In the year 2021-22, NCC students actively participated in many adventure activities. The students also paid respect to the martyr family. A total of 08 cadets have also been selected for the army. Brigadier S Ghosh, Akashdeep and other NCC officers were present in the programme.

CM to distribute loan of 300 Crore to SHGs

■ Will Communicate with Group Members of Districts
■ Will Participate Virtually in Panchayat Level Group Programme
■ Programme Will Be Held on February 8 at Kushabhau Thakre Hall

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will distribute bank loans worth Rs 300 crore to the members of self-help groups formed in the State Rural Livelihood Mission. He will virtually hold dialogue with the members of self-help groups of some districts. In this virtual programme to be held in Kushabhau Thakre auditorium on February 8 at 10:30 am, group members at the Gram Panchayat level in

all the districts will connect through various virtual mediums. Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Mahendra Singh Sisodia and Minister of State Ramkhelawan Patel will also be present. So far more than 40 lakh rural poor families have been provided financial assistance in the form of bank loan of Rs 2,762 crore by connecting them with about 3 lakh 50 thousand self-help groups in the state. The Panchayat and Rural Development Department has been benefiting the beneficiaries by organising virtual programmes continuously since the time of lockdown to strengthen the economic condition of rural families during the corona period. By receiving the amount, the group members will boost their income by further strengthening their present livelihood, which will open the doors of their prosperity and their economic and social status will be better than before. It is noteworthy

that in MP State Rural Livelihood Mission, social and economic empowerment is being done by connecting women members of poor families living in rural areas with self-help groups. It is generally seen that people in rural areas are deprived of the benefits of various schemes despite being eligible due to the difficulty of documentation and other formalities in the procedures of banking service. With a view to simplify this process, the State Government has resolved to make adequate bank loans easily available for self-help groups by coordinating extensively with banks. Intensive monitoring and transparent process has been prepared along with the submission of bank loan cases through the software of Self-Help Groups. Bank Sakhiyas have also been identified by the Mission to make banking services accessible, who are cooperating with group members in banking work in rural areas.

NGT issues notices to collectors of four districts over plea on firecracker order violation

As per the data of the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, the air quality had turned 'very poor' in Bhopal and 'poor' in Indore on Diwali.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Bhopal bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices to the collectors of four major districts in Madhya Pradesh, seeking their replies on the contempt plea, which alleged that they did not ensure compliance with the tribunal's previous order as people at these places burst firecrackers during Diwali last year, leading to rise in air pollution.

In the order, NGT's judicial member Shivkumar Singh and member expert Arun Kumar Verma on Friday directed the collectors of Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior to file their replies within four weeks, the petitioners' counsel Prabhat Yadav said on Saturday.

The contempt petition moved by PG Nainpandey and Rajat Bhargava of Jabalpur said the NGT had on October 27 last year banned bursting of crackers and allowed the use of only green crackers for limited time on Diwali (November 4), where the air quality index (AQI) was below



200, he said.

As per the petition, on the next day of Diwali, the AQI in these four districts shot up due to bursting of banned crackers and caused breathing problems among people in the midst of the outbreak of COVID-19, a respiratory disease, Yadav said.

The petition said that the collectors of the four districts did not ensure compliance with the NGT's order issued in October and fire-

crackers were burst even where the AQI was poor and it continued till late night, he added.

The plea sought that the officials be made to pay compensation for causing pollution. According to him, the petitioners have also filed a report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to substantiate their written submission about the air pollution caused in these four major districts in the state. As per the

data of the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board (MPPCB), the air quality had turned 'very poor' in Bhopal and 'poor' in Indore on Diwali. The air quality was measured from 6 am on November 4 to 6 am the next day, an MPPCB official had said a day after Diwali.

The air quality in two major cities of MP - Gwalior and Jabalpur - was moderate then.

As per the MPPCB website, the PM-10 or dust particles level in Bhopal's residential areas was 350.2 as against the normal of 118.8 during the 24-hour period ending on November 5 morning. It was 236.40 against the normal 102.20 in residential areas of Indore. In Gwalior's residential areas, where bursting of crackers was banned, the PM-10 level was recorded at 113.7 against the normal 159.9. In Jabalpur, the level was 165 as against the normal of 85.

A PM-10 level between 100 and 200 indicates 'moderate' air quality and that above 200 is considered 'poor' and above 300 as 'very poor.'

RENAME BHOPAL AS BHOJPAL IN HONOUR OF RAJA BHOJ: SARANG

■ Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the central government has given its approval to rename Hoshangabad district in the state as Narmadapuram.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Welcoming the decision to rename Hoshangabad district as Narmadapuram, Madhya Pradesh medical education minister Vishwas Sarang on Friday demanded that the state capital Bhopal be rechristened as Bhojpal in honour of Raja Bhoj, an 11th century ruler. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh

Chouhan has said that the central government has given its approval to rename Hoshangabad district in the state as Narmadapuram.

Sarang expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chouhan over renaming Hoshangabad as Narmadapuram and Babai town located in the same district as Makhan Nagar (after noted Hindi poet and journalist Makhanlal Chaturvedi). "The names of those cities and villages, which remind us of slavery, are no longer in Madhya Pradesh. With this resolution the name of Hoshangabad was changed. Hoshangabad, situated on the banks of Narmada, will now be called Narmadapuram," he added.



He further said that he started the campaign to change the name of Bhopal to Bhojpal and that he has appealed to the government to change the name. "I have been demanding for long to change the name of Bhopal to Bhojpal. I

have also raised this demand in the state assembly and now I will write a letter to the chief minister on the issue," Sarang said in a statement. Sarang said the idea behind changing names of some towns and villages is to delink them from their colonial past. The Narmada river is the lifeline of the state and to change the name of Hoshangabad situated on its banks to Narmadapuram is a welcome step, the BJP leader said.

"Though the Congress calls this (name change exercise) as saffron agenda, we don't mind it. It is a matter of happiness that Babai will be known as Makhan Nagar as it is an expression of gratitude towards patriots," he said. In the statement, Sarang also announced to rename Shivpuri town in Tikamgarh district as Kundeshwar Dham in honour of Baba Kundeshwar, a revered religious figure in the state, as demanded by local residents. The demand to change names of various cities and places gained momentum after the Centre agreed to the state government's request to rename Habibganj railway station in Bhopal as Rani Kamalapati station after the famous Gond queen last year. The Prime Minister had inaugurated the renamed railway station, redeveloped with airport-like amenities, in November 2021.

MP removes cap on marriage gatherings, night curfew to continue

■ After reviewing the prevailing Covid situation in the state, the Madhya Pradesh government on Friday removed the cap on the number of guests attending wedding ceremonies.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After reviewing the prevailing Covid situation in the state, the Madhya Pradesh govern-

ment on Friday removed the cap on the number of guests attending wedding ceremonies.

The review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took note of the declining trend in the number of daily Covid cases in the state.

Following the meeting, the state home department on Friday evening issued a fresh notification lifting restrictions at marriage functions. Earlier, a total of 250 guests were allowed to attend weddings.

The fresh guidelines will come into effect from February 5. "Considering the present situation of Covid-19

in Madhya Pradesh, the government has decided to lift its earlier decision to allow only 250 guests for marriages," the notification read.

The new rule is applicable only on marriage functions. All other gatherings -- political, social or religious -- will continue to follow the 250 attendees cap.

The night curfew will continue to be in place from 11 pm to 5 am. Similarly, only 50 people can gather at funerals, while rallies and protest demonstrations continue to be prohibited till further orders. The state reported 6,516 new Covid-19 cases and 8,451 recoveries in the last 24 hours.

BIRTHDAYS OF VILLAGE AND CITY IS LIKE A PRIDE DAY FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS: CM

■ To begin from Jait village of Sehore district
■ People will be connected with plantation
■ Maulshri, Cassia, Gulmohar and Saptaparni saplings planted in smart garden

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the idea to celebrate the birthday of any city or village is an environment and development friendly idea. The birthday of a village or town will be like a pride day for the people living there. This is being started from Jait village of Sehore district in the state. According to the proposed programme on February 8, Chouhan will plant saplings with the citizens in his native village Jait. In future, such programme will also be held in other places, which will also become an opportunity for the local citizens to take a pledge to contribute for the progress of their village and town.

Chief Minister gave this information by planting saplings in Smart Udyan on Saturday. Chouhan along with a team of Zee News planted saplings of Maulshri, Cassia, Gulmohar and Saptaparni. Chief Minister congratulated the team of Zee

News. Zee News MP-CG Editor Mohit Sinha, Pramod Sharma, Shri Vasu Choure etc. were present. Chouhan said that people should plant saplings on their birthdays and birthdays of family members and on the birth anniversary and death anniversary of deceased family members. Apart from this, the work of planting saplings can also be done on auspicious occasions like engagement and marriage. After planting saplings, people should also take care of them. We all have to work together to increase greenery. Arrangements have also been made in the Ankur Abhiyan to plant a sapling, upload its picture on the website and to record the details regarding the



development of the plant from time to time. A large number of citizens of the state are joining this campaign. Chouhan said that from Narmada Jayanti last year, he had started a campaign to plant one sapling every day, which he is still continuing. This effort to protect the environment will be continued. There may be a change in its form, but the message of expansion of greenery will definitely continue to reach the common man through one or the other medium. Chief Minister said that the temperature of the earth has been predicted to increase by two degree Celsius by the year 2050. The earth is in trouble. In view of this, we all have to make con-

certed efforts to keep the environment clean and ensure that the carbon emissions turn to zero. Chouhan said that today energy conservation is also necessary. The initiative of a waste-to-CNG plant in Indore is a step in this direction. We also have to protect our rivers. Like Ganga ji, efforts will be made in Madhya Pradesh for natural farming on the banks of Narmada.

Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh is like a temple for him. Daughters are like a boon to us. Earlier, the sex ratio in Madhya Pradesh was 914 per thousand, which has increased to 956, it means, we are getting good results of encouraging the birth of girls. Ladli Laxmi Yojana was implemented in Madhya Pradesh. Muskaan Abhiyan is an initiative to save the girl child from crimes. Along with this, many important programmes are being run for the education and health of the girl child. Girls are also getting involved in environmental protection. Many social organizations have come forward for plantation in Bhopal. Daughters are also playing an important role in this. The responsibility of saving the environment can be fulfilled only when we take out time for this work. Strong will-power can get us such time. Today, many organizations doing good work in the environmental sector have come out.



Rachel Zegler didn't expect to land Snow White role

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Rachel Zegler has revealed that she was never expecting to land the role of 'Snow White' in Disney's live-action remake of the classic story.

The 20-year-old actress will play the titular role in Disney's live-action remake of the iconic fairytale. In a conversation with Andrew Garfield for Variety's 'Actors on Actors' series, she said: "Never in a million years did I imagine that this would be a possibility for me."

"You don't normally see Snow Whites that are of Latin descent. Even though Snow White is really a big deal in Spanish-speaking countries, 'Blancanieves' is a huge icon whether you're talking about the Disney cartoon or just different iterations and the Grimm fairy tale and all the stories that

come with it." But you don't particularly see people who look like me or are me playing roles like that." Zegler's casting as the classic character sparked a backlash from some users on social media but the 'West Side Story' star says she is determined to win over them with her performance in the film, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She recalled: "When it was announced, it was a huge thing that was trending on Twitter for days, because all of the people were angry. We need to love them in the right direction. At the end of the day, I have a job to do that I'm really excited to do. I get to be a Latina princess."

The live-action remake of 'Snow White' has also caused controversy after criticism from actor Peter Dinklage, who suffers from a form of dwarfism known as achondroplasia, which took him at the story's "f**ing backwards" depiction of dwarfs.



ZENDAYA'S 'EUPHORIA' GETS THE NOD FOR THIRD SEASON

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Zendaya-starrer teen drama 'Euphoria' has been greenlit for a third season at HBO. The show, based on an Israeli miniseries of the same name, is a big success. It enjoys an overwhelming social media traction but it also generates buzz on a weekly basis as the season progresses.

The first three installments of Season 2 have nearly doubled in per-episode viewership in comparison to its freshman season, reports Variety.

Francesca Orsi, executive vice president, HBO Programming, said in a statement accessed by Variety, "Sam, Zendaya, and the entire cast and crew of 'Euphoria' have taken Season 2 to extraordinary heights, challenging narrative convention and form, while maintaining its heart. We couldn't be more honored to work with this gifted, wildly talented team or more excited to continue our journey with them into Season 3."

'Euphoria' tells the story of a 17-year-old drug addict Rue played by Zendaya, and her pursuit to find hope and survive while balancing the pressures and confusions of love and loss amidst her circle of friends and enemies in the town of East Highland.

Nina Dobrev joins Aaron Eckhart in action-thriller 'The Bricklayer'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Nina Dobrev has joined Aaron Eckhart in action-thriller 'The Bricklayer', which will start next month in Europe. 'Cliffhanger' and 'Die Hard 2' filmmaker Renny Harlin is directing the movie, which The Expendables outfit Millennium Media is producing with Gerard Butler after both teamed up with Eckhart on the lucrative 'Has Fallen' franchise, reports deadline.com.

In 'The Bricklayer', someone is blackmailing the CIA by assassinating foreign journalists and making it look like the agency is responsible. As the world begins to unite against the US, the CIA must lure its most brilliant and rebellious operative out of retirement, forcing him to confront his checkered past while unraveling an international conspiracy.

The film will be shot at Millennium's Nu Boyana Greece studio and its Nu Boyana Bulgaria facility. Screenplay comes from Hanna Weg and Matt Johnson.

Producers are G-Base's Alan Siegel, Butler and Danielle Robinson; Eclectic Pictures' Heidi Jo Markel; and Millennium Media's Jeffrey Greenstein, Les Weldon, Jonathan Yunger, Yariv Lerner and Rob Van Norden. Avi Lerner, Trevor Short, Boaz Davidson and Tanner Mobley from Millennium are executive producers.

Bulgarian-born Canadian actress Dobrev is best known for her roles in the 'The Vampire Diaries', 'Deglass: The Next Generation' and Summit's 'Perks of Being a Wallflower'. Recent work include Netflix's 'Love Hard' and 'Redeeming Love' while upcoming are Netflix's 'The Out-Law' and comedy 'The Reunion'.



MATT REEVES: THE BATMAN'S RIDDLER HAS 'TERRORIST ASPECT'

Los Angeles | Agencies

The Batman filmmaker Matt Reeves says Paul Dano's version of the Riddler has "a terrorist aspect to him". Reeves told Total Film magazine: "He's not just a serial killer. He definitely has a political agenda. There's a terrorist aspect to him."



"He's indicting the city for what it is. And one of the things he's doing with each of these crimes is, he's attacking the so-called legitimate pillars of the city."

"The whole point of it was to put (Batman) on the path of trying to solve a mystery that was not only going to reveal the history of the city, and why it's so corrupt, but that also is going to turn at a point, and become actually quite personal."

Meanwhile, Reeves said he took inspiration from 'Mindhunter' and the Zodiac killer when it comes to Riddler's costume in the new movie, which is a departure from the outfits worn by the likes of Frank Gorshin and John Astin in the 1960s TV series, or Jim Carrey in 'Batman Forever', reports femalefirst.co.uk.

He explained: "I read 'Mindhunter'. It made me think of the Zodiac killer, and how he actually wore this primitive costume that really is a primitive superhero costume... a rogue's galley costume."

"And I was like, 'Oh, that's really scary, the idea of people really wearing masks, and withholding their identities, and terrorising people and how scary that is.'"

"And so I started thinking, 'Well, it could be an origin tale for the Riddler, and it could be an origin tale for some of these other characters.'"

Dakota Johnson to play first female superhero in universe of Marvel characters

Los Angeles | Agencies

After the massive success of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home', Sony is looking to expand on its universe of Marvel characters as sources say that actress Dakota Johnson is in talks to star in the studio's Madame Web movie.

S.J. Clarkson is on board to direct it. Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless penned the screenplay, reports deadline.com.

In the comics, Madame Web is depicted as an elderly woman with myasthenia gravis and thus was connected to a life support system that looked like a spider web. Due to her age and medical condition, Madame Web never actively fought any villains.

For that reason, sources have stressed it's possible the project could turn into something else. Insiders say due to her psychic sensory powers, she is essentially Sony's version of Doctor Strange.

Either way, getting a female-driven property in Sony's universe of Marvel characters has always been a top priority for studio brass given the long list of strong female characters that appear in these comics throughout the years.

Sony executives have taken their time in figuring out who would land the title role, meeting with a number of A-listers. In the last two months, the list has been cut down, with Johnson gaining front-runner status right before the holiday.



Cate Blanchett, Danny Kennedy to host climate podcast

Los Angeles | Agencies

Celebrated actress and producer Cate Blanchett is all set to co-create and co-

host a climate podcast along with climate entrepreneur and activist Danny Kennedy.

The deal has been signed between Audible and Blanchett's Dirty Films (in association with StoryHunter). The first part of the series will be launched globally in April ahead of Earth Day (April 22).

The podcast, which will be titled 'Climate of Change with Cate Blanchett and Danny Kennedy', will feature thinkers, innovators and high-profile guests. It has got the nod from Audible for its two seasons.

Audible is an American online audiobook and podcast service that allows users to purchase and stream audiobooks and other forms of spoken word content.

The podcast will also feature an exclusive sound track by Grammy Award-winning electronic artist Imogen Heap.

From women-led energy solutions in Uganda, to a Navajo solar farm in the Arizona desert, to ideas that could transform the global fashion industry, Cate and Danny will be heard offering surprising, uplifting stories of iron-clad grit and resilience.

The two will interview guests along the way, as they discuss the biggest challenges humankind face and the incredible and ground-breaking work being done to tackle the crisis.

On her association with Danny, Cate said: "This podcast is a joyous extension of a long-standing friendship that all of us at Dirty Films have had with the wonderful Danny Kennedy."

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Christine McGuinness



INDIA'S TEMPLATE IN FOCUS AS THEY FACE WEST INDIES IN LANDMARK 1000TH ODI

Ahmedabad | Agencies

The much-talked template of India will be in focus as they face the West Indies in their landmark 1000th One-day International in the form of a series opener at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday. After being blanked 3-0 by South Africa in the ODI series in January, India would be back to playing in the comfort and familiarity of home conditions as they seek to shape their template in the format.

India's way of working in the ODIs has been the top-order getting the bulk of runs and then expect the middle-order to cash on it. But in the series against South Africa, neither of them worked with the middle-order becoming a glaring point of weakness. Skipper Rohit Sharma, in a virtual press conference on Saturday, said he doesn't think that the template will undergo drastic changes due to the loss in South Africa. Sharma's return, after a left hamstring injury, is expected to boost the top-order with Ishan Kishan now confirmed as his open-



ing partner in absence of Shikhar Dhawan and Rituraj Gaikwad (down with Covid-19) and Mayank Agarwal still in quarantine.

Barring a career-best 85 from Rishabh Pant in the second ODI at Paarl, India's middle-order didn't have much of an impact against South Africa. With Shreyas Iyer unavailable due to Covid-19, there is a chance for Suryakumar Yadav, who did well in his lone outing at Cape Town, to get an extended run in the middle-order.

subsequently underwent a knee surgery. With Sharma stressing that Yadav won't be rushed into action, it will be a toss-up between off-spinner Washington Sundar or young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi to pair up with Yuzvendra Chahal.

With Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah rested, Thakur and Chahal are frontrunners for the fast bowlers' slots. That leaves Prasad Krishna, Mohammed Siraj and uncapped Avesh Khan in a three-way fight for the third pacer's spot.

Squads:

India: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Deepak Chahal, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohd. Siraj, Prasad Krishna, Avesh Khan, Ishan Kishan, Shahrukh Khan.

West Indies: Shai Hope (wicket-keeper), Brandon King, Nicholas Pooran, Shamarh Brooks, Darren Bravo, Kieron Pollard (captain), Jason Holder, Fabian Allen, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Alzarri Joseph, Akeal Hosein, Hayden Walsh, Kumar Roach and Nkrumah Bonner

It was such an impactful moment in my life: Kohli on being picked by RCB

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India batter Virat Kohli has revealed that being picked by his current IPL side Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) was an impactful moment in his life. Kohli was speaking about his experiences of how being picked by the franchise changed his life in a podcast of 10 episodes created by the RCB side released on Saturday.

"I was in Malaysia for the World Cup, and I remember the day when the drafts were happening. The Under-19 dynamic was a little different because we rightly had a huge pay gap. That was the only time there was cap on how much can a player be picked for if you have not played for India. Even that moment, for players like us, was so amazing because when they revealed the amount we got picked for, we are surprised and couldn't believe it," said Kohli in one of the episodes of the podcast.

Before the start of the inaugural edition of the IPL in 2008, Kohli was captaining the India U-19 side in the 2008 Men's U-19 World Cup in Malaysia. Though Delhi Daredevils (now Capitals) showed interest in signing Kohli, they went to sign his



fellow Delhiite Pradeep Sangwan and Kohli was then picked by RCB on a contract of USD 30,000.

"Delhi team, who was initially interested in me later went for Pradeep Sangwan as their dynamic of the squad demanded for a left-arm seamer and our best during the Under-19 campaign. So, since Delhi decided to strengthen their bowling department, RCB picked me and it was such an impactful moment in my life which I didn't realise then, but when I look back, things would

have been very different to what they are now. I would not have it any other way than this," added Kohli.

Australia batter Glenn Maxwell, one of the three retained players by RCB ahead of the 2022 IPL Auctions, threw light on how playing in the glittering league changed his life.

"IPL has changed my life in an amazing way. Some of the heroes and the people I have admired throughout my career, I have got a chance to play for, against and playing under them.

National motorcycle racing

Rajini Krishnan claims 10th National title after a decade

Chennai | Agencies

Veteran Rajini Krishnan (RACR Castrol Power1 Ultimate) scripted a masterclass ride and though he finished third in the premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc category despite a crash, he did just enough to claim his 10th National title and his first in a decade on Saturday. It was the 41-year-old Chennai star's first National crown in 10 years and came on the concluding day of the fifth and final round of the MMSC fmsci Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship at the MMRT, here.

Also annexing the National titles was 19-year-old Chennai collegian Alwin Sundar (AS Motorsports) in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category despite finishing second behind Allwin Xavier (Sparks Racing) who thus completed a triple crown.

In the Girls' category, Ryhana Bee (RACR Castrol Power1 Ultimate), also from Chennai, marked her comeback season after a year's absence due to injury, by winning the fifth consecutive race. She had sealed the championship after Round 4 but ensured that she closed the season on a winning note.

Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) had assured himself of the National title, his 10th, on Friday after finishing third in the Pro-Stock 165cc category. In the second race on Saturday, he cruised to fourth. KY Ahamed led a 1-2 finish for TVS Racing with Deepak Ravikumar second, while Rajiv Sethu (Idemitsu Honda SK69 Racing) came in third.

Rajini Krishnan, who needed just four points to annex the championship going into the final round, had a roller-coaster weekend, marked by crashes in both the races. In the first out-



ing on Friday, he crashed to finish 12th, and without a point. In the second race on Saturday, starting from P12, he moved to second but hit an oil patch on the last lap. However, he jumped back on to finish third behind Rahil Shetty (Gusto Racing) and Anish Damodara Shetty (Race Concepts), to earn 15 valuable points. Anish Shetty crossed the finish line first, but he dropped to second following a five-second penalty for an infringement, elevating Rahil to the top step of the podium. Rajini, who had made his National Championship debut in 2003, topped the leaderboard with 183 points and six wins, followed by Anish Shetty (164) and Rahil Shetty (156)

SINDHU INDUCTS FATHER PV RAMANA, SHYAM SUNDER RAO INTO VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE HALL OF FAME



Hyderabad: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu inducted Arjuna awardee PV Ramana, her father, and Dronacharya awardee Shyam Sunder Rao into the Prime Volleyball League Hall of Fame on Saturday.

The League honoured two of the greatest Indian volleyball players during the opening ceremony at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad. Minister for Sports in Telangana V. Srinivas Goud also graced the opening ceremony in Hyderabad and declared the Prime Volleyball League open. Seven franchisees, namely Calicut Heroes, Kochi Blue Spikers, Ahmedabad Defenders, Hyderabad Black Hawks, Chennai Blitz, Bengaluru Torpedoes and Kolkata Thunderbolts will battle it out for the trophy from February 5-27. The competition will be held in a robust bio-bubble and all the safety measures for Covid-19 have been put in place. The tournament will consist of 24 matches with Hyderabad Black Hawks taking on the Kochi Blue Spikers in the opening match. All the teams will play each of the other teams once before the top four teams qualify for the Semi-Finals. The knockouts will be played on February 24 and 25.

'Play with an open heart,' : Vandana Katariya

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Play with an open heart and don't be afraid of making mistakes. We learn from our mistakes so we should not be afraid of them." Indian women's hockey team forward Vandana Katariya, the first Indian woman to score a hat-trick in the Olympics, has this piece of advice for the team that finished in third place at the recently concluded 2022 Asia Cup.

The forward, born to a Dalit family with her father working as a master technician for Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) in Haridwar, was honoured with the Padma Shri this year.

Despite challenging circumstances, Vandana scored a hat-trick at the Olympics in a match against South Africa during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. She also has the distinction of being part of the team that won a gold medal at the 2017 Asia Cup as well as the team that won a silver medal at the 2018 Asian Games, a truly meteoric rise for the 29-year-old.

Her successes, however, didn't come without setbacks. She was subjected to several casteist slurs from upper caste men in her village Roshanabad after losing to



Argentina in the semi-finals of the summer Olympics in Tokyo. The men even went so far as to blame the loss on their being too many Dalit players in the team.

Vandana has put that in the past though, and shares her excitement at being awarded the Padma Shri. "I didn't even know that I was going to get the award," she says. "I had gone on a team dinner and found out when I got several messages on my phone." She credits her achievements to the support of her team and the government and dedicates the Padma Shri in particular to her father, who sadly passed away in 2020 during training for the Olympics. "We went to the Asia Cup thinking we have to do our best," says Vandana of the hockey team, adding that despite not winning the trophy the team learnt a lot during the competition.

PKL 8: U MUMBA BEAT TAMIL THALAIVAS TO IMPROVE PLAYOFF CHANCES



Bengaluru: Former champions U Mumba beat Tamil Thalaivas 35-33 on Day 7 in Pro Kabaddi League Season 8's Rivalry Week here on Saturday. Thalaivas fought valiantly after a dismal first half to make it a close affair in the final minutes. But Mumbai's captain Fazel Atrachali marshalled his defence well to ensure they walked away with all five points in the race for a playoff spot.

Abhishek Singh scored 10 points for Mumbai while defenders Rinku, Atrachali and Rahul Sethpal had three points each. Thalaivas raiders Manjeet and Ajinkya Pawar had seven points each.

The first half was completely dominated by U Mumba with their raiders Abhishek Singh and Ajith Kumar finding easy points from a disjointed Tamil defence. Abhishek's hand touches gave Mumbai an early lead, but Sagar's Super Tackle helped Thalaivas stay in the match. But Ajith Kumar, playing against his former team, donned the secondary raider's role to perfection and ensured Mumbai got their first all-out in the 9th minute to open a six-point lead.

Abhishek Singh's heroic three-point Super Raid paved the way for another all-out with four minutes remaining for the interval. Thalaivas had no control in the first - perhaps best summed by captain But Mumbai's Atrachali and Harendra Kumar clinched two successful tackles to take the match away from Thalaivas' grasp. U Mumba will breathe a huge sigh of relief after almost squandering a 15-point lead. The win will also help the Season 2 champions improve their chances of a playoff spot.

La Liga: Big test for Barca and Atletico Madrid; Benzema back for Real

FC Barcelona and Atletico Madrid will play a key game between them on Sunday as they look to ensure a place in the top-four of La Liga and next season's Champions League.



Madrid | Agencies

Barcelona will be without injured Ansu Fati, Clement Lenglet and Memphis Depay, but will have all of their January signings available, with Dani Alves, Ferran Torres and Adama Traore all likely to start. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's lack of football action over the past couple of months means he will probably begin the game on the bench.



Xavi Hernandez's side has produced moments of good football since he replaced Ronald Koeman, but they need to consolidate these performances, although Atletico promises to be a difficult rival to overcome. Diego Simeone's men ended a run of poor results with two injury-time goals to take three points against Valencia two weeks ago, and the visit to the Camp Nou will show if that was a one-off or a real turning point



in their irregular season. Real Madrid are also in action on Sunday as they entertain Granada, and the La Liga leaders have Karim Benzema back after he missed their Copa del Rey defeat to Athletic Club Bilbao with a hamstring problem. Ferland Mendy's muscle problem means Marcelo will start at left-back allowing David Alaba to return to central defense, while Dani Carvajal is expected to return on the right for Lucas Vazquez.

Tata Open Maharashtra Sousa ends Ymer's dream run, sets up title clash with Ruusuvuori



Pune | Agencies

Portugal's Joao Sousa drew on his experience to end Elias Ymer's sensational run at the 2022 Tata Open Maharashtra with a remarkable three-set win to enter the singles final at the Balewadi Stadium here on Saturday. Sousa fought back from a set down to win the nail-biting semi-final 5-7, 7-6(4), 7-5 at the fourth edition of South Asia's only ATP-250 event organised by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association. He will take on sixth-seeded Emil Ruusuvuori in the

summit clash on Sunday. Earlier, Ruusuvuori held his nerve during the crucial second-set tie-breaker to secure a hard-fought 6-3, 7-6(0) victory against Kamil Majchrzak and seal his berth in the final.

The final matches of singles, as well as doubles categories, will be played on Sunday.

The top-seeded Australian duo of Luke Saville and John-Patrick Smith have already secured their place in the final when they defeated Mukund Sasikumar and Friday night.



ISHA KOPPIKAR MAKES SELF-LOVE A PRIORITY THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

Team Absolute | Chennai

Actress Isha Koppikar Narang will be taking time off her busy schedule to engage in self love this Valentine's day. She says it is a huge priority. Isha said: "Self Love is a huge priority and this valentine's, I am going to do that. I have so many things and people to care for. If I am not at my best and don't care for myself, I would be burnt out and won't be able to help those that I am accountable for."

"One needs to love and celebrate oneself first. We always care for others but what we neglect is to look after our well being as well. There is no one else that we should depend on for that."

The actress, who has worked in films such as 'Krishna Cottage' and 'Ek Vivaaha Aisa Bhi', says she would try to do some detox and allow her energies to rejuvenate and reflect a bit.

"Just being with oneself and spending time forgiving oneself can be a form of self love. Let's care for the community but first, we should be perfectly fine."

I AM CELEBRATING EVERY INCH, EVERY CURVE: ILEANA D'CRUZ

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ileana D'Cruz shared a picture of herself in a red bikini and has talked about body positivity as she says she is celebrating every inch and curve.

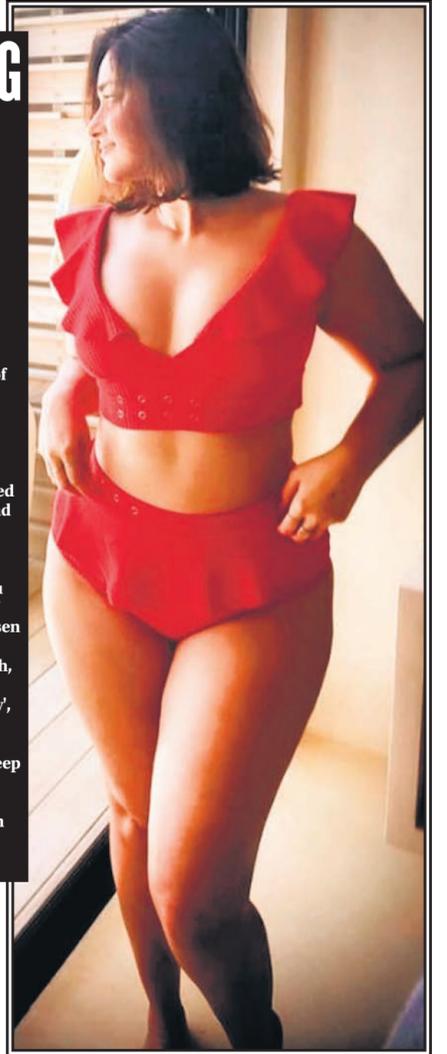
Ileana posted the picture of herself on Instagram, where she is seen flaunting her curves. She even talked about how she deleted applications which make one look 'toned' and 'slimmer'.

The actress wrote alongside the powerful picture: "So easy to get sucked into apps that get you alter body so effortlessly to make you look 'slimmer', 'more toned' etc etc. Proud of the fact that I've deleted those apps and chosen this instead."

"This is me and I am celebrating every inch, every curve, all of me."

Ileana will next be seen in 'Unfair N Lovely', a comic take on India's obsession with fair skin. The film is set against the backdrop of Haryana and features Ileana opposite Randeep Hooda.

She also has a film with Indian-American sensation Sendhil Ramamurthy, Vidya Balan and Pratik Gandhi. It is a romantic comedy-drama film.



Varun Sharma welcomes furry companion on his birthday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood's young comedy king Varun Sharma, who celebrates his birthday on Friday, turned a dog parent as his mother gifted him a 55-day-old Shih Tzu pup. The actor always wanted to have a furry companion. Talking about the pup, the actor said: "All my childhood, I have been after my mother to get me a puppy. She'd say that one day when I can shoulder the responsibility, she'd get me one. Over the years as I joined movies and life got busier, I kept the plan of being a pet parent on hold. With long schedules, relentless work days, it felt like a distant dream."

He added: "This time, when I got home and found this little ball of energy running towards me, I felt the happiest I have ever been. It's a sense of growing up that my mother trusts me to take care of a puppy and more than anything I know I am ready to be a pet parent."

On the work front, the actor has 'Cirkus' and 'Fukrey' as well as an untitled film lined up for release.



RANBIR KAPOOR IS A 'BEST BOYFRIEND EVER': ALIA BHATT

Mumbai: Actress Alia Bhatt has called actor Ranbir Kapoor 'best boyfriend ever' after he was pictured copying her signature pose from the upcoming film 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'.

Alia posted a picture on her Instagram story shared by one of her fan clubs. It features Ranbir and Alia in two different images doing a namaste pose from the film as their backs are towards the camera.

On the image, she wrote: "Best Boyfriend Ever".

'Gangubai Kathiawadi' is inspired by the life of Gangubai Kothewali, 'madam' of a brothel in Mumbai's Kamathipura, and is based on a chapter of Hussain Zaidi's book 'Mafia Queens Of Mumbai'. The film is all set to have its much-awaited world premiere at the prestigious 72nd Berlin International Film Festival. The movie also stars Ajay Devgn and is produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Dr Jayantilal Gada (Pen Studios).

'THE GREAT INDIAN MURDER': BRILLIANTLY MOUNTED, BUT THE OUTCOME OF THE CASE LEAVES YOU DISAPPOINTED



FILM REVIEW

BY TROY RIBEIRO

(Streaming on Zee5)

Direction: Tigmanshu Dhulia.

Cast: Richa Chadha, Pratik Gandhi, Jatin Goswami, Ashutosh Rana, Raghuvir Yadav, Shashank Arora, Sharib Hashmi, Amey Wagh, Paoli Dam and Mani PR.

Duration: Average 47 minutes per episode (nine episodes in all).

Ratings: *** (three stars)

This nine-episode series directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia is an adaptation of the book, 'Six Suspects', authored by the former diplomat, Vikas Swarup, who also wrote 'Q&A', which was adapted by Danny Boyle for 'The Slumdog Millionaire'.

It follows the investigation of a high-profile murder. While the book was inspired by the Jessica Lal murder case that shook Delhi in the late 1990s, the series is a toned-down version of what actually happened then.

Narrated in a non-linear format, the series begins in New Delhi, 2018. Vicky Rai, the playboy Chairman of Rai Industries and son of the Home Minister of Chhattisgarh, gets involved in a scandal with a famous Hindi film actress, following which two bodies of young girls are found in the boot of his car. He

is arrested but soon acquitted.

To celebrate his acquittal, he throws a party at his farmhouse in Delhi. During the celebrations, he is shot dead.

Munna Chaurasiya, a guy with a dubious character pretending to be a waiter at the party, and Eketi, a tribal from the Andamans, who is in town in search of a stolen idol, are arrested for possessing guns at the time of the incident. They are the immediate suspects.

The case is handed over to the CBI investigator Suraj Yadav and Sudha Bharadwaj, the investigating officer from Delhi Police. Sudha is assisted by her deputy, Munjot.

As the three of them dig their heels into the case, they stumble

upon Mohan Kumar, a retired IAS officer who was a Chief Secretary and is now suffering from DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder). He was also present at the party with a gun.

With live-wire performances and interesting character expositions taking place across the country, the narrative keeps you glued to the screen. Your heart bleeds for Munna, his sister Champi as well as for Eketi, and you appreciate the sincerity of Sudha Bharadwaj and Munjot. But when you realise how corrupt Suraj Yadav is, your blood boils. What holds your attention to the series is the bunch of suspects and their interaction with the investigating officers. The plot puts us through a constant

back-and-forth of gaining and losing sympathy for each of them. The writing also interestingly interweaves in the political scenario and the events of the period to make the tale relatable.

The pace of the first two episodes is racy, but by the third episode, the tempo falls, and the narrative meanders gradually. The lack of subtitles for the Tamil dialogues in the fourth episode is a killjoy.

On the acting front, every actor in the series delivers a sincere performance.

Overall, the series, despite being brilliantly crafted and astutely mounted, leaves you disappointed because of the outcome of the case.



IT'S ALL ABOUT PUSHING BOUNDARIES: SONU SOOD

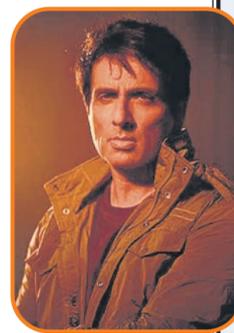
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Well-known Bollywood actor Sonu Sood, who will helm the 18th season of the adventure reality show 'MTV Roadies', says it captures the spirit of young people who strive to push their boundaries.

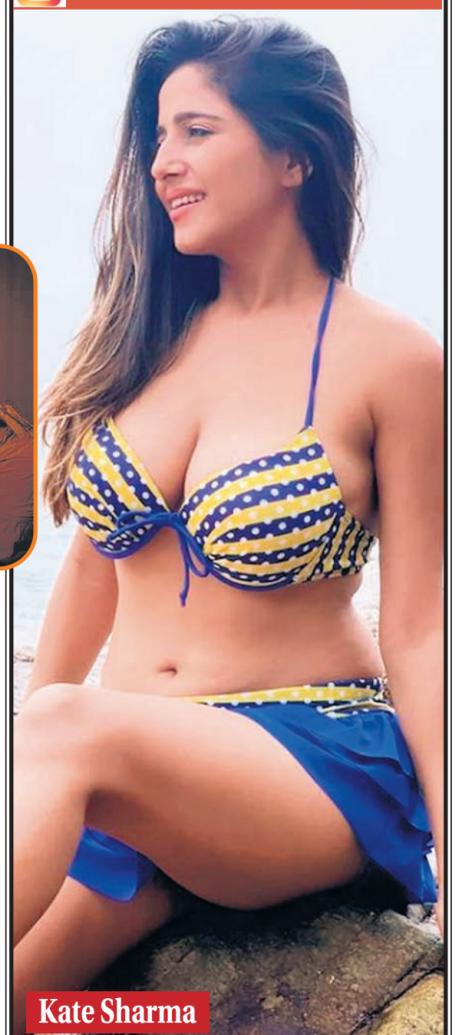
The actor has replaced Rannvijay Singha, who was synonymous with the show for the past 17 years.

Sharing his excitement on hosting 'MTV Roadies', Sood said: "The show is imbued with the phenomenal spirit of young people who dare to challenge their limits. The new season is going to be high on adrenaline and adventure and will leave viewers on the edge of their seats." He added: "The show comes with an infectious energy; something that'll inspire me at every step to push my limits as well. I am thrilled to host the upcoming season and take the contestants through this South African expedition."

The new season will be shot in South Africa, it will have some unprecedented twists and turns, where the actor will lead the way for an enthralling new journey across the thrilling landscape of South Africa -- beaches, mountains, rivers, bays, harbours, deserts and dense forests. The shoot of 'Roadies Season 18' will begin in the second week of February 2022 in South Africa and the show will go live in March on MTV India.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kate Sharma