

FEBRUARY EDITION 2024

Midlands

The challenge of making an informed choice — Authentic vs Self-Certified halal





this winter (I-r) Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and Chair of the WMCA; Mayank Gupta, director of DryWall, and Stephen Simkins,

ader of Wolverhampton Council

6 top tips

to help you

save money

and energy

family-run Black Country manufacturer has moved and doubled the **Size of its factory, following a £7.59 million investment from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA),** Drywall Steel Sections, which has invested alongside the WMCA into the wider £13 million scheme, has moved to a

new 39,850 sq ft factory built on four-and-a-half acres of brownfield land in Ettingshall, Wolverhampton.

The firm was previously based in Cradley Heath, Dudley, for more than ten years but had outgrown the facility, which was also no longer fit for purpose for its modern production methods.

The factory manufactures light gauge steel framing for the construction industry (including modular housing), as well as steel products for wall partitions and ceilings. It also has an engineering department, DrySpec, which specialises in designing and detailing steel framing for a vast range of

buildings across the country. The investment is the latest to be made by the WMCA as part of its nationally leading 'brownfield first' regeneration programme. The programme helps unlock and transform former industrial land by cleaning it up in order to create more jobs and high quality affordable homes. Andy Street, Mayor for the West Midlands, and Chair of the WMCA, said:

Manufacturers like Drywall are incredibly important to our regional economy which is why we use the money we secure from government to support those businesses who want to grow and generate new jobs for local people.

Continued on page 6

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The challenge of making an

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By Halal Food Authority UK

When it comes to making food choices, effort is always made to go for the best based on an informed decision.

This article is a humble effort to enhance consumer awareness on the Halal Certification process so that they are aware of the difference between self-proclaimed halal and certified halal.

Certification plays a decisive role in buying choices as it inspires consumer's trust and confidence because of the transparency and verifiability of the process. There are different halal standards, that are a prerequisite of access for clients and manufacturers who want to trade in a specific country to meet its demand and grasp the market.

A product certified by a competent and well-established halal certification body is accepted globally without any need for further investigation or verification.

Product approval is a very sensitive process that requires focussed and in-depth analysis which is only possible under a competent and experienced technical team.

Halal certification bodies have a well-structured and highly organised system for product approval which is the first step towards halal certification.

Product submissions as well as supporting documents are reviewed and scrutinised by highly qualified, trained and experienced food technologists. Halal certification is the basis for making and maintaining a halal claim. In this lieu, self-proclaimed halal

food is not only a challenge for the food industry but a big threat for consumers' health too as it comes without any authenticity or verifiability.

One may find a number of some self-proclaimed halal products simply bearing an inscription of The Arabic word that neither stands for any halal certification body nor represents any traceability or any authenticable process of ensuring halal standards.

On the other, halal certification bodies put more financial and human resources to ensure product authenticity which is almost impossible in the case of selfproclaimed products.

They have designed a detailed process of reviewing and approving product documents, verifying sites through surveillance audits to evaluate the halal control point (HCP) and ensuring that product and manufacturing processes fulfill the requirements of halal standards.

The halal products approved by Halal certification bodies depict specific logos/ symbols that are identifiable and traceable. These bodies ensure halal authenticity from farm to fork and provide detailed records from raw materials to

finished products. Throughout the process, due consideration is given to ensure that product labelling does not create any confusion in the Muslim community. Labels are scrutinised and approved to put on products that are approved by a halal certification body before releasing a product to the market.

Halal information is not just in the English language but is bilingual or even multilingual to ascertain the traceability of the products in every possible manner and help consumers understand the label in a better way.

Hidden ingredients such as processing aids, anti-caking agents, carriers, and incidental ingredients

Self-proclaimed halal food is not only a challenge for the food industry but a big threat for consumers' health too as it comes without any authenticity or verifiability.

from various sources present another from the market. serious problem for Muslim consumers.

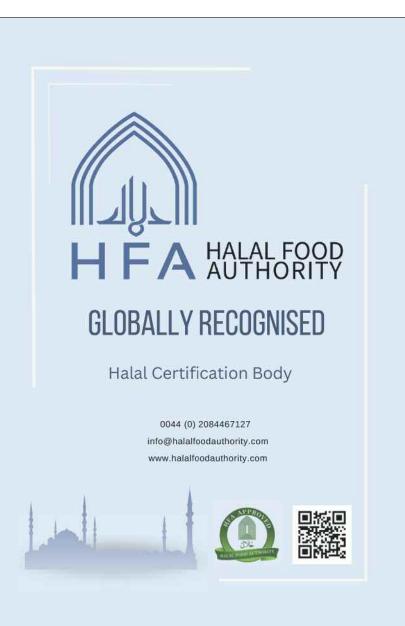
Magnesium or calcium stearates are used in the manufacturing of candy and chewing gum without mentioning the origin of the stearates.

Halal certification of the product, proper halal markings, and logos can clarify the doubt for consumers as it requires clear labelling of the source of the ingredients like gelatine, lecithin, mono & diglycerides, etc.

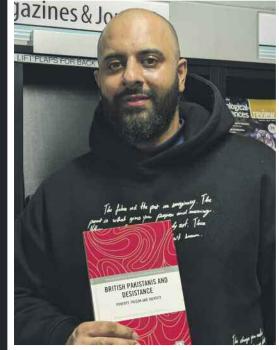
The animal source ingredients such as oils, fats, meat derivatives, or extracts like gelatine and rennet also need to be declared. A product with a halal-certified logo makes life easier for consumers to make prudent choices while purchasing products

The Halal-certified foods are monitored and certified from farm to form. The food supply chain and its related equipment are regularly examined, verified, and validated through halal audits. This exercise is conducted to eliminate any risk of haram (non-halal) food contamination.

Summing it up, one can safely say that simply labelling a product does not make it halal. Under any circumstances, the claim must be supported by some verifiable facts, and Halal Certification by an authorised body such as the Halal Food Authority, is the best answer to all the questions that may come to a consumer's mind before making a prudent choice.



• Pa Stan 17 114 is an expert on ga 12



British Pakistani criminals need this transition from somebody in more support from institutions including mosques to help prevent them from returning to prison, says the co-author of a book on the lives of gang members. 'British Pakistanis and Desistance -

Poverty, Prison and Identity' looks at the lives of men who offend, highlighting the events which led them to start breaking the law, continue offending and how they may struggle to move away from a life of reiso energy from a life of crime once they are released from prison.

Dr Mohammed Qasim MBE, an expert on gang culture, race and crime and a visiting research fellow at the University of Bradford's School of Social Sciences, said: "Most of the people we spoke to were genuinely remorseful of their crimes. "They are a lock of

"They said there was a lack of support for them finding work when they came out of prison. "We, as a Muslim community, need

to be doing so much more to support

prison to them stopping offending altogether. We have a duty to support them accordingly.

"The institutions need to better support their transition, mosques need to work closer with them and provide them with the support they require, even if it is simply signposting them.

"We need a proper support structure when they are released to society, so they don't re-offend.

"The Islamic faith has the potential to support young men from desisting from criminality and this needs reater attention." Dr Qasim lives in Swansea but grew

up in Manningham, Bradford, where he had previously gained access to a group of young Muslim men, known as The Boys, many of whom went onto commit crime

He reunited with some of the men and was introduced to younger members of the group for research for the book, which he co-wrote with Colin Webster, Emeritus Professor of Criminology at Leeds Beckett University, are co-authors of the book. The authors argue that the public

erception of male British Pakistani Muslims has changed over the last 35 years, from being seen as law-abiding people to now often considered to be associated with drug dealing and grooming girls.

They claim young Muslim men are increasingly linked to criminality and are seen as violent and aggressive.

In the book, the authors write: "The general social profile of the prison population is disproportionately found among young Pakistani men "British Pakistani Muslim young men who affected upon re-entry from prison proported that 'prisong work

prison reported that 'prisons' were made for people like us'." Dr Qasim added: "Desistance is to

try to stop people from offending. The reason why so many people have been to prison is often because of foolish mistakes and in some cases because of the pressures of making money

illegally. These people need support and care.

"It's important to support these people and show that there are other ways to make money and live lawabiding lives, so many of them are gifted young men with tremendous

The book is one of the first studies of desistance with British Pakistanis. It features accounts from both first and second-generation men who live in Bradford. The older men reveal what life was like for them when they arrived in the UK from Pakistan and worked in textile mills in Bradford.

It updates the lives of these men, now in their 60s, who left the mills and worked in industries including retail and catering. They are asked about raising sons in a social environment of unemployment and poverty.

The study looks at those who were jailed for their part in the 2001 Bradford riots and what impact their imprisonment had on their lives 20 years later. It discusses the early

imprisonment of people and the impact that it has on them.

Dr Qasim says he would like to hear more from those who have been released from prison and rehabilitated instead of returning to a life of crime. He added: "The findings have been

really interesting. Increasing numbers of British Pakistanis have become more interested in their faith while they have been in prison and this in some cases is the reason why they desist from offending behaviours.

Dr Qasim's previous books include 'Young, Muslim and Criminal: Experiences, Identities and Pathways into Crime'.

He features as an interviewee on VICE's 'The War on Drugs Show: The Albanian Mafia'. The programme has been viewed more than five million times in less than a year on YouTube.

British Pakistanis and Desistance -Poverty, Prison and Identity by Dr Mohammed Qasim and Colin Webster, published by Routledge, is available now from routledge.com. LOTTO

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Wolverhampton factory doubles in size

Cover story continued

"We are also continuing to protect our green belt by prioritising investment on the regeneration of brownfield sites like this one. It's important we clean up these sites to provide high quality affordable housing for local people and modern commercial premises for our businesses, helping to attract further investment into our region."

Drywall Steel Sections Ltd is part of a family-owned group of companies set up by Rajinder and Sunita Gupta more than 20 years ago. Since joining the business six years ago, their son Mayank has taken over as the managing director, and the firm is seeing new growth through fresh vigour. Mayank Gupta, who previously worked

Mayank Gupta, who previously worked in television production management and the financial sector before joining the family firm, said: "We are proud to bring Drywall Steel Sections Ltd's headquarters back to our home city of Wolverhampton.

"Our new headquarters is equipped to handle significantly more manufacturing capacity with a much more efficient production process, allowing us to remain competitive in the market. Alongside our family investment, we are most grateful to the WMCA for its support in unlocking this brownfield site.

"The new Drywall HQ and commercial starter units on G5 Industrial Park will help safeguard current jobs and provide a much improved facility for the existing team. It will also create new jobs, help smaller businesses to grow in brand new premises, and boost the region's economy.

"Our new headquarters is equipped to handle significantly more manufacturing capacity with a much more efficient production process, allowing us to remain competitive in the market."



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Record breaking 5.7 tonne cocaine seizure

The National Crime Agency and Border Force have made what is believed to be the biggest ever seizure of class A drugs in the UK.

The haul of 5.7 tonnes of cocaine was found in a container at Southampton Port on 8 February. Details can only now be released.

Specialist Border Force officers were called in to carry out the search by the NCA, who identified the shipment through it's Near Europe Task Force. The blocks of drugs were found hidden within a cargo of bananas which had been transported

from South America. NCA officers believe the haul was heading to the Port of Hamburg in Germany for onward delivery. Enquiries are ongoing with international partners across Europe with a view to identifying the criminal networks involved. Based on UK street-level prices the cocaine would likely have had an estimated value in excess of £450

million. The previous largest UK seizures saw 3.7 tonnes of cocaine also found at Southampton in 2022, and 3.2 tonnes found on-board the tug boat MV Hamal in Scotland in 2015.

The domestic cocaine market is dominated by criminal gangs who the NCA believe to be making around £4 billion a year in the UK alone.

Cocaine trafficking is closely linked to serious violence throughout the supply chain, including firearms and knife crime in the UK. The cocaine trade has seen an exponential rise in associated violence in the past few

years. NCA Director Chris Farrimond said: "This record-breaking seizure will represent a huge hit to the international organised crime cartels involved, denying them massive profits. The work of the NCA was crucial to making it happen.

"While the destination for the consignment was continental Europe in this case, I have no doubt that a significant proportion would have ended up back here in the UK, being peddled by UK criminal gangs. "The NCA is targeting international

networks upstream and overseas, disrupting and dismantling them at every step. International law enforcement co-operation is essential to this mission.

"Working closely with UK partners

like Border Force, we are determined to do all we can to protect the UK public

Minister for Legal Migration and the Border, Tom Pursglove MP, said: "This government takes a zero-tolerance approach to the supply of illegal drugs, and I am grateful to dedicated Border Force officers and the NCA for their

Force officers and the NCA for their work to apprehend this record-breaking seizure. "This seizure sends a clear message to criminals that they will be caught. Our Border Force officers continue to work relentlessly to protect our borders and ensure the safety and security of the public." the public." The NCA's Near Europe Task Force

The NCA's Near Europe Task Force is a team funded through the Home Office Drug Strategy to focus on the international supply of drugs, identifying and disrupting offenders, and making it more difficult for organised criminal groups to transport drugs to the UK.



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Virtuosos Aakash Odedra and Aditi Mangaldas to perform at Birmingham Hippodrome

Mehek is a major new collaboration from two of the finest Kathak contemporary dancers on the world stage, Aakash Odedra and Aditi Mangaldas.

Together they have created a powerful, raw and mesmerising duet which tells the story of a taboo relationship between an older woman and a younger man. Mehek is a physical exploration of the human heart, its desires, courage and

resilience. The title Mehek alludes to the essence of love and the enduring power of memory. The stage becomes a place where rhythmic tales of desire unfold, entwined with elements of nature.

Composer Nicki Wells, a frequent collaborator of both Odedra and Mangaldas, has created the soundscore, sometimes epic, sometimes intimate. She sings live on stage with two Indian percussionists, Ashish Gangani and Hiren Chate and vocalist Faraz Ahmed. Ahmed has contributed to the composition of the classical music in the soundtrack.

Authenticity is at the heart of the piece. At the start of the creative process, the company worked with over 450 elders from communities across Leicester who were taking part in Mehek Live, a major learning and participation project funded by a Nationally Significant Project Grant from Arts Council England. Some of their personal stories and memories of life and love, told to Aakash Odedra, dramaturg Karthika Naïr and musician Hiren Chate, have fed into the final piece

The wider Mehek Live project, run in partnership with Moving Together, culminates during the Elixir Festival at Sadler's Wells on 12 April. There will be a symposium to share the outcomes of Mehek Live with Speakers including Lewis Major from Aakash Odedra Company; Emily Jackson from Moving Together; Joce Giles, Artistic Director of Elixir Festival and Natasha Anderson, Head of Community Engagement at Sadlers Wells East, with more speakers to be announced. The symposium will be live-streamed and recorded for later dissemination.

The show comes to Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 9 April at 7.30pm, for more information visit: www.birminghamhippodrome.com.

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The WFP announced it could no longer send humanitarian aid to the area after its trucks were targeted



Haza

World Food Programme warns of mass starvation as Israel continues to ban entry of aid

Struggling to survive, Palestinians in Gaza have been eating grass, animal feed, and in northern areas simply drinking broth because aid is no longer entering the Strip, more Palestinians are now expected to die of malnutrition than have died as a result of Israel's brutal bombing campaign.

It is now 140 days since Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza. This week, the International Court

This week, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague has been hearing the submissions of 50

countries on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Israel is not attending the hearings but has sent a five-page written statement saying an advisory opinion would be "harmful" to attempts to resolve the conflict because questions posed by the UN General Assembly are prejudiced.

are prejudiced. The ICJ has heard about Israel's annexation of Palestinian land, the deliberate transfer of settlers on to occupied Palestinian territories and the restrictions Tel Aviv imposes on Palestinians with regards to accessing their agricultural lands, natural resources and communities. This, many states have argued, proves Israel intends to make the occupation permanent, and under international law, occupations are temporary measures.

In Gaza, Israel has been edging closer to Rafah, the final 'safe zone' for Palestinians who have been forced to flee northern and central parts of the Strip. There have been reports that Egypt is building a walled enclosure for Palestinians on its side of the Rafah Crossing, in order to accept refugees fleeing Israel's expanding offensive. Egypt has denied the reports, but images from the area have circulated online.

Israeli opposition leader and former Prime Minister Benny Gantz has indicated that a ground offensive into Rafah could be launched during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which begins in just a few days.

Negotiations for a prisoner swap deal and ceasefire are ongoing in an effort to avert a further escalation.

The situation in northern Gaza has become so dire, after the World Food Programme (WFP) announced it could no longer send humanitarian aid to the area after its trucks were targeted by occupation forces, that Palestinians have reportedly died of starvation, while children and pregnant women have been found to be suffering severe malnutrition.

Meanwhile, the US and its allies continue to cut aid to the UN agency responsible for Palestine refugees

(UNRWA) as a result of Israel's so-far unfounded allegations that some of its staff took part in the 7 October Palestinian resistance's infiltration of Israel. Israel has provided no proof of the claims, however 18 countries cut ties with the UN body.

Israel is putting in place laws to ban UNRWA from operating in the areas under its control, this would ban officials from the organisation entering the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israeli officials have also said they are preparing the "necessary procedures" to close Al Jazeera news channel.

The US and UK have continued to bomb Yemen because of the Houthis' targeting of Israel-bound ships, with the Houthis announcing the UK and US vessels in the Red Sea will now be targeted in response.

targeted in response. Israel's bombing of southern Lebanon has intensified over the past week, While the cross border battle between Hezbollah and Israel have also continued, 190 Hezbollah fighters have been killed as a result of the fighting since 8 October.

Produced in association with UK Government 💩

Save energy and money



top tips to help you save money and energy this winter

Winter is here and we're heating our homes again, and this means that costs may rise.

There are some low and nocost options you can take in your household to reduce energy usage. These options can help make your heating system more efficient and

save you money while staying warm and safe.

Efficiency can be improved by adjusting the boiler flow temperature dial/setting to 60 degrees on Combi boilers. Reducing flow temperature isn't the same as turning down the thermostat.

It won't noticeably reduce the temperature of your home but may take longer to heat up. If you are over 65, or have pre-

existing health conditions, you may want to set a slightly higher boiler flow temperature of 65°C to ensure that your home warms more quickly.

setting is really good. It comes on first thing in the morning for an hour just before the children get out of bed to get ready for school; and then for an hour for when they get back from school. We've also become quite good at turning off lights in all the rooms we're not using. All this is a big help in keeping my bills

"Putting my heating on a timer

"Keeping my bills under control"

WK Government

Busy mother-of-five Ms Mirre is a single parent, and the rising cost of living means she needed to take some extra steps to ensure her energy bill is manageable this winter.

"I've already had my boiler serviced and have turned down the boiler flow temperature. I wasn't sure how to bleed my radiators, but when a friend showed me how, it was really easy.

Help for Households

Find out more at GOV.UK/SaveEnergy

#ItAllAddsUp

It all adds up

See below some actions you can take in your home to lower energy use and save money

These actions can have a big impact on lowering your energy costs

Reduce your boiler flow temperature to 60 degrees to save up to £70 per year

Bleed your radiators for a warmer home and lower bills

Heat the rooms you're in and turn down the radiators in unused rooms to save up to £50 per year

Reduce your washing machine temperature to save up to £20 per year

Install an energy efficient showerhead and save up to £40 per year. They are sometimes available free through your water supplier

Get your boiler serviced to keep it running efficiently and avoid repairs

Bleeding your radiator: a step-by-step guide

You'll need a standard radiator key, and old towel/ cloth and a jug. When you've found out which of the radiators in your home's heating system need bleeding, follow these

simple steps:

1. Make sure your heating is off and the radiators are cold.

2. Hold an old cloth, or a jug, under the bleed valve, and insert the bleed key.

3. Turn anti-clockwise until air starts escaping (you'll hear a hissing noise).

4. When water starts to escape, turn the key clockwise to retighten the valve.

5. Repeat on other radiators that need attention, making your way back towards the boiler.

6. Turn your heating back on and check if your radiators are now heating up correctly.

flat head screw driver

Radiator key:

Most DIY shops have

them, or use a

under control.

SAVE OVER £100 on your energy bills this winter



South Asian heritage project exhibition celebrates migration stories from Croydon, Sheffield and Bradford

A much-anticipated South Asian heritage project promises to be a captivating exploration of the rich and multicultural heritage of Croydon, Sheffield and Bradford.

"The personal stories

gathered in this

exhibition originate and

crossover with countries

such as India, Guyana,

Malawi, Bangladesh,

Pakistan and Kenya."

to Roots programme, has over the past two years, successfully brought together heritage, community, and theatre arts partners to engage and work with South Asian communities.

Using a multi-arts approach, this showcase is capturing and preserving, and will archive authentic stories, challenging assumptions and stereotypes surrounding these

communities in the UK. Suzanne Gorman, Artistic Director of Maya Productions said: "The experiences of the

Anglo-Indian community are rarely seen on stage, screen or in museums. The personal stories gathered in this

exhibition originate and crossover with countries such as India, Guyana, Malawi, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kenya. "I look forward to more people engaging with

these stories, lives and the creativity of the individuals and communities we have been working with.' Virginia Smith, Museums and Collection

The exhibition, a culmination of Maya Manager, Museum of Croydon said: "The Routes Productions' broader Routes ______ to Roots programme has

to Roots programme has woven a rich tapestry of genuine and enchanting stories, dispelling stereotypes, and nurturing mutual understanding within the mutual South Asian communities of the three places.

"We're excited to share these narratives through this beautifully expressed multimedia exhibition."

A participant of Routes to Roots, said: "By telling your stories and listening to their stories it's encourage and stories, it's encouraging, and a relief that you are not alone in

that sense. You have had problems, they have had problems, how people have solved their problems, and how you can help each other."

The Routes to Roots exhibition will be at the Museum of Croydon until 26 April 2024. It is free to attend, and audiences can view it on Wednesdays and Fridays from 11am to 4pm.

A Journey of Migration: The

exhibition delves into the fascinating migration and settlement stories of the South Asian communities who came to the UK. Through interactive displays, it will celebrate the diverse identities that contribute to the rich cultural fabric of British society, exploring themes of migration, family, home and cultural identity.

Innovative Exhibition

Design: The exhibition is absorbing and thought-provoking, combining art, poetry, photography,

documentary, podcast, and interactive installations to present compelling oral histories and experiences. It fosters community engagement and invites visitors to gain a

eeper understanding of migration ourneys. Benny and the Greycats - A

Musical Journey: Routes to Roots is inspired by Maya Productions' musical in development, Benny and the Greycats. Inspired by Artistic Director Suzanne

Gorman's family history, the production explores the migration experience of Anglo-Indian communities, telling the story of a family of Anglo-Indian railway workers who swap playing in a swing band in South India, for a new life in 1960s

Connecting Communities: The

Opens:

8th March to

26th April 2024

at the Museum

exhibition takes visitors on a journey from Croydon, home to a close-knit Anglo-Indian community, to Sheffield, the setting of Benny and the Greycats, and to Bradford, a historical centre of

the textile industry. It sheds light on the South Asian migrant experience, providing a platform for these communities to share their rich stories. The exhibition connects of Croydon individuals, fosters meaningful dialogues, and creates a sense of community, celebrating hidden stories and amplifying voices that have historically been silenced. **Engagement activities:**

Educational resources will be available for secondary school students and teachers to engage more deeply with the exhibition's themes



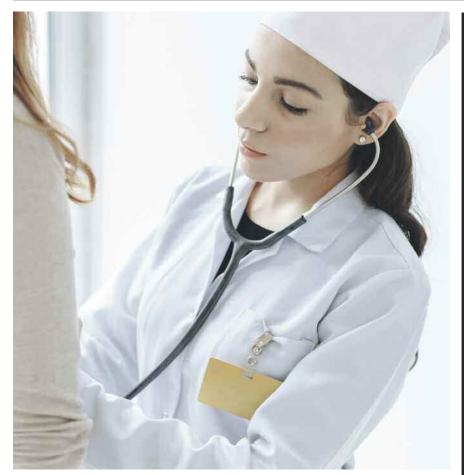


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NHS facing further strike disruption

The NHS is facing further strike disruption this week amid continued high demand for services, as its top doctor warns more than one in 10 days have been impacted by strike action in the past year.

Strike action by junior doctors will run from 7am on Saturday (24 February) to midnight on Wednesday (28 February) and is set to impact most routine care as the NHS prioritises urgent and emergency services

By the end of this action, hospital

doctors will have taken 44 days or 1,056 hours of industrial action, equating to around 12% of the year. The analysis comes

as weekly figures released show there were an average of 2,355 more patients in hospital each day last week (97,416) than the same period in 2023 (95,061). Despite the NHS

having over 2,500 more general and acute beds compared to same week last year, bed occupancy remains high, with 95.3% of adult general and acute beds

occupied in the week ending 18 February. There were almost four times as many flu patients in hospital every day last week (2,208) than in the same week last year (638), and up from 1,582 a month ago.

Other winter viruses also continue to cause concern, with an average of 509 patients in hospital with norovirus and 2,720 patients with Covid-19 in hospital each day last week

The data shows NHS staff continue to contend with high demand for urgent and emergency care, with 89,377 ambulance handovers to hospitals last week, up 12% from 79,752 in the same week last year.

NHS call handlers also answered 369,030 calls to 111, up 10% from the 336,656 answered in the same week last year. Despite the higher volume answered, 59.5% of calls were answered within 60 seconds last week, compared with 44.9% in the same week last year. Alongside dealing with ongoing winter

pressures, staff have also been working hard this week to mitigate the impact of strike action due to run from Saturday to Wednesday, with trusts putting in place measures to maintain care for those who need it urgently, and rescheduling

planned appointments which are now unable to go ahead. Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS national medical director, said: "Colleagues across the country have worked incredibly hard to ensure urgent and life-saving care has continued during

more than a year of strike action, while also delivering progress on our recovery plans, but the NHS is under huge strain trying to mitigate the impact of these latest strikes during one of the most difficult times of the year "It remains vital that

people who need care come forward and get it in the usual way – using 999 and A&E in life-threatening emergencies and 111 for everything else." The previous round of industrial action by

junior doctors in January this year saw over 113,000 hospital appointments disrupted and at least 23,000 staff absent day on weekdays. In total strikes have now impacted over 1.3 million hospital appointments across the NHS. Junior doctors make up around half of

all doctors in the NHS and have anywhere up to eight years' experience working as a hospital doctor, depending on their specialty, or up to three years in general

practice. The NHS is advising the public to use 111 online as the first port of call for urgent but not life-threatening issues during industrial action so that they can be directed to the best place for their needs. Patients who need medical care should continue to use 999 or come forward to A&E as normal.

Patients who haven't been contacted to say their appointment has been cancelled should also attend as normal.

Man charged over dog attack fails to attend court



A man has failed to turn up to court in connection with a dog attack that left an 11-year-old girl and two others injured.

Farhat Ajaz, 61, was due to appear at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on Thursday charged with three counts of being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control in a public place.

It followed an incident in Bordesley Green,

Birmingham, on 9 September. Ana Paun, 11, suffered shoulder and arm injuries in the attack by an American XL bully and Staffordshire bull terrier crossbreed.

Two men were also hurt.

In court, prosecutor David Devine said a postal requisition had been sent to Mr Ajaz, of Bordesley Close in Birmingham, on January 23. Mr Devine requested a warrant was issued for the accused's

District judge David Wain granted the request, saying he was satisfied Mr Ajaz knew about the

hearing and that no contact had been made with his solicitor regarding reasons why he may not be able to attend.

The attack last autumn prompted Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary at the time, to seek urgent advice" on whether the American bully XL breed should be banned.

Less than a week later, 52-year-old Ian Price died after being attacked by two American bully XL dogs in Stonnall, near Walsall.

The death of Mr Price prompted Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to vow to ban the breed, saying it posed a "danger to our communities". American XL bullies were added to the banned breeds list on 31 October.

Since 31 December, it has been against the law to sell, give away, abandon or breed from an XL bully.

People whose ownership of the breed pre-empted the switch had to apply for special permission -subject to stiff guidelines - to continue to keep their

By the end of this action, hospital doctors will have taken 44 days or 1,056 hours of industrial action, equating to around 12% of the year.

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Charity warns mass starvation and calls on the UK government to support an immediate ceasefire

A British aid agency has issued a stark warning about the levels of starvation facing Gaza in a stunt on Monday, 5th February.

Outside the Houses of Parliament, the Islamic Relief UK charity highlighted the mass starvation facing Palestinians in Gaza as a direct result of Israel's ongoing siege. A van was driven around

A van was driven around Parliament Square, Millbank, Westminster bridge and Whitehall with the clear message that 'Israel is starving Gaza', to draw the UK government's attention to the severity

of the crisis.

"This is an entirely man-made catastrophe resulting from Israel's ongoing attacks and siege of the territory, and without a ceasefire could lead to a full-blown famine amongst Gaza's population," says Islamic Relief.

It is feared that more than half a million people in Gaza, a quarter of the population, are now facing the most severe Phase 5 'catastrophic' level of food crises, meaning a high risk of starvation and death. Shockingly, more than 80% of all people currently classified as being in Phase 5 worldwide are in Gaza. The only way to prevent this is by demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and an end to the siege so that sufficient aid can entering Gaza.

Humanitarian organisations must be able to do their work safely and effectively.

Shazia Arshad, Head of Communications, Islamic Relief UK says: "Palestinians in Gaza are facing the fastest descent into starvation in recent history. Aid agencies the world It is feared that more than half a million people in Gaza, a quarter of the population, are now facing the most severe Phase 5 'catastrophic' level of food crises, meaning a high risk of starvation and death

over have repeatedly warned that Israel's bombardment and siege would lead to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

"Now these warnings have become reality, and unless immediate action is taken the numbers dying of hunger, malnutrition and disease could far exceed those already caused by the bombardment.

"The UK government must face the reality of Israel's actions and the resulting starvation and must demand an immediate ceasefire and an end to the siege or risk becoming complicit."



India's widespread demolitions of Muslims' demolitions of Muslims' homes, businesses and places of worship through the use of JCB bulldozers and other machines must stop immediately, Amnesty International said in two companion reports released this month.

year-and-a-half since the demolitions, in spite of the financial hardships created by the loss of their homes and businesses, victims continue to wait for justice with legal cases pending in courts.

The Indian government has also failed to provide access to justice and effective remedies for victims as accountability for human rights violations committed by the police, municipal corporations, development authorities and revenue departments in the five states remains elusive.

Instead, the state governments and federal government have continued to demolish other Muslim properties, as evidenced by the destruction of homes and shops in Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand in 2023.

unlawful have been sold to customers, the company has no control over or responsibility for their products' use or abuse.

However, according to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights', JCB has a Human responsibility to respect human rights including by conducting due diligence to identify, prevent and mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to its operations, products or services across its value chain.

This requirement is especially important when a company's products are used in regions where there is a heightened risk or evidence of their link to human rights abuses publicly available, such as in Assam, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. "Under international standards,

JCB is responsible for addressing what third-party buyers do with its equipment. The company must stop looking away as JCB machines are used to target and punish the Muslim community, while people sloganeer

The demolitions were often instigated at the highest levels of government, with many state officials directly or indirectly calling for the use of bulldozers against Muslims.

Amnesty International's reports - anti-Muslim vitriol mounted from 'If you speak up, your house will be demolished': Bulldozer Injustice in India' and 'Unearthing Accountability: JCB's Role and Responsibility in Bulldozer Injustice in India' — document the punitive demolition of Muslim properties in at least five states with a widespread use of JCB-branded bulldozers or diggers as brand of choice in a hate campaign against the minority community.

These demolitions are carried out with widespread impunity as was evident from the Mira Road demolitions after a Ram Temple Rally turned violent earlier last month in Mumbai, India.

There have been calls on the Government of India and state governments to immediately halt the de facto policy of demolishing people's homes as a form of extra-judicial punishment and ensure nobody is made homeless as a result of forced evictions; and they must also offer adequate compensation to all those affected by the demolitions and ensure those responsible for these violations are held to account.

"The unlawful demolition of Muslim properties by the Indian authorities, peddled as 'bulldozer justice' by political leaders and media, is cruel and appalling. Such displacement and dispossession is deeply unjust unlawful and deeply unjust, unlawful and discriminatory. They are destroying families— and must stop immediately," said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary

Amnesty International's Secretary General. "The authorities have repeatedly undermined the rule of law, destroying homes, businesses or places of worship, through targeted campaigns of hate, harassment, violence and the weaponisation of JCB bulldozers. These human rights abuses must be urgently addressed." abuses must be urgently addressed.

Amnesty International's Crisis Evidence Lab and Digital Verification Corps have verified that JCB's machines, while not the only vehicles used, were the most widely deployed equipment in these demolitions. Their repeated use have given rise to the use of monikers for the company like 'Jihadi Control Board' by celebratory

right-wing media and politicians. In response to a letter from Amnesty International, a JCB spokesperson said that once products atop these bulldozers. JCB cannot continue to evade responsibility while its machines are repeatedly used to

its machines are repeatedly used to inflict human rights abuses," said Agnès Callamard. "The company must publicly condemn the use of its machinery to commit human rights violations, including punitive demolitions of Muslim properties in India, use its leverage to mitigate adverse impact and create robust human rights due and create robust human rights diligence policies for the use of its equipment across the globe."

Discrimination and complicity of politicians and media

The reports found that Muslimconcentrated localities were chosen for demolitions, while Muslim-owned properties were selectively targeted in diverse areas. Nearby Hindu-owned properties, particularly in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, were left untouched.

The demolitions were often instigated at the highest levels of government, with many state officials directly or indirectly calling for the use of bulldozers against Muslims.

Punitive demolitions have been aggressively pursued as a form of extrajudicial punishment over many years and in several states, including Uttar Pradesh whose chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, has been labelled by the media as "Bulldozer Baba" (grandfather).

The Indian media has also referred to the demolitions as "bulldozer justice"; describing the punitive destruction of homes and businesses as "(good) models of governance" by state authorities, while failing to consider whether the demolitions were carried out in accordance with the law or constitute unlawful discrimination against the Muslim community.

"In a year that India heads to the polls, the ongoing hate campaign against minorities – especially Muslims - and the widespread impunity enjoyed by those responsible for the demolition of their homes and properties is unacceptable. Amnesty International calls on the Indian authorities to ensure immediate protection of the rights of Muslims and those who are most marginalised before, during and after elections," said Agnès Callamard.

INDIA: 'Authorities must immediately stop unjust targeted demolition of Muslim **DRODERTIES**⁷ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is participating in a roadshow aboard a bulldozer in support of BJP candidate Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore from the Jhotwara constituency ahead of the Rajasthan Assembly elections



"The authorities have repeatedly undermined the rule of law, destroying homes, businesses or places of worship, through targeted campaigns of hate, harassment, violence and the weaponisation of JCB bulldozers. These human rights abuses must be urgently addressed."

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Benefits of implementing **Pilates into your** weekly routine

With the new year in full swing, interest in the latest fitness trends has risen drastically, and with many wanting to get fit this New Year, fitness enthusiasts are now scouring the internet for the best workout routines to follow.

Online searches for Pilates are currently at the highest they have been in five years, proving just how keen people are to start the New Year off on the right foot and learn more about the benefits of Pilates exercises and how they affect the body. Luckily, experts at mirafit.com have put together

a know-all guide to Pilates, sharing industry

knowledge on its benefits, who it is ideal for and how it can aid you in maintaining your fitness goals this new year.

A spokesperson from Mirafit commented: "Pilates is an excellent form of exercise that will help you tone your body, keep you in tune with your muscles, and significantly improve your posture.

"Pilates could be the perfect way to help introduce fitness into your daily or weekly routines, so it is worth trying either alongside your other workout routines or solely on its own."

What is Pilates? Pilates is a holistic workout focusing on both alignment and posture, as well as breath work. It is a great abdominal workout but also helps to strengthen and tone the glutes, lower back and hips.

What are the benefits of Pilates? There are many benefits to a Pilates workout; these include:

- Helps align posture: Prevents hunching in the back by engaging core muscles, back and pelvic floor, allowing complete relaxation in the upper parts of the body, such as the neck and shoulders. It works to take away the pressure on your hips, which, therefore, improves your posture. Overall, this workout will get the parts of your body that hold your spine in the correct alignment to stay straight and improve posture.

Gives more definition: Although Pilates does not help gain muscle, it can work the muscles through

dynamic stretching to tone and define the body.

Practices mindfulness: Pilates encourages your body's limits and can be a great form of motivation. The breathwork needed to execute many of the exercises correctly is tough but very rewarding, leaving you in touch with your body whilst building strength.

- Improved balance, mobility and stability: Through Pilates, your body gets to work all the areas which might be tight by opening them up. This benefits those who work long hours sitting at a desk or hunched over.

How to start Pilates

There are so many options out there for local classes, online classes, courses, and videos, which is why it is important to go for the option that makes you feel the most comfortable and where you can put your all into the class without

distractions.

Take part in local classes Classes are a great way to get instant help regarding form, form, technique and motivation.

Online

If you prefer to workout in your own space, then this is the option for you. In fact, online searches for '28 day wall Pilates challenge free' skyrocketed just days into 2024 by 315%, proving just how keen people are to get focused on a challenge that requires not taking part in a class.

This is also a great option if you would still like to go to the gym but follow an online guide on your phone without being in front of an instructor.

Follow videos and guides online There are plenty of paid-for and free guides and videos online which will help you delve into the world of Pilates. These can be a fabulous way to introduce yourself to the Pilates world without taking a trip down to the gym and can be a slightly cheaper option than paying for a local class.

How often should you do **Pilates**?

If you want to see significant changes to your body with purely Pilates workouts, you should practice it at least three to four times per week. Rest days in between will allow your body to recover, adapt and gain strength. You can increase the number of exercises and time you do in these workouts as you get stronger.

If you are just starting or want to see a little difference alongside your other workout routines, committing to a 20-minute Pilates workout daily will make you fit and toned in no time!

Costly mistakes 2 in 5 have ended a relationship over a poor financial decision

A survey looked at the importance of decision-making and found that 40% have ended a relationship over a poor financial choice.

Overall, nearly three-quarters of respondents feel sure about their decision-making ability, describing themselves as decisive (74%). Just one in six admit to being indecisive.

Those who are sure about their choices chalk it up to good judgment skills (68%), confidence (63%) and strong intuition (62%). They also pride themselves on their ability to think quickly (58%) and gauge others' behaviours like tone or body language (54%). For nearly half of these respondents, properties attract as they look for

opposites attract, as they look for someone more decisive when considering a relationship (46%). This holds true except in the Midwest, where only one in five seek someone more decisive. While most believe they're decisive,

many seek advice from someone at work or the news, above their partner's advice, considering when money-related decisions.

found that some of the daily decisions made.

people struggle with regularly are what to eat for different meals, what to watch on TV and hobby-related decisions like what

book to read or what to create. When it comes to big decisions, survey-takers put more faith in research (55%) and make pro- and-con lists (55%) to help them out.

Most respondents indicate they would want to be 100% sure before making a significant purchase, like a house. This requires more certainty than the decision

to start a family, change jobs or move. Surprisingly, 40% said they would leave a major decision up to random choice.

Some of these major decisions people have committed to are related to time or money, like moving somewhere new or investing a large sum of money. Others have made career-changing

moves like starting a new job or career path or becoming a business owner. Of the major decisions to consider,

respondents agree that starting a business (21%) and investing a large sum of money (22%) would take the longest deliberation.

Interestingly, 23% have misgivings about their partner and another 22% Conducted by OnePoll, the survey also regret certain parenting decisions they

Top decision-making struggles

- What to eat for different meals 44%
- What to watch on TV 40%
- Hobby-related decisions 39%
- What to wear for the day 37%
- What to purchase at the grocery store - 36%
- Order of getting ready 32%
- How much/little of their money to spend - **31%**
- Breakdown of the day 25%

 When to take care of their personal hygiene - <mark>1</mark>8%

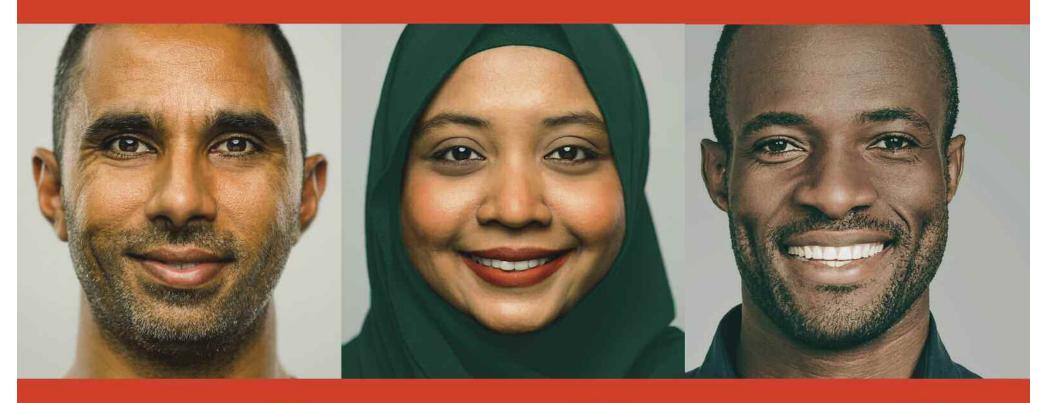
Social-related decisions - 18%

Life & Style 21

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UK still undecided on digital cash as privacy concerns persist

British authorities will not decide until next year at the earliest on whether to go ahead with a state-backed digital pound that would provide an alternative to payments operated by banks

and technology companies. The Bank of England and Britain's finance ministry said they would continue preparatory work following a public consultation which drew 50,000 responses, many raising privacy concerns.

"No final decision has been made to pursue a digital pound - also called a central bank digital currency," the BoE and finance ministry said in a ioint statement.

the case for digital cash had not been made.

Other central banks, including the European Central Bank and the U.S. Federal Reserve, are also wrestling with privacy issues.

The European Union's legislation for underpinning a digital euro has been slowed by privacy concerns, prompting the bloc's financial services chief Mairead McGuinness to say last year that it was not a "Big Brother project".

Britain says a digital pound would be private but not anonymous, unlike physical cash.

As with existing bank accounts and credit card payments, authorities

"A digital pound would not replace cash, so the public would continue to have access to an anonymous payment option," the BoE and government said in their response to the consultation."

"The Bank and HM Treasury have progressed to the design phase of work on a digital pound and expect to decide whether to proceed to the build phase around the middle of the decade.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was an early supporter of the idea, calling on the BoE to start work on the project in 2021 when he was finance minister.

However, even if the project does get a go-ahead, it is unlikely to be operational until near the end of the decade.

Under the proposals, Britons would be able to hold electronic pounds with the same value as physical cash - up to a limit of 10,000 to 20,000 pounds (\$12,700-\$25,400). Like cash, the money would not pay interest.

Banks had lobbied for a lower limit of 3,000 to 5,000 pounds, fearing the project could lead to an outflow of money from standard bank accounts. Last month, British lawmakers said would be able to track transactions they suspect involve money laundering or finance terrorism.

"A digital pound would not replace cash, so the public would continue to have access to an anonymous payment option," the BoE and government said in their response to the consultation.

The use of physical cash is dwindling in Britain and the BoE has said a state-backed digital option could provide alternatives to existing bank payments or separate payment systems which large technology

companies might develop. Legislation would be put in place to ensure privacy following further consultation if the project goes ahead, the government said, adding it also planned further public consultations

The digital currency would not allow the government to program it in a way which blocked holders from making certain transactions, a concern of some privacy advocates.

Shortlisted Leeds-born Jasdeep Singh Degun in the running for two Royal Philharmonic Society Awards

Leeds-born sitarist and composer Jasdeep Singh Degun has been shortlisted for two Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Awards: the Instrumentalist Award and the Large Scale Composition Award.

Scale Composition Award. Celebrating classical music and musicians nationwide, and billed by The Sunday Times as the 'biggest night in UK classical music', the RPS Awards shine a light on brilliant musical individuals, groups and initiatives inspiring communities across the UK. As a sitarist, Jasdeep has been shortlisted for the RPS Instrumentalist Award, alongside cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson and pionit Ravel Kolenikov.

Johnson and pianist Pavel Kolesnikov.

As composer, co-music director and soloist, his highly acclaimed opera Orpheus, commissioned by Opera North in partnership with South Asian Arts-uk, has been nominated for the Large-Scale Composition Award.

Jasdeep said: I'm thrilled to be nominated at this year's RPS Awards. I see all of these awards as a spotlight on

the wonderful Indian classical musicians in this country. "I am very thankful to my teacher Ustad Dharambir

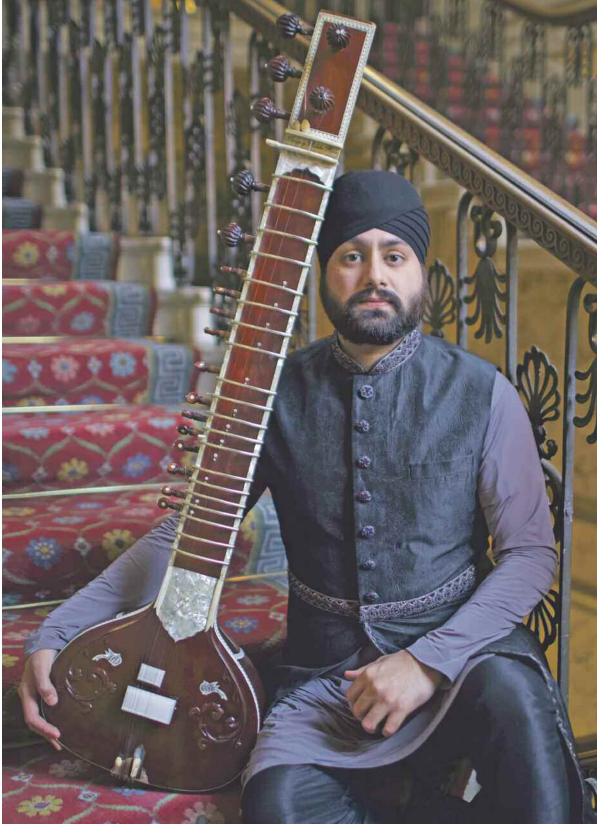
Singh and the numerous individuals and organisations that have supported me over the years.

Jasdeep brings a unique energy and vision to both Indian classical and contemporary music, which has seen him receive a number of awards and accolades since his Sky Academy Scholarship in 2016.

"Most recently the Songlines Best Newcomer Award, Critics' Circle Music Award and UK Theatre Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera, an Asian Achievers Award, an Asian Media Award, and a nomination for Best Stage Work at this year's Ivor Novello Classical Awards.

Passionate about breaking down cultural boundaries, Jasdeep has also worked with Guy Chambers, Cerys Matthews, Melanie C and Vangelis. Jasdeep is redefining genres and is on a mission to expose music from his heritage to audiences across the globe. For the very first time, the RPS Awards will be

presented out of London, taking place at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) on Tuesday 5th March



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THE LATEST ENTERTAINMENT AND CELEBRITY NEWS FROM BOLLYWOOD & HOLLYWOOD



Taking place from Thursday 7th March until Sunday 10th March 2024, Southbank Centre Commenting on the South Asian Sounds is part of the Southbank Centre's launch of the series, Southbank Centre Artistic ongoing mission to reflect Director Mark Ball said: and support the breadth of "From film soundtracks to praver, music sits at the creative communities represented in London and heart of South Asian culture and South Asian Sounds promises to be an incredible celebration of the richness nnounces new Sol and diversity of its forms. **Continued on page 26 Asian Sounds music series**



Southbank Centre announces new South Asian Sounds music series

Tickets for South Asian Sounds on sale now. Visit: www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/south-asian-sounds

Continued from page 25

"We're excited to present such internationally renowned artists representing a wide range of genres and traditions. Their appeal will reach audiences across the capital's South Asian diaspora, who make up a fifth of our city's residents. With projects like South Asian Sounds, the Southbank Centre is a home from home for all, in the heart of London." The Afghan Youth Orchestra, which aims to

heal wounds and build strong bonds within Afghan society, will appear alongside with some of UK's outstanding ensembles and soloists through music.

They open the long weekend of music on Thursday 7th March in the Queen Elizabeth Hall with a mix of Afghan traditional and folk songs as well as Western classical music. On Friday 8th March in the Royal Festival,

the 'King of Bhangra' Malkit Singh will take to the stage, showcasing his internationally successful brand of bhangra, a mix of

traditional, rap, house music and more. In the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Pakistani singer Zeeshan Ali, renowned for his performances of Ghazal, Qawwali and Sufi music, appears alongside the Leo Twins, who took Pakistan by storm after their appearance on the country's music TV series Nescafé Basement in 2016.

Going late into the night, South Asian arts collective, Dialled In, which connects diasporic and native music, hosts its first event of the weekend with a club night in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer. DJs include NTS regular and illustrator Anu, the genrebending Mumbai artist



Kiss Nuka and the Vedic Roots sound system, a product of Southhall's historic incubation of bhangra and dub.

On Saturday 9th March, in the Royal Festival Hall, acclaimed Indian singer and Bollywood star Pratibha Singh Baghel stages a curated collection of popular old film classics, current Bollywood hits, and ghazals, accompanied by Southbank Centre Resident

Orchestra Chineke! Orchestra. Continuing their takeover, Dialled In curates a line-up of South Asian classical and contemporary live performance as well as spoken word in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, diasporic and native storytelling through film in the Purcell Room and musical archive digging with DJs and selectors in the foyer. The last day of the series, Sunday 10th March, will feature a packed programme: in the Royal Festival Hall, Indian classical vocalist and composer Kaushiki

Chakraborty performs an afternoon of raga music while. In the evening, world-renowned Sitar maestro Ustad Nishat Khan and his equally talented brother and Surbahar maestro, Ustad Irshad Khan, come together to

perform a rare duet for sitar and surbahar. In the Queen Elizabeth Hall, there will be a showcase of Indian folk music with the awardwinning artists Malini Awasthi and Anwar Khan Manganiyar.

Khiyo, the innovative London-based band giving Bengali heritage music a modern, fresh sound, will perform in this double bill with the Sufi Mystic Singers in the Purcell Room.

Closing out the weekend is a double bill concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall featuring sound artist Jason Singh and jazz star Sarathy Korwar, whose album 'Kalak' was ranked second in The Guardian's Best Global Albums of 2022

South Asian Sounds is hosted at the Southbank Centre and presented in partnership with Asian Arts Agency, Darbar Arts Culture Heritage Trust, Dialled In, SAMA Arts Network and Ragatip.



Event Listings

 Afghan Youth Orchestra: **Breaking The Silence** Thursday 7 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7:30pm

• The King Of Bhangra, Malkit Singh Golden Star Friday 8 March, Royal Festival Hall, 7:30pm

• Leo Twins & Zeeshan Ali Friday 8 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 8pm

• Concrete Lates: Anu + Kiss Nuka + Vedic Roots Friday 8 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer, 10pm

• **Pratibha Singh Baghel: the Symphony of Love** Saturday 9 March, Royal Festival Hall, 7:30pm

• Malini Awasthi & Anwar Khan Manganiar: Indian Folkloric Traditions Sunday 10 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 1pm

• Kaushki Chakraborty Sunday 10 March, Royal Festival Hall, 2pm

• Khiyo: From Bangladesh to Britain + Mystic Sufi Singers Sunday, 10 March 2024, Purcell Room, 3pm

 Ustad Nishat Khan & Ustad Irshad Khan: a Duet for Sitar & Surbaha Sunday, 10 March 2024, Royal Festival Hall, 7:30pm

 Jason Singh X Sarathy Kor Sunday 10 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7:30pm







Tickets for South Asian Sounds on sale now. Visit: www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/south-asian-sounds

Rifco Theatre Company in partnership with Watford Palace Theatre and HOME Manchester is delighted to announce the headline cast for its most spectacular and

announce the headline cast for its most spectacular and ambitious musical to date, Frankie Goes To Bollywood: A Billion Colour Musical. Conceived by Artistic Director of Rifco, Pravesh Kumar MBE, Frankie Goes To Bollywood is a spectacular all-singing-all-dancing tale of heroes and villains, with all the costumes and the spectacle of a Bollywood feature film. It tells the tale of being British in Bollywood and explores what it takes to get to the top. The musical will premiere at Watford Palace Theatre, running from Thu 25 Apr – Sat 11 May 2024 followed by a 10-day run at HOME Manchester Wed 15 May – Sat 25 May 2024, and then a national tour.

25 May 2024, and then a national tour.

Frankie never wanted to be a star, all she's ever really wanted is a close and loving family - but after a chance encounter with an up-and-coming director, she finds herself transported to Bollywood, cast in a movie and thrust into the limelight. Might the Bollywood world provide her with the family and community she has always dreamed of? always dreamed of?

Suddenly Frankie is immersed in the world of fame and fortune but as she climbs the sparkling staircase of stardom, each step makes her question what she is willing to do, or be subjected to, for success.

Drawing inspiration from both traditional Bollywood music and the best of western musical theatre, the music for Frankie Goes To Bollywood is a carefully integrated hybrid - designed to appeal to lovers of the Bollywood genre and also lovers of a good old West End extravaganza.

Frankie Goes To Bollywood is inspired by those true stories of young men and women who make the journey to India to become Brits in Bollywood.

Pravesh says "A lot of the story is about a question of belonging. In some ways in the UK, British born South Asian people, will still forever be seen by many as immigrants, no matter how many generations their families have lived in Britain. "So forging a generation Pollwrood he that in front of

"So forging a career in Bollywood, be that in front of or behind the camera can be seen by those who go out there, as somewhat of a homecoming. But then, being British born, and new to a lot of the culture, many of the British born, and new to a lot of the culture, many of the women who go to work in the industry become acutely aware of the deeply ingrained sexism, not just within the industry itself, but displayed on screen. And that's something they have to address and decide how much of that disparity they can put up with." "I wanted to highlight this issue, because as the world fights the good fight for increased equality between genders, it's men's responsibility to shine a light on sexism, and to call it out when they see it - at work, amongst their friends, and in the wider world. "I love Bollwood fiercely and this musical is at heart

'I love Bollywood fiercely and this musical is at heart, a celebration of the genre and the art and the people involved. But that doesn't mean I'm not still hoping and pushing for change. So my hope is that is this work a celebration of Bollywood, but at the same time, a small catalyst for improved social standing for women in the industry, both behind-the-scenes, and how they are

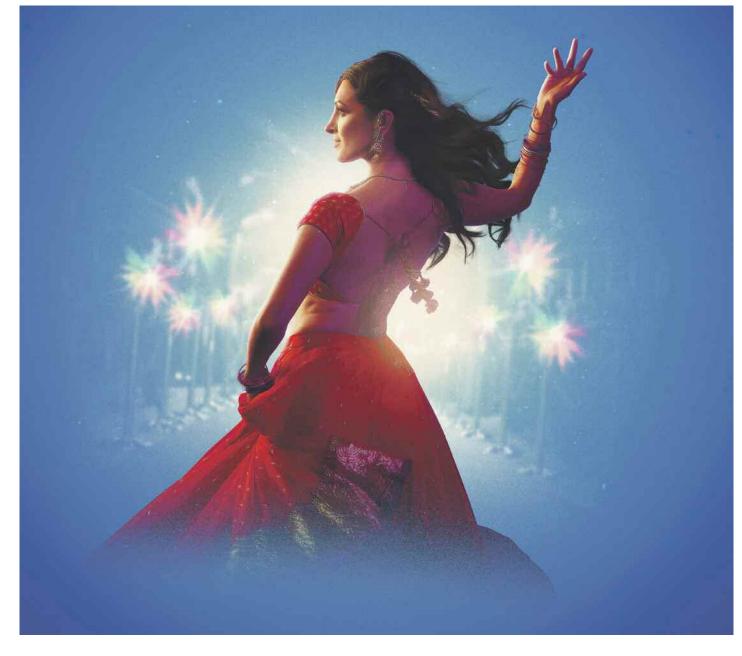
ndustry, both behind-the-scenes, and now ancy are portrayed on the silver screen." RIFCO Theatre has a long tradition of working to celebrate and reflect contemporary British Asian experiences, culture and society. Pravesh's own experience working for a decade in Bollywood, characteride his extensive work in LIK theatre and film alongside his extensive work in UK theatre and film looking at the British South Asian experience plays a fundamental role in the development of Rifco's productions and subject matter, focusing on untold

stories and under-represented voices. In Frankie Goes To Bollywood, Rifco have created a

multi-layered piece of theatre. On one level it offers a sumptuous British spin on the glorious visual and romantic stories of Bollywood; a breathtakingly colourful journey of romance, sweeping songs and vibrant dance; the big, bold explosion of movement, colour and music that 'Bollywood' immediately brings to mind. Yet this is juxtaposed against an exploration of the darker undercurrent within the culture. Frankie Goes to Bollywood delves into the influence the film industry has on society's views of women, both in India and for the 4 million South Asian residents of the UK.

Cast for major new musical inspired by true stories of Brits in Bollywood announced

goes to







Sing

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Peppa's Cinema Party Release date: 9/2/2024 Director: Andrea Tran Genre: Animation Cert: U

Come on everybody it's time Come on everybody it's time for Peppa's Cinema Party! This year Peppa Pig celebrates her 20th anniversary and to mark such a HUGE occasion she is throwing the MOST EPIC PARTY EVER – and all of her friends are INVITED! (That's YOUU) YOU!)

Featuring the voices of Katy Perry as Ms. Leopard and Orlando Bloom as Mr. Raccoon in an episode of the 3-part Wedding Party story, the whole

family can enjoy 10 never-before-seen Peppa Pig episodes! And with five brand new songs,

dance along!

as well as 11 interactive entertainment shorts with Peppa and her friends playing, dancing and singing in the real world, you and your little ones will be moving and grooving with Peppa in a whole new way!

So grab your coat and jump into your boots, let's be on our way to the Peppa Cinema Party!

The Iron Claw

Release date: 9/2/2024 Starring: Lily James, Maura Tierney, Jeremy Allen White, Maxwell Jacob Friedman, Aaron Dean Eisenberg, Harris Dickinson, Zac Efron, Holt McCallany **Director: Sean Durkin** Genre: Biography/Drama

The Iron Claw depicts the true story of the inseparable Von Erich brothers, who made history in the intensely competitive world of professional wrestling in the early 1980s. Through tragedy and triumph, under the shadow of their domineering father and coach, the brothers seek larger-than-life immortality on the biggest stage in sports.



Release date: 14/2/2024 Starring: Mike Epps, Dakota Johnson, Tahar Rahim, Emma Roberts, Adam Scott, Celeste O'Connor, Isabela Merced, Zosia Mamet, Sydney Sweeney Director: S.J. Clarkson Cert: 12A

In a switch from the typical genre, Madame Web tells the standalone origin story of one of Marvel publishing's most enigmatic heroines. The suspensedriven thriller stars Dakota Johnson as Cassandra Webb, a paramedic in Manhattan who may have clairvoyant abilities. Forced to confront revelations about her past, she forges a relationship with three young women destined for powerful futures... if they can all survive a deadly present.

SOME VOICES ARE FOREVER

BOB MARLEY ONE LOVE

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Bob Marley: One Love

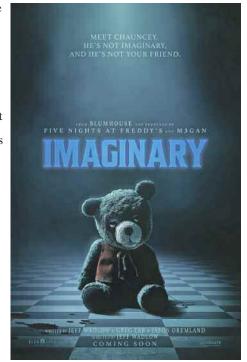
Release date: 14/2/2024 Starring: James Norton, Anthony Welsh, Michael Gandolfini, Tosin Cole, Kingsley Ben-Adir, Umi Myers, Nadine Marshall, Lashana Lynch Director: Reinaldo Marcus Green Cert: 13A

BOB MARLEY: ONE LOVE celebrates the life and music of an icon who inspired generations through his message of love and unity. On the big screen for the first time, discover Bob's powerful story of overcoming adversity and the journey behind his revolutionary music. Produced in partnership with the Marley family and starring Kingsley Ben-Adir as the legendary musician and Lashana Lynch as his wife Rita.

Imaginary

Release date: 8/3/2024 Starring: Betty Buckley, DeWanda Wise, Tom Payne Director: Jeff Wadlow Cert: TBC

From Blumhouse, the genre-defining masterminds behind FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S and M3GAN. When Jessica (DeWanda Wise) moves back into her childhood home with her family, her youngest stepdaughter Alice (Pyper Braun) develops an eerie attachment to a stuffed bear named Chauncey she finds in the basement. Alice starts playing games with Chauncey that begin playful and become increasingly sinister. As Alice's behaviour becomes more and more concerning, Jessica intervenes only to realise Chauncey is much more than the stuffed toy bear she believed him to be.







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A striking, highly personalised duo-tone Bentayga EWB Azure V8 the first of its kind - has been delivered to its expectant customers, having been crafted by hand by Bentley's bespoke and personalisation division, Mulliner.

An example of the growing trend among Bentley customers for personal commissions, the car is a stunning example of a truly individual Bentley – the result of the free rein that a Mulliner commission provides.

Among the unique features requested by the owners was a bespoke two-tone exterior finish, prompting Bentley Motors to bring forward its introduction of two-tone finishes for Bentayga EWB by 12 months.

The customers originally visited Bentley Newport Beach to order a Bentayga EWB Azure

V8 First Edition, intending to select exterior

Highly personalised, first of its kind, duotone Bentayga EWB Azure V8 customised

colours and interior finishes from the 46 billion different configurations available with the standard options range.

But with the help of Mulliner's Design Manager, Phill Dean, the couple were soon inspired to let their imaginations roam free.

imaginations roam free. The Bentayga EWB commissioned by the customers is a striking and individual creation, with a duo-tone exterior of Onyx over Kingfisher Blue conceived to dazzle in the California sunshine. Having established a base specification of the Azure wellnessfocused package, complete with Blackline and Touring specifications, the couple also requested rear privacy glass and the deletion of Bentley lettering on the tailgate, being content to let the winged B badge speak for itself.

badge speak for itself. The Onyx finish chosen for the bonnet, roof and upper body is seamlessly integrated with the gloss black grille, front air intakes, wing vents, side coachlines and rear diffuser of the Blackline specification.

It makes a dramatic contrast with the Kingfisher blue finish, while the dark roof and cabin creates a lower, sportier visual impression. The colour split is repeated in the 22" ten-spoke wheels with a painted finish in Kingfisher and Beluga. Selflevelling Bentley wheel badges add the finishing touch to the exterior. The interior of this unique

The interior of this unique Bentayga EWB is as stunning as it is meticulously crafted, and the customers spent many hours exploring the palette of choice with Phill Dean.

Their choices included the fourseat configuration with Bentley's airline seat specification for the two rear seats, Naim for Bentley audio system and mood lighting. More vibrant however is the customers' own vision of luxury, with a cabin in the dramatic combination of Mandarin and Imperial Blue leather.

Light, contemporary and sustainable Open Pore Koa Veneer was chosen for the fascia, rear centre console, door inners and picnic tables. But it's the flashes of Kingfisher accent hide that make the most dramatic impact, appearing on the seat bolsters, lower fascia, six oclock tab on the steering wheel, gear lever and door trim. Kingfisher hide is also revealed on the upper surface of the picnic tables when extended.

A Mulliner key box provides security for jewellery and valuables and is delivered in a combination of Imperial Blue hide and Mandarin, with Imperial Blue Alcantara for the inner surfaces.

Bentley seat emblems are embroidered in Kingfisher, with the same colour being used for contrast stitching throughout the cabin. Even the Imperial Blue comment

the Imperial Blue overmats feature Kingfisher micro piping with Mandarin stitching and outer binding. Fittingly, the door treadplates are engraved with a "One of One" message bespoke to the customer.

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Sikhism advocates equality, social justice, service to humanity, and tolerance for other religions. The essential message of Sikhism is spiritual devotion and reverence of God at all times while practicing the ideals of honesty, compassion, humility and generosity in

everyday life. The Sikhs understand their religion as the product of five pivotal events. The first was the teaching of Guru Nanak: his message of liberation through meditation on the divine name. The second was the arming of the Sikhs by Guru Hargobind. The third was Guru Gobind Singh's founding of the Khalsa, its distinctive code to

be observed by all who were initiated. At his death came the fourth

event, the passing of the mystical Guru from its 10 human bearers to the Guru Granth Sahib. The final event took place early in the 20th century, when Sikhism underwent a profound reformation at the hands of the Tat Khalsa. Sikhs are universally proud of their distinct faith.

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Minimalist design, traditional brand values and iconic go-kart handling

Following the launch of the all-new MINI Cooper Electric, the Cooper family expands with the introduction of two new petrol models: the MINI Cooper C and the performance enhanced **MINI** Cooper S.

MINI Cooper S. Like its all-electric counterpart, the MINI Cooper combines minimalist design, traditional brand values and iconic go-kart handling; and is available in three well specified trim levels – Classic, Exclusive and Sport. Priced from £22,300 RRP, first customer deliveries will take place in spring 2024. The car is ideal for all those people who want to drive a classic MINI 3-door and appreciate the traditional performance and characteristic sound of a combustion engine. With an increased output of 204 hp the four-cylinder engine of

With an increased output of 204 hp, the four-cylinder engine of the MINI Cooper S accelerates the vehicle from 0-62 mph in just

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33 Motors

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6.6 seconds, with a maximum torque of 300 Nm. Classic, Exclusive and Sport, with System 9. each trim offering an array of The upper half of the screen

While the MINI Cooper C is equipped with a 156 hp, three-cylinder engine, which delivers a torque of 230 Nm and is capable of completing the 0-62 mph sprint in just 7.7 seconds.

Adding to the overall driving experience, both models are equipped with a suspension and damping system designed for handing and powerful precise brakes.

The exterior:

cult status included

With its purist design compact silhouette, the and fifth generation MINI Cooper embodies the brand's core principles: go-kart handling and creative use of space. The silhouette features clear

surfaces, short overhangs and a short bonnet; combined with a achieve typical MINI proportions. The front end is characterised by

a new octagonal grille with filigree contour.

Positioned either side are newly designed circular LED headlights, which are available optionally with three customisable light signatures, each with a specially orchestrated welcome and goodbye animation. The rear of the MINI Cooper

features clear surfaces and redesigned matrix lights which can be switched to different modes in the same way as the headlights.

each trim offering an array of exterior and interior personalisation options

The interior: classic, innovative Inspired by the classic Mini, the MINI Cooper's interior is minimalistic, with the entire cockpit focussed on just three elements: the new Vescin steering wheel, a 24cm circular OLED display and toggle bar.

The dashboard is constructed using a textile surface, and behind the steering wheel, the optional Head-up Display ensures that all relevant content appears in the driver's field of vision.

To create additional space, all the most important driving functions including parking brake, gear selector, start/stop key, Experience Mode toggle and volume control are directly accessed via the toggle bar. An opening panoramic glass sunroof floods the cabin with natural light, while the removal of the gearstick generates extra space for a new Wireless Charging shelf.

By folding down the rear seats in a 60:40 ratio, the luggage compartment can be expanded from 210 litres to provide a maximum volume of up to 725 litres.

Revolutionary circular

OLED display Central to the Cooper's interior is a circular, 24cm OLED display, where all vehicle functions can be operated via either touch or voice And, it's available in three trims: control using MINI Operating

M8EI 427

displays vehicle-related information such as speed and important information on vehicle status, while the lower area houses Navigation, Media. Phone and Climate.

In the Home menu, other widgets are displayed in thumbnail view to the left and right of the current menu function. Swiping up from the lower edge of the screen reveals a tool belt where favourite functions can be stored and called up rapidly.

All other functions can be accessed via the menu with the display returning to the default setting via the home button.

The temperature for the driver and front passenger is permanently displayed on the left and right-hand edge of the screen. Climate control

settings are also integrated into the MINI Interaction Unit and can be adjusted on the top layer by touch or voice command. Depending on the Experience Mode selected, a single tap on the speed display transforms the entire unit into a MINI-typical speedometer. "Hey MINI!":

Intelligent Personal Assistant

Just say "Hey MINI" to activate the MINI Intelligent Personal Assistant (IPA) on the OLED

display. A 3D visualisation then appears in the form of a car avatar or MINI's divital companion Spike. digital companion, Spike. Interacting with the MINI IPA, the digital driver can use their voice to control a wide range of options such as telephony. navigation. entertainment and other vehicle

functions New driver assistance systems

The new MINI Cooper offers numerous driver assistance systems for safe and comfortable driving. As standard, the Safe Exit function monitors the area around the parked vehicle and warns approaching road users before the door is opened. This function not door is opened. This function not only delays the unlocking of the doors, but also uses light signals

doors, but also uses light signals outside the vehicle to warn of a possible collision. Utilising the MINI Cooper's 12 ultrasonic sensors and four surround-view cameras, the Driving Assistant Plus package provides support for steering, lane keeping, and automatic speed and distance and automatic speed and distance control to ensure even more comfortable driving experiences.



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The areas of England that produce the most football players - London crowned top London is the best region for football, producing 57 England players, over the past 24 years.

A new study has analysed which areas of England have produced the most football players on the men's England team within the past 24 years.

The East Midlands and the South West has produced the fewest number of players, at just 7 each. New research has revealed that London has produced the highest number of England footballers over the past 24 years.

over the past 24 years. The study looked at 204 male England team players of the past 24 years to see which regions in England they were born in.

London is the region that has produced the most players, with 57 footballers on the men's England team, including David Beckham, Bukayo Saka, Harry Kane, and formed player turned manager Gareth Southgate.

London is the region that has produced the most players, with 57 footballers on the men's England team, including David Beckham, Bukayo Saka, Harry Kane, and formed player turned manager Gareth Southgate.

Ranking close in second is the North West which has produced 50 players. Looking more closely at the region reveals that Merseyside has produced 18

football players, including Wayne Rooney and Steven Gerrard, while Greater Manchester has produced 17 players including Marcus Rashford and Gary and Phil Neville.

Gary and Phil Neville. Jumping down to third is Yorkshire and the Humber, producing 22 players. Among these are Harry Maguire and Dominic Calvert-Lewin who were both born in Sheffield. Maguire currently plays for Manchester United, while Calvert-Lewin plays for Everton F.C.

The South East placed fourth with 20 players, while the West Midlands produced 19 players. Hertfordshire produces the most here with five players.

In seventh place is the North East which has produced eight players. Within the region, Northumberland has produced seven players, while Tyne and Wear has produced just one.

Tyne and Wear has produced just one. Joint last place goes to both the East Midlands and the South West, each producing only seven players over the last 24 years.

over the last 24 years. Speaking on the findings, Steven Ellis of NoDepositFriend.com, who conducted the research, says: "The football-rich heritage of London and the North West, exemplified by clubs like Chelsea, Arsenal, Manchester and Liverpool, contributes significantly to the development of skilled players, resulting in a greater representation in the national team compared to other regions.

"In contrast, the East Midlands and the South West may face challenges in player development, given the potential lack of top-tier clubs and robust football infrastructure, resulting in a lower number of players from these regions making it to the national team."





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The return of F1 to Baku on the weekend of April 28th - 30th, will mark the seventh time the pinnacle of motorsport has raced on the streets of Azerbaijan's historic capital city. The Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix will be the first of

six races in the 2023 season to stage a sprint race, guaranteeing three days of high-octane, ultra-competitive

guaranteeing three days of high-octane, ultra-competitive racing for fans to enjoy. The Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix 2022 saw Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen become the sixth different winner in six races at Baku as he stormed to a crucial victory in his quest for the driver's title in front of thousands of fans who had returned to the Baku Grandstands for the first time since 2019. BCC's General Director, Magsud Farzullayev, was delighted to announce the launch of ticket sales this morning: "We are thrilled to announce the launch of ticket sales for the next Formula 1 race weekend in Baku, the

sales for the next Formula 1 race weekend in Baku, the seventh time we have welcomed F1 to our beautiful city. "Last year's race was another amazing instalment that

showed once again that this sport is nothing without its fans.

"As always, we expect another exhilarating instalment on the streets of Baku. With a different winner every year so far, it is clear that no one can predict what will happen when F1 returns to our awesome circuit but one thing we are absolutely certain of is that there will be no shortage of drama!'

Now, Baku City Circuit (BCC), the Promoter of the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix is offering fans a limited supply of special 'early bird' discounts of 20% on the cost of all four-day tickets, an offer that runs until January 15th, 2023.

Moreover, all Junior tickets will be sold at 30% less than the cost of adult tickets throughout the entire sales phase. Tickets to the 2023 race weekend will be available for purchase to fans from home and abroad and will offer up

full F1 racing schedule as well as the F2 support series featuring the racing superstars of tomorrow. A 4-day ticket includes Grandstand access to not only

A 4-day ticket includes Grandstand access to not only the three days of racing as well as all accompanying entertainment offerings but also to a special Public Pit Lane Walk on Thursday 27th April. Four-day early bird tickets are on offer in a variety of categories, ranging from General Admission 'Roaming Tickets', to Grandstand to VIP Hospitality and Paddock Club to ensure there is a suitable option for everyone to prior the grant tage action on the planat line and in enjoy the greatest racing action on the planet live and in person at one of the world's fastest and most challenging street circuits that has to date delivered six different winners in its previous six editions.

To find out more, including ticket prices, visit: https://www.bakucitycircuit.com/

F1's most unpredictable race launches ticket sales ahead of seventh Grand Prix in Baku

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DESHI WHITES Multicultural Fans Group Supporting Leeds United FC

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"Together, let's embrace the power of football to bridge cultures and build lasting connections."

Football fandom

Pioneering fan club, Deshi Whites, celebrates multiculturalism in football

Continued from page 40

"We hope Deshi Whites brings together the community through fan engagement, and we are grateful to the fans for the diversity initiative, Leeds United Foundation, and Hamara HLC for the ongoing support," stated Humayun Islam, Director of ISSE, emphasising the collaborative effort behind the initiative.

Komar Uddin, a long-time Leeds United supporter, expressed his enthusiasm for Deshi Whites, added: "I have been a Leeds United fan for many years, and Deshi Whites will hopefully create an opportunity for me to engage with the club more closely."

Likewise, Kutub Zilanee eagerly anticipates getting more involved with

Deshi Whites and relishing match day experiences at the iconic Elland Road Stadium. "I can't wait to get more involved and hopefully enjoy matchday experiences at the iconic Elland Road Stadium," said Zilanee.

The launch event was organised under the guidance of Jonir Ali, chairman of Cross Flatts FC, a project of Hamara HLC. Ali's dedication and support have been instrumental in bringing Deshi Whites to fruition, symbolising the collaborative efforts within the community.

Deshi Whites invites all football enthusiasts to join them in celebrating diversity, unity, and the shared passion for Leeds United FC at the launch event. "Together, let's embrace the power of football to bridge cultures and build lasting connections," they say.



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DESHI WHITES

Multicultural Fans Group Supporting Leeds United

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Pioneering fan club, Deshi Whites, celebrates multiculturalism in football

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A pioneering multicultural fans group dedicated to supporting Leeds United FC, welcomed fans at their launch on 13th February, at the esteemed Old Cockburn Sports Hall in Beeston, Leeds. As a grassroots initiative, Deshi Whites aims to forter industry within the Leeds United for the spirit of unity and whites embodies the spirit of unity and

foster inclusivity within the Leeds United fanbase, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds to experience the thrill of football fandom and

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camaraderie.

Continued on page 39



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