

absolute india

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XBB.1.16 VARIANT DRIVES GLOBAL SURGE IN COVID CASES, DEATHS

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) so far, 3,648 sequences of the Omicron XBB.1.16 variant have been reported from 33 countries, including India, on open research platform GISAID, the global health body said. Meanwhile, India on Monday reported 7,178 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, according to the data shared by the Union health ministry.

- Although there has been a "slight increase" in XBB.1.16-related hospitalisation in India and Indonesia, the levels are "much lower than seen in previous variant waves", as per the WHO.
- Further, "available information does not suggest that XBB.1.16 has additional public health risk relative to XBB.1.5 and the other currently circulating Omicron descendent lineages".
- "However, XBB.1.16 may become dominant in some countries and cause a rise in case incidence due to its growth advantage and immune escape characteristics," the WHO added.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Omicron subvariant XBB.1.16, present in 33 countries, is making a fresh surge in Covid infections as well as deaths in Italy, the US, the UK, Vietnam, and other nations, including India. According to the Italian Ministry of Health, the country recorded 27,982 new positive cases during April 14 and 20, compared to the previous week (21,779). The number of deaths also increased by 48.1 per cent, totalling

191, compared to the previous week (129). Latest estimates from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the subvariant XBB.1.16 accounts for 9.6 per cent of new infections this week - up from nearly 6 per cent of cases the week before and about 3 per cent two weeks prior. The UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) in the latest technical briefing said there were at least 135 cases of Omicron XBB.1.16, in the UK. It also claimed five lives in England. Media reports state that Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam logged 56

fresh coronavirus cases with 42 hospitalisations during the past 24 hours, on April 23. Currently, 180 patients are receiving treatment in medical facilities and 57 cases require mechanical ventilation. In addition, Singapore and Australia also are seeing over 100 Covid cases. The current Covid surge in India is showing signs of slowing. In the last seven days, cases across the country rose by 20 per cent, a significantly lower rate than the 80 per cent to 110 per cent spikes seen in the previous five weeks, as the seven-day case count fell in four states where infections had earlier been surging. Kerala, which has been reporting the highest number of new cases, logged a 13 per cent drop in the current week. Cases also fell in Gujarat, Himachal, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, while showing no rise in Maharashtra. The global health body, last week, also upgraded XBB.1.16 as a Covid-19 "variant of interest" (VOI) due to its "sustained increase" and "growth advantage" reported from several countries. Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 response at WHO said in a tweet that XBB.1.16 has shown "growth advantage and immune escape".

NITISH MEETS MAMTA AND AKHILESH, SAYS AIM TO THROW OUT BJP

Team Absolute | Kolkata

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar on Monday stressed that the opposition parties need to shed their egos to unite against the BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The remarks came after Banerjee met Nitish Kumar and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav at the state secretariat of Nabanna IN THE afternoon. After the meeting, the Chief Ministers addressed the media and stressed for an opposition unity which has to be achieved by shedding individual egos. "We are always together. The BJP has become the hero and there is a need to convert them into zero. There is no question of personal ego. In the coming days we will move together," Banerjee said. Echoing her, Nitish Kumar said that all the anti-BJP opposition parties will have to unite before the 2024 elections. "Let us all sit



together and discuss how to move ahead in the coming days. We had an extremely fruitful discussion and we have agreed that all will have to get united and move together," he said. However, from the brief media interaction, it was clear whether the two Chief Ministers agreed on including Congress in the bigger united opposition alliance. Continuing his pitch for opposition unity ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Bihar Chief Minister Bihar Nitish Kumar and his deputy Tejashwi Yadav met Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow

on Monday evening. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Nitish Kumar said that time had come for all parties to come together and throw out forces that had done nothing for the country. "There is no work being done in the country - the only work is publicity. In Uttar Pradesh, no work has been done except publicity," he said. Nitish Kumar made it clear that he was no a Prime Ministerial candidate and said that his effort was only to bring the maximum number of parties on one platform and ensure removal of BJP from power.

'Better to wind up CBI'

SC sets aside Telangana HC order asking CBI to give questionnaire to YSRCP MP

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday set aside the Telangana High Court, which directed the CBI, investigating the murder of former Andhra Pradesh Minister Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy, to provide a written questionnaire in advance to MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy, who is also under the agency's scanner. The top court said it is really perturbed by the high court order. During the hearing, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha orally observed that if this is the standard for investigation, then it is better to wind up the CBI and added that imagine other accused citing this as a precedent. "First, anticipatory bail. Second, questionnaire by CBI. This is like rewriting criminal law jurisprudence... at the end of it, the CBI may or may not arrest you... the choice is of the investigating agency," the Chief Justice told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Avinash Reddy. The Chief Justice said if this is the yardstick, then the same written questionnaire will have to apply in all CBI and ED cases. "Look what the high court said, the petitioner shall attend the CBI office, the question and answer shall be in printed written form. Questionnaire may be handed over to the petitioner,



why do we need the CBI?" The top court observed that the high court has misapplied itself and passed an extraordinary order and such orders prejudice the investigation, especially when the CBI is ascertaining the role of several accused. It termed the high court order unwarranted, while quashing the direction the high court had issued to the CBI. However, the top court said the high court can proceed with the hearing of the anticipatory bail plea of Avinash Reddy on merits.

NO HEAT WAVE IN MOST PARTS OF INDIA FOR A WEEK: IMD

New Delhi: There will be no heatwave for the next seven days in most parts of the country, the weather office said today, in a big relief after days of scorching heat. A fresh wet spell is expected in the northwest region from Friday, it added.

Earlier this month, it had predicted above-normal maximum temperatures in most parts of the country except northwest and peninsular India, during April-June. The maximum temperatures were between 36-39 degrees Celsius in the northwest, central, and east India on Sunday, while it was 30-35 degrees in the rest of the country. The Himalayan region saw it between 15-25 degrees. "No heat wave conditions are likely in the country during the next seven days," the India Meteorological Department said in its latest bulletin. It said that the western Himalayan region is likely to receive rainfall from Wednesday and the northwestern plains from Friday. Thunderstorms have been predicted in central Maharashtra, Telangana, and southern Madhya Pradesh between Tuesday-Thursday. Southern states like Tamil and Kerala are likely to receive rain for the next three-four days. In Maharashtra, all schools affiliated with the state board have been shut till June 15 while the summer vacation extends till June 30 in Vidarbha region.

Wrestlers move SC for FIR against WFI President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat and other wrestlers have moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction for registration of an FIR against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. As senior advocate Narendra Hooda mentioned the plea before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Monday, the Chief Justice asked Hooda to mention the matter again on Tuesday as his petition was not on the list of mentioning matters. According to the plea, Phogat and other wrestlers have cited an inordinate delay in registration of an FIR by Delhi Police against the WFI chief and urged the apex court to issue a direction to police to lodge a case against him. Counsel familiar with the development said the matter will be mentioned again for early hearing in the Supreme Court

on Tuesday. Amid the ongoing protests by wrestlers against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the Delhi Police have reportedly sought a report from the probe committee that was established by the Sports Ministry in response to the complaints. "We have received seven complaints and are currently conducting an inquiry into all of them. We will register an FIR once concrete evidence is obtained. In the course of our inquiry, we have requested a report from the Sports Ministry's probe committee that was established to investigate the accusations of sexual harassment made against the WFI chief," said a senior police official. On Sunday, Olympian wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Phogat and other top Indian grapplers, restarted their protest against the WFI chief in Jantar Mantar in central Delhi. An Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist, Phogat broke down while speaking to reporters.

India begins 'Operation Kaveri' to rescue Indians stranded in Sudan



New Delhi | Agencies

About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan under Operation Kaveri that has begun to evacuate nationals from the crisis-torn Sudan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Monday. "Operation Kaveri gets underway to bring back our citizens stranded in Sudan. About 500 Indians have reached Port Sudan. More on their way,"

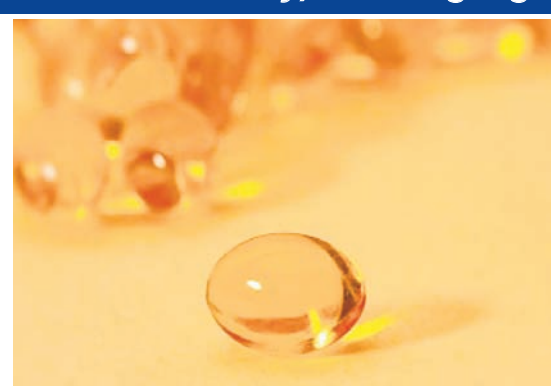
Jaishankar tweeted. India has positioned two heavy-lift military transport aircraft in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah and a naval ship at a key port in violence-hit Sudan as part of its contingency plans to evacuate its stranded nationals. The development comes even as France and Saudi Arabia have evacuated some Indians along with citizens of other countries as part of their evacuation mission from Sudan.

Helpline number issued to help the citizens of MP, HS made nodal officer
Bhopal : Citizens of Madhya Pradesh/India who are stranded in Sudan can register their information by calling the telephone number 91-755-2555582 for any kind of help. Residents of Madhya Pradesh whose family members or relatives are stuck in trouble in Sudan, can register information by calling CM Helpline 181 for their help. Along with this, information can also be lodged on CM Helpline Portal (www.cmhelpline.mp.gov.in) for any kind of assistance related to Sudan Crisis.

Vitamin D levels may affect body's response to cancer treatment: Study

The findings, published online in the peer-reviewed journal CANCER, showed that for patients with advanced melanoma, it may be important to maintain normal vitamin D levels when receiving immunotherapy medications called immune checkpoint inhibitors. Vitamin D has many effects on the body, including regulation of the immune system.

"Of course, vitamin D is not itself an anti-cancer drug, but its normal serum level is needed for the proper functioning of the immune system, including the response that anti-cancer drugs like immune checkpoint inhibitors affect. In our opinion, after appropriately randomised confirmation of our results, the assessment of vitamin D levels and its supplementation could be considered in the management of melanoma." **Lukasz Galus, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poland**



LONDON | Agencies

Vitamin D levels may be key in determining the human body's response to anti-cancer immunotherapy, especially

among people with advanced skin cancer, according to a study. To see whether levels of vitamin D might impact the effectiveness of immune checkpoint inhibitors, the

team analysed the blood of 200 patients with advanced melanoma both before and every 12 weeks during immunotherapy treatment. A favourable response rate to immune checkpoint inhibitors was observed in 56.0 per cent of patients in the group with normal baseline vitamin D levels or normal levels obtained with vitamin D supplementation, compared with 36.2 per cent in the group with low vitamin D levels without supplementation. Progression-free survival -- the time from treatment initiation until cancer progression -- in these groups was 11.25 and 5.75 months,

respectively. Melanoma is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in melanocytes (cells that colour the skin). Melanoma can occur anywhere on the skin. Unusual moles, exposure to sunlight, and health history can affect the risk of melanoma. A previous study, published in Melanoma Research earlier this year, showed that people who took vitamin D regularly were less likely to have had melanoma in the past or currently. They were also deemed by dermatologists to be less likely to develop melanoma in the future.



EDITOR'S SPECS

26 regional parties got donations over Rs 189cr in 21-22

Twenty-six regional parties have received 5,100 donations worth Rs 189.801 crore -- both above and below Rs 20,000 -- during the 2021-22 financial year (FY), reveals a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). No donations have been declared by AIADMK, BJD, NDPP, SDF, AIFB, PMK and JKNC for FY 2021-22. The report focuses on donations declared by Regional Political Parties, during the Financial Year 2021-22, as submitted by the parties to the Election Commission of India (ECI). With regard to the total amount of donations, TRS leads with Rs 40.90 crore from 14 donations followed by AAP which has declared receiving Rs 38.243 crore from 2619 donations. JDU received Rs 33.257 crore that is the third highest amongst all regional parties. SP and YSR Congress have declared total donations Rs 29.795 crore and Rs 20.01 crore, respectively. Nearly 85.46 per cent or Rs 162.21 crore of the total donations received by regional parties, have been received solely by top five regional parties. ADR analysed 33 out of 54 regional parties and only 19 had submitted their donations reports to the ECI in the stipulated time period. Fourteen other regional parties have delayed their submission by a minimum of two days to 109 days. Maximum donations in cash were declared by IUML, which collected a total of Rs 5.55 lakhs, followed by KC-M with Rs 1 lakh, PDF with Rs 80,000, PPA with Rs 5,000 and AAP with Rs 120. Among all the states, donors from Tamil Nadu made the highest donations of Rs 5.55 lakhs in cash followed by donors from Arunachal Pradesh who donated a total of Rs 5,000 in cash. Nearly 4.78 per cent or Rs 1.828 crore of the total donations above Rs 20,000 made to AAP was received from abroad, the ADR report said.

ALL EYES ON BIHAR CASTE CENSUS: CAN IT BE THE NATIONAL TEMPLATE?

With the second phase of the caste based census underway in Bihar, the people of the state are starting to analyse its positives and negatives.

Ajay Kumar

The 'intellectual community' believes that it has some loopholes like the sub-castes in the Extremely Backward Class (EBC), Other Backward Castes (OBC), Dalit and Muslim communities will be counted but there is no provision to count sub-castes in upper castes. It has created suspicions in the minds of the people about the intentions of the state government, or this loophole being used for political purposes. Ashok Kumar, a Patna based private teacher, told IANS: "The state government is well aware that MLAs, MLCs and MPs of upper castes cannot advocate for their castes in Bihar. They believe that if they talk in the interest of upper caste people, their vote banks of lower castes may slip away from them and they might lose the election." "Two to three upper caste MLAs and MPs are in the RJD, BJP, JD-U, Congress, HAM and others but they are not vocal about the interests of their castes. On the other hand, Dalit and minority leaders talk in the interest of their castes. This is the reason why the state government is counting castes and sub-castes of EBC, OBC and the minorities but not in the upper castes. The leaders at the panchayat or block level may talk for the interest of their castes but in the rank of MLA, MLC and MP they cannot dare to do that. They are looking at their personal and party interests," Kumar said. "I am connected to the Bhumihar Ekta Manch Whatsapp group where a number of BJP leaders are also present. The BJP has decided to celebrate Babu Veer Kunwar Singh

birth anniversary on April 23 which is okay but I have pointed out to celebrate Parsuram Jayanti as well on 22 but no one reacted to it," Kumar said. No one knows the actual numbers of castes but there is a general perception in Bihar that the numbers of EBC, OBC and minority communities are much higher than upper castes like Bhumihar, Brahmins, Rajput and Kayasth. The BJP has traditional voters belonging to the upper castes while Nitish Kumar is an undisputed leader of the Lav-Kush community and Lalu Prasad Yadav is a leader of Muslim-Yadav and other lower castes. Jitan Ram Manjhi is a leader of Mahadalits and Chirag Paswan is a leader of the Dalit community. However, the caste based census has lots of positives as well. Dr Vijay Kishore, a Patna based economist said: "After the completion of caste based census, we would earmark the backwardness of a particular caste and community. Following that, the state and central governments are running many welfare programmes in the interest of EBC, OBC and minority communities. There is no political interest involved which I also believe will benefit the common people on the social, financial and political fronts." The first phase of the caste based census was completed in March this year where every house had a unique house code. The second phase kicked off from April 15 and will end in one month. In the second phase, Bihar government employees will go to every house and ask 17 questions printed on one sheet. The same will also be uploaded digitally as well so that anyone can access it from the inter-



net. The employees will ask the name of the family head, his/her father's name, age, sex, marital status, religion, caste, sub-caste (In case of EBC, OBC, minority) followed by code, educational qualification, profession, residential status (Staying in own house or rent), temporary migration status, owning computer, laptop, motor vehicles, agriculture land, residential land and income from all sources. Patna district magistrate and nodal officer of the caste based census in the district Dr Chandrashekhar Singh said: "It is

taking half an hour to collect the information on one family in physical and digital modes. We are also contacting people who are living abroad. We are asking their profession, tenure, castes, financial status with country code through video calling. Everything is going in a smooth manner." Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar said: "The report will be tabled in the Bihar Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad followed by it being sent to the Centre. The detailed report of the caste based census will be

put in the public domain as well. It will not only give the caste status of a particular person but also its financial status. It will help to make policies followed by the development of the people and eventually the state." "It is the responsibility of the Centre to conduct a census in the country. I am surprised that it has not happened in the last 12 to 13 years. The past governments were organising it every 10 years."

international

INDIAN NOT ALLOWED TO BRING PREGNANT SUDANESE WIFE HOME, CRIES FOR HELP

Meenakshi Iyer | Agencies

An Indian national in crisis-torn Sudan has been left in a spot after the Indian mission in Khartoum approved his evacuation request but left behind his pregnant wife who is a Sudanese national. Bobby Sebastian from Kottayam, Kerala, has been working in Khartoum for the past three years, and is married to Sudanese national Hala Muawia Mohamed Abuzaid. "Due to current unrest in the country and deadly situation we registered evacuation request to (the) Indian Embassy in Khartoum," Sebastian wrote in a message posted by author and migrant rights activist Rejimon Kuttappan on his social media. "The evacuation request was successful for me but unfortunately, my wife was not listed on the selected names... I feel it is very unsafe and dangerous to leave her here (Sudan), and also she is conceiving," the message read. Sebastian's Sudanese wife does not have a valid Indian visa or an OCI



card at the moment. According to Kuttappan, the couple has marriage documents, and the wife has also visited Kerala in the past. Sebastian has requested the relevant Indian authorities to intervene,

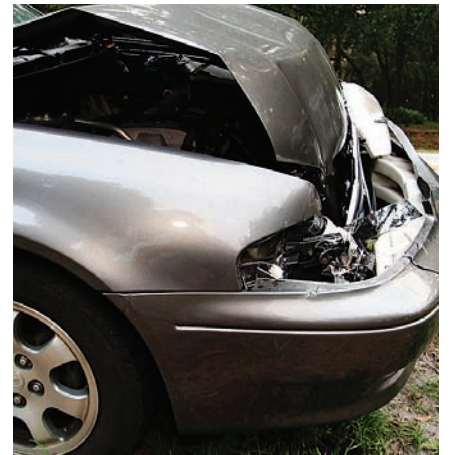
saying that there isn't "enough time to obtain a valid Indian visa" for his wife. Responding to Kuttappan's tweet, Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor said that he is now in direct touch with Sebastian, and has con-

tacted External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's office for an emergency evacuation. "I am in touch with him directly in Khartoum and have contacted @DrJaishankar's office to arrange for an emergency evacuation on a temporary permit till her OCI card can be processed," Tharoor wrote in response to the tweet. "MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) will probably need to coordinate with MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) to get this done. My sympathies are with him," Tharoor wrote. There are approximately 4,000 Indian citizens in Sudan, and according to the Indian Embassy in Khartoum, about 1,500 of them are longtime residents. Violent clashes that erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on April 15, continues unabated. According to Sudan's Health Ministry, the violence has left at least 424 people dead and about 3,730 wounded.

Two Indian expats killed in separate accidents in UAE: Report

Dubai | Agencies

Two Indian expats died in separate transport accidents during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays in the UAE, a media report said. Sharjah-based Abhilash, 38, had gone boating with his colleagues in Khor Fakkan when the accident took place, the Khaleej Times newspaper reported. Three other people, including a child, were injured in the accident with at least one of them in critical condition, the Sharjah Police said on Monday. There were 16 passengers on the boat when the accident took place, the report said, not mentioning the exact date or time of the accident. Abhilash's body is presently being kept at the mortuary in Khor Fakkan Hospital. He is survived by his wife and daughter. In another accident, Subeesh Chozhiamparambath, 35, from Kerala was killed and two others severely injured when a car in which they were travelling crashed in Al Mafraq area of Abu Dhabi. Subeesh from Palakkad was travelling from Al Samha to Mussafah for Eid shopping when he met with the accident on April 20. An Abu Dhabi resident for the past two years, Subeesh worked at a landscaping company, and died exactly a month before turning 36 years-old.



"It was a multiple-car crash in the Al Mafraq area. Subeesh along with two others were sitting in the back seat. The car they were travelling in was hit. Subeesh is no more," his cousin told Khaleej Times. Of the two people travelling with Subeesh, one person has been admitted to the ICU with severe injuries, and another has sustained minor wounds. "Subeesh got engaged. He was making plans to get married once he returned sometime later this year," said a relative, adding that the Indian Embassy helped them finish necessary paperwork for repatriation.

7.1-MAGNITUDE QUAKE JOLTS NEW ZEALAND'S KERMADEC ISLANDS

Wellington: New Zealand is assessing the possibility of a tsunami risk after a 7.1-magnitude earthquake jolted the country's northeast islands region on Monday. The quake hit the Kermadec Islands region with a depth of 49 km at 12:41 p.m. local time, Xinhua news agency reported. People should be self-evacuating immediately from all places near the coast where the earthquake was felt "for longer than a minute or was strong enough that it was hard to stand," New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency said in a statement. "In these areas a tsunami may have been generated and may arrive quickly, so evacuate immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as possible," it added.

NYC MAYOR NAMES INDIAN-AMERICAN TO RACIAL ADVISORY BOARD

New York | Agencies

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has appointed Indian-American Udai Tambar to a newly-formed advisory board on implementation of the Racial Justice Charter Amendments. The 15-member advisory board will help ensure the city continues to lead the nation in innovative, racial equity work and carries out the city's newly enshrined charter changes. Tambar most recently served as Vice President of Community Health at Northwell Health and is currently the President and CEO of New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL) -- the largest non-profit youth tennis and education program in the country, serving 85,000 K-12 NYC youth. "I am excited to partner with the new advisory board to represent NYC's most resilient communities," Tambar said in a statement released by Mayor Adams' office. "A majority of the families we serve at NYJTL are BIPOC New Yorkers, and it is crucial that this new racial equity infrastructure ensures that they live in a society where they can flourish and achieve their fullest potential," he added.

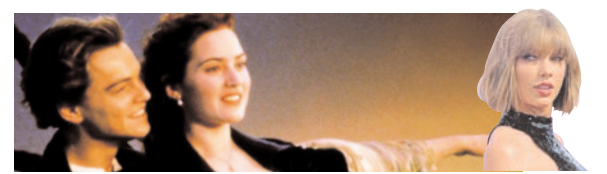


Tambar has devoted much of his career to serving the youth, including serving as Chief of Staff and Director of Youth & Children Services for the NYC Deputy Mayor for Health

and Human Services, and as the Executive Director for South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!). He graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts and received a Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton University. "Our city has come a long way in the fight for racial justice, but there is still much more work to do to end systemic inequity," Mayor Adams said in a statement. "We are proud to announce the launch of this advisory board, which will help us apply the critical actions needed to these important initiatives. We are fully committed to advancing equity for New Yorkers from all backgrounds and walks of life," he added. The advisory board will bring together 15 diverse leaders with significant experience successfully implementing large-scale change within government and with a proven commitment to racial equity, a release from Mayor Adams' office said. In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Equity, these leaders will tackle the structure, design, and development of the new, forthcoming office and commission, as well as the citywide racial equity plans and the true cost of living measure.

LIGHTNING STRIKES KILL 9 IN BANGLADESH

Dhaka: A series of lightning strikes in Bangladesh killed nine people in less than two hours amidst heavy rain, officials said on Monday. The deaths were reported in different areas of Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Sylhet districts between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Sunday, reports Xinhua news agency. The majority of the fatalities occurred in rural areas where people were working on their farmlands. Death due to lightning strikes is common in the densely populated country during this time of the year, as the weather changes from the dry to the rainy summer season. Bangladesh has seen a surge in lightning strike deaths, with hundreds of fatalities recorded annually in the past few years.



'Gadot should keep doing'

Ana De Armas responds to rumours that she may replace Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Ana de Armas has finally shared a response to the Wonder Woman rumours. The Cuban-born actress has broken her silence on the speculation that she will replace Gal Gadot as the new Wonder Woman, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). In the Wired Auto Complete Interview, the 'Blonde' actress was asked if she's going to take over the Wonder Woman role in the new DCEU under the supervision of James Gunn and Peter Safran. Showing her support for the Israeli actress to keep the mantle, she responded: "Well I feel like Gal Gadot is doing a great job, so, you know, I think she should keep doing that." Words swirled on the Internet that de Armas could become the new Wonder Woman after DC decided not to move forward with Patty Jenkins' 'Wonder Woman 3'. It was reported in December 2022 that the director decided to walk away from the project after Gunn and Safran, who are tasked with reshaping the DC landscape, turned down her treatment for the threequel. Clarifying the reports, Jenkins said in a lengthy statement released via Twitter, "Here are the facts: I originally left Rogue Squadron after a long and productive development process when it became clear it couldn't happen soon enough and I did not want to delay WW3 any further."



Elizabeth Olsen finds it 'ridiculous' doing her own stunts

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Elizabeth Olsen has talked about doing her own stunts and said that there are "stunt doubles" for a reason. During Wednesday's episode of 'The Late Show', the 'Love & Death' star told Stephen Colbert that she has found doing most of her stunts in the Marvel Cinematic Universe "ridiculous," reports [hollywoodreporter.com](#). When specifically doing stunts attached to a wire, she said: "Your stomach leaves you. It's like, I guess, the joy people get on roller coasters, which I don't get, but people love that feeling." The 'Godzilla' actress said when she first started doing stunts, she would just laugh, but that she's "definitely recovered from my giddiness. Sometimes I'm just like, 'Okay, how many more of these do you want? I can do this all day,' kind of thing. But sometimes I get a little freaked out." She even recalled filming a stunt for Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness, where she had to be dropped from 30 feet in the air. "They wanted to drop me pretty quickly so that it looked like it had an impact, but I kept landing like Peter Pan, kind of like fencing," she said. "I was like, 'Just use the double. This is so ridiculous. There is a double for a reason. Like, face replaces.' They do it all the time." But Olsen said that they ended up using her take in the film. "We've had so much technology, growth through these movies, and they just chose to really use me," she added.

'VERY HAPPY & COMFORTABLE TOGETHER'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Shawn Mendes showed Camila Cabello with literal flowers amid speculation of their reconciled romance following their Coachella reunion. Mendes was seen picking up flowers ahead of his meetup with Camila. He was photographed carrying a bouquet of white and purple flowers into his SUV in Los Angeles, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). The heartthrob appeared to be in a great mood, smiling as he returned to his parked vehicle while pushing a trolley loaded with a bundle of firewood and some grocery bags. He then loaded all the items he purchased at a store into his car. Shawn went low-key dur-



Shawn Mendes spotted picking up flowers before date night with Camila Cabello

ing the grocery run, wearing a white T-shirt, black pants and white sneakers. Just several minutes later, Camila was pictured visiting Shawn's house in West Hollywood. She appeared to be trying to go incognito as she sported an orange tracksuit with the hood over her head while entering his house about 30 minutes after he picked up the flowers. "My friends and I were walking down Santa Monica Blvd. just after 8 p.m. on Wednesday night when I looked up from my phone and saw Shawn and Camila walking toward us holding hands," the eyewitness told Page Six. "I clearly had a shocked look on my face because Shawn looked at me and smiled because he knew I recognised him," the fan went on dishing: "They were deep in conversation and seemed very happy and comfortable together."

Jennifer Aniston, Adam Sandler bond over their 'weird sense of humour'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Jennifer Aniston has declared that Adam Sandler is one of her "absolute favourite people in the world." The Hollywood co-stars are friends since their early twenties and starred alongside each in three films, including their latest 'Murder Mystery 2', and the former 'Friends' star said that having the "same weird sense of humour" is why they get along so well, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#). "It comes from us just being us, I think. We have been friends for more than 30 years. We met at Jerry's Deli on Ventura Boulevard when we were 20 and 22 and we have been friends ever since," she said to Best UK magazine. "This is the third movie we have got to do together, and Adam is always a joy to work with, as well as being one of my absolute favourite people in the world. We make each other laugh. We have the



same weird sense of humour. That's always a good thing." She added: "I am so happy we got to work together, and that we got to do it all again on this movie." Jennifer recently admitted Adam calls her out on her dating choices. The actress - who was previously married to Brad Pitt and Justin Theroux - revealed that Adam has been known to question some of her romantic decisions over the years. Appearing on 'The Tonight Show', she told host Jimmy Fallon: "If I get anything from him, it's 'What are you doing?' Usually based on someone I'm dating." It's not all one-sided though as the sitcom legend pointed out that she is more than happy to help him out too. She added: "I very much love to take care of him. He's so concerned with taking care of everybody else, which he really does,

and he doesn't take care of himself." Pausing for a moment, she continued: "I'm sorry to call you out on national television, Adam, but you have to know this. And I have a little arsenal of herbs in my trailer, and I make him smoothies when I can and give him all sorts of Chinese herbs when he's exhausted. I'm like the mobile pharmacy. I'm the set medic." Aniston admitted Sandler's wife Jackie Sandler tells her that him taking her advice lasts "about a minute."

SISU: A HARD HITTING ACCOUNT OF HITLER ERA THAT NAILS THE NAZIS, QUITE LITERALLY

FILM REVIEW
SHACHI CHATURVEDI
Cast: Jorma Tommila, Mimosa Willamo & Aksel Hennie
Director: Jalmari Helander
Runtime: 93 mins
Ratings: 3/5



Synopsis : During the final days of the Second World War, a lone prospector meets Nazis on a scorched-earth retreat in northern Finland. When the troops decide to seize his riches, they immediately realise they have encountered no ordinary miner.
Review : The film is divided into seven chapters, and it opens with a guy delving into the dirt in search of gold. Soon after, he discovers a plethora of objectives and chooses to take them someplace. Where? Go find out. Returning to the narrative, he comes across a Nazi soldier who decides to fool with him, unaware that he is none other than Koschei, the immortal.
A soldier who is said to have slain over 300 Russians on his alone. The murdering war

begins from here. The tale of the Nazis vs the Koschei. When it comes to the screenplay and plot, the well-written and executed script manages to offer goosebumps with high-octane action and a lot of dead bodies and blood. It is a touch over the top in places, but who doesn't like watching Nazis killed?
In terms of standout performances, I have no words for this man Jorma Tommila. The way he looks, moves, and conducts himself completely convinces you that he is capable of performing some humanly unattainable tasks. The dude wins hearts with all that blood on his face and some real acting.
Mimosa Willamo plays one of the hostages held by Nazis. She excels in her job as she is able to retain her emotions and expressions throughout.

Aksel Hennie plays Nazi's leader and he is the actual fun factor since he portrays himself as a tough guy but constantly pushes his squad members forward anytime he smells something fishy, which makes him a humorous aspect.
Take a bow, whoever did the VFX and make-up to depict the scars; everything looked so real and authentic that you were willing to take anything that was presented to you at one point.
Regarding the background score, as the film demands, there are no songs, but what a fantastic background sound effect. The complete silence and the unexpected explosion sounds send chills down your spine.
Aside from everything else, the presence of humour is admirable. Yes, you read that correctly. There are no words to describe how serious this picture is, yet how they have maintained the comic factor intact is pretty astonishing. During the most serious scenes, when you're sulking in your chairs and hiding to avoid the blood, you get to take a breath and laugh at how something is presented to you.
Conclusion : Although there are some over-the-top instances, the film as a whole is exceptional and should be seen in cinemas.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY
AGOS
DAOU
CCAA
Da
Kim Kardashian





'KHEL KHATAM, PAISA HAJAM'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has a savage response to the verified tick mark of a few Twitter accounts getting restored for free.

The micro-blogging website has restored the blue tick verification for accounts with more than one million followers on the platform, but Amitabh, who has a whopping 48.4 million followers, paid for the subscription.

Now, he has asked the platform in a hilarious way about why he had to make payments despite having such a huge following on the website.

Amitabh tweeted: "Are maare gae Gulfam, biraj me maare gae Gulfam. Ae Twitter mausi, chahchi, beheni, tai, bua... jhauan bhar ke ta naam hain tumhaar."

He added: "Paise bharwa liye hamara neel kamal khaatir. Ab kahat ho jekar 1 m follower unkar neel kamal free ma. Humar to 48.4 m hain, ab? Khel khatam, paisa hajam?"

It was just last week, when the micro-blogging website took away the blue marks from several verified accounts.

Big B gave it his own spin and asked about not getting the tick mark despite payment. A day later, when it was restored, he thanked Twitter and even wrote a song for Elon Musk, with a sprinkle of humour.



BIG B'S SAVAGE RESPONSE ON GETTING BACK HIS BLUE TICK ON TWITTER



'PERFECT SYNC'

Anushka Sharma, Virat Kohli have a 'dance pe chance' in the gym

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Power couple Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli shook-a-leg on Punjabi singer Shubh's song 'Elevated' in a new video. Anushka took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself dancing along with her husband Virat in coordinated steps in the gym.

Virat is seen dressed in a black T-shirt paired with grey pants and a baseball cap. Anushka is seen in a printed shirt paired with ripped jeans. The end is with a blooper, where the actress bumps into the cricketer and he's heard saying: "Aah."

The 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi' actress captions the video with "Dance Pe Chance," a song which featured in her debut film with Shah Rukh Khan.

On the work front, Anushka will next be seen playing the role of Indian bowler Jhulan Goswami in the film 'Chakda Xpress'. The film will be releasing on Netflix. The release date of the movie is not out yet.



Aakruti Bagla | Mumbai

Apart from her gorgeous looks, Aditi Rao Hydari has always managed to leave an indelible mark with her acting chops not only in Bollywood, but also down South. Looking at her trajectory, she might have played meaty roles in some films, but she has managed to give her best.

She has worked with some of renowned filmmakers like Vikramaditya Motwane, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Imtiaz Ali, and Mani Ratnam among others. The actress has also time and again expressed her adulation towards ace makers validates her craft.

Aditi shared, "I am a director's actor, and I proudly assert that. I like to come on set, be a sponge and surrender to their vision. I got such a feeling for the time on Mani Ratnam's set. I felt like a kid in the playground, taking risks, being curious and I knew that I would be nurtured."

She further said, "I have always wanted to work in various languages. I never looked at it as being a 'Pan-India' star. I observed it as cinema, story and feelings, which has no language. As a kid who has grown up in a multicultural environment, I am familiar with such experiences."

On the work front, Aditi will be next seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Heeramandi with Sonakshi Sinha, Manisha Koirala, Richa Chadha, and others. The actress will be seen in Gandhi Talks with Vijay Sethupathi.

'TRULY GRATEFUL TO ALL MY FANS'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shraddha Arya, who is seen playing the role of Preeta in the show 'Kundali Bhagya', shared her excitement as the show completes 1,500 episodes. She recalls her journey and expresses gratitude to Ekta Kapoor and the audience for the love and recognition. She said: "It is to the show, Ekta ma'am and the creative team that I owe Preeta becoming a household name and a much sought-after dinner-table companion for our viewers. All these years, the whole team of 'Kundali Bhagya' has worked very hard towards keeping the show on top and personally, I have loved every scene I have performed as Preeta." The show that started in 2017 is going through a lot of twists and turns as it has taken a 20-year-leap and Shraddha and the new generation of actors including Paras Kalnawat (as Rajveer), Sana Sayyad (as Palki) and Baseer Ali (as Shaurya), have entered the show.

About her journey on the show, Shraddha said: "Over these last 6 years, my co-actors, the whole crew and the sets have become a second home and like a family to me. With this milestone, I am truly grateful to all my fans and followers who have given their support to us over all these years."

Congratulations to the whole team, I promise, I will continue to always give my best as Preeta."

Shraddha Arya recalls her journey as her show completes 1,500 episodes



I KNEW I WOULD BE NURTURED: ADITI RAO HYDARI ON WORKING WITH MANI RATNAM

Jeet shares his 'movie was supposed to be a web series'

Shachi Chaturvedi | Mumbai

Chengiz is a 2023 Indian Bengali-language period action thriller co-written and directed by Rajesh Ganguly based on Neeraj Pandey's narrative. The film has received several accolades since its premiere. While discussing the film and the journey, Jeet had an exclusive interview with Absolute India News.

While discussing the process, the actor said that the film was planned to be a web series. "The idea of the story and how it has been told. When Rajesh narrated it to me, it was a much lengthier story; it was for OTT. Then we discussed that we should make it into a film and not keep it for too long, and Rajesh converted that idea into a film. It is not a film that we have made, it is the dream that we have lived," Jeet shared.

Later, while discussing the difficulties, the star shared, "When you are chasing a dream and aiming to reach a goal, nothing is difficult as long as you enjoy every bit of it, and to be honest, we enjoyed everything, from the filmmaking process to each other's company. We fought, we loved, but everything for just one goal: only to make Chengiz happen."

While discussing future aspirations, we asked Jeet what he was looking forward to, to which the actor responded, "If you ask me, we all live with the same desire and aspiration: that each day becomes better, and I'm trying to focus on that. As humans, we have insatiable desires. We desire something new every time we accomplish something."



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kriti Kharbanda