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Damage expected over 7 districts of Gujarat on June 15, says IMD

CYCLONE BIPARJOY

As the very severe cyclonic storm Biparjoy moves near the Saurashtra and Kutch coasts, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday said that damage is expected over Kutch, DevbhumiDwarka, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Morbi, Junagarh and Rajkot districts of Gujarat on June 15.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Biparjoy (pronounced as 'Biporjoy') over Northeast Arabian Sea moved nearly northeastward during past six-hours and lay centred at 2:30 p.m. on June 14 over the same region near latitude 21.9 degree N and longitude 66.5 degree E, about 260 km southwest of Jakhau Port (Gujarat), 270 km west-southwest of DevbhumiDwarka, 280 km west-southwest of Naliya, 330 km west of Porbandar, and 340 km south-southwest of Karachi (Pakistan)," said IMD in a statement.

"It would continue to move nearly northeastwards and cross Saurashtra & Kutch and adjoining Pakistan coasts between Mandvi (Gujarat) and Karachi (Pakistan) near Jakhau Port (Gujarat) by evening of



June 15 as a very severe cyclonic storm with maximum sustained wind speed of 125-135 kmph gusting to 150 kmph," it said.

The IMD further predicted that sea condition will be phenomenal over northeast Arabian Sea till June 15 evening and rough to very rough over adjoining east central Arabian Sea during the same period.

"The astronomical tides along

these districts could be up to 3-6 meters in different places and damage expected in these districts on June 15," said an IMD official.

ARMED FORCES PREPARED TO TACKLE ANY SITUATION, SAYS DEFENCE MINISTER



New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that the Indian Armed Forces are prepared to provide any assistance in tackling Cyclone Biparjoy.

"I spoke to all three service chiefs and reviewed the preparedness of the armed forces for the landfall of Cyclone Biparjoy," the Defence Minister said. He said that the armed forces are ready to provide every possible assistance to the civil authorities in tackling any situation or contingency due to the cyclone.

On Tuesday, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) had evacuated 50 staff of the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) in Okha, Gujarat. Meanwhile, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has said that it was prepared to tackle Cyclone Biparjoy, which is expected to make landfall in Gujarat on Thursday.

"NDRF has deployed 18 teams and 13 SDRF teams. The cyclone is expected to make landfall in Gujarat on the evening of June 15. More than 45,000 people have been evacuated to safe places. We are prepared for all the challenges after the landfall," said DG NDRF AtulKarwal.

SITHARAMAN REVIEWS PREPAREDNESS OF BANKS



New Delhi: With cyclone Biparjoy expected to make a landfall in the coastal regions of Gujarat on Thursday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday took a virtual review meeting with heads of various banks and insurance companies to review their preparedness to face the impact of the 'very severe' cyclonic storm.

"Smt @nsitharaman today chaired a meeting of Managing Directors and senior officials of various banks and insurance companies via VC to review their preparedness in view of the impending #CycloneBiparjoy," the Finance Ministry tweeted.

"MDs from the banks and insurance companies provided a detailed update on the precautionary measures for the #CycloneBiparjoy," the Finance Ministry said in another tweet.

During the meeting, Sitharaman said that all disaster management protocols should be followed and the staff should be made aware of them.

MP Polls

All eyes on Scindia loyalists who had jumped ship to BJP

Team Absolute | Bhopal

As the Assembly elections near in Madhya Pradesh, leaders switching sides to secure their political future is gaining momentum.

Against this backdrop, all eyes are on the loyalists of Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who along with him had jumped ship from the Congress to the BJP that resulted in the collapse of the Kamal Nath-led Congress government in 2020.

On Wednesday itself, BJP leader Bajinath Singh Yadav, considered to be close to Scindia, re-joined the Congress in the presence of senior party leaders Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh.

There is a buzz in the state that many Scindia loyalists are finding it tough to secure their political future, especially with the ruling BJP facing huge anti-incumbency in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.

The political future of most Scindia loyalists seems to be at stake, as the BJP leadership has made it clear that tickets to contest the upcoming elections will be distributed on the basis of surveys and keeping the winning probability of the candidates in mind.

In 2020, a total of 26 Congress MLAs (22 in March and four subsequently) had switched sides to the BJP along with Scindia, thus bringing down the Kamal Nath-led Congress government in Madhya Pradesh. However, seven of them had lost the bypolls held later,



including Imarti Devi, Raghuraj Singh Kasana, Gिरिराज Dandotiya, Adal Singh Kasana, Ranvirjatar, Munnalal Goyal and Jasmantjatar.

Given that BJP's Shivraj Singh Chouhan returned as the Chief Minister in 2020 primarily because of Scindia, 12 of the latter's loyalists were made Cabinet ministers.

They are - Tulsi Silawat, Govind Singh Rajput, Mahendra Singh Sisodia, Prabhuram Chaudhary, Pradumn Singh Tomar, Bisahul Singh, Hardeep Singh Dang, Rajvardhan Singh, O.P.S. Bhadoria and Brajendra Singh Yadav, among others.

Now, with the Assembly elections barely five months away, and with the Shivraj Chouhan-led government facing huge anti-incumbency for its nearly two-decade rule, the BJP

leadership is reportedly struggling to end the rift between the 'old' and 'new' party cadres in different constituencies.

After the last Assembly elections held in 2018, the Congress led by Kamal Nath had managed to return to power after 15 years. However, after 22 party MLAs led by Scindia joined the BJP, the Shivraj Chouhan-led saffron party returned to power in March 2020.

However, now Bajinath Singh Yadav returning to the Congress has given a jolt to the saffron camp. Not only because he was a strong supporter of Scindia, but also because he hails from Scindia's bastion in Shivpuri.

And with top state Congress leaders welcoming Yadav back into the party, it is seen as a signal that Scindia might be losing ground in his own bastion.

Earthquake strikes Kutch amid fear of Cyclone

Kutch: In a double blow to the region, an earthquake hit Kutch on Wednesday amidst the looming threat of Cyclone Biparjoy. The quake, measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale, struck 5 kilometers west-southwest from Bhachau, Kutch.

The epicentre of the quake, that took place at 5.15 p.m., was located at a latitude of 23.291 and a longitude of 70.293, with a depth of 18.5 kilometers, informed Gujarat government's Institute of Seismological Research.

This recent earthquake comes just weeks after the last seismic event in Kutch, which occurred in May 2023. The previous earthquake, measuring 4.2 on the Richter scale, struck the Khavda region of Kutch near the India-Pakistan border. As the region braced for the approaching cyclone Biparjoy, parts of the Saurashtra-Kutch region experienced heavy rainfall accompanied by strong winds, as reported by the Meteorological Department on Wednesday. According to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), in last 24 hours, 54 talukas across the Saurashtra and Kutch districts received more than 10 mm of rainfall. The districts of DevbhumiDwarka, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Porbandar, and Junagadh witnessed particularly intense rainfall.

Among the affected areas, Khambhaliyatalka in DevbhumiDwarka district recorded the highest rainfall with 121 mm, followed by Dwarka with 92 mm and Kalyanpur with 70 mm during the mentioned period, as reported by the SEOC.

Names of CBI, ED should be changed to 'BJP Sena': Kejriwal

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Central government of misusing the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by targeting the opposition leaders.

During a meeting with CPI general secretary D Raja and others, Kejriwal sought their support against the Central government's ordinance and accused it of using the CBI and the ED as tools for political purposes.

Kejriwal tweeted, "The names of CBI and ED should be changed to 'BJP Sena.' There was a time when these investigative agencies were respected. Whenever they conducted raids or made arrests, it appeared that the



person must have done something wrong. Today, these agencies have become mere political weapons of the BJP."

Kejriwal also criticized a provision in the Union government's ordinance that allows them to establish commissions and boards for the Delhi government.

"If that's the case, then why hold elections? The people of Delhi have decisively defeated BJP three times. They

were only given 3 out of 70 seats once, and 8 seats in another election. The BJP was even defeated in the MCD. If they can't win, they want to control Delhi through backdoor tactics," Kejriwal said. During the event, D Raja referred to Kejriwal as his great friend and expressed support for Kejriwal's stance on how the rights of Delhi are being undermined by the ordinance.

India aims to launch 'Global Biofuel Alliance' during G20 energy ministerial meeting next month

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Puri on Wednesday said that to resolve the common concerns of upcoming economies, India is proposing to launch the Global Biofuel Alliance under India's G20 presidency during the Energy Ministerial Meeting in July 2023.

In a meeting with International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Fatih Birol, the minister said that the aim of the Alliance is to implement projects in order to increase the deployment of biofuels and its related technology.

He also thanked IEA for supporting the India led initiative for launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance.

Puri pointed out that reducing technology gaps via advancement in development and deployment of the full range of emerging clean energy technologies requires urgent, collaborative action.



IEA estimated that on the investment front, India needs nearly \$150 billion per year in clean energy investment until 2030 to keep on track for its ambitious clean energy transition.

IEA estimated that on the investment front, India needs nearly \$150 billion per year in clean energy investment until 2030 to keep on track for its ambitious clean energy transition.

This is three times the current level of annual clean energy investments in India.

Meanwhile, the Petroleum Minister also informed Birol that despite turmoil in the energy sector, India has taken several measures to maintain energy security for its citizens.

"These include diversification of supplies, increase of alternate energy sources like biofuels, CBG, increasing E&P footprint along with focus on domestic production; and meeting energy targets through EVs & Hydrogen," he said.

He further said that, "I understand that IEA is willing to relax certain conditions in respect of India including mandatory eligibility criterion of maintaining crude oil or product reserves equivalent to 90 days of the previous year's net imports."

GUJARAT BECOMES FIRST STATE TO ISSUE DIGITAL HEALTH CARDS FOR STUDENTS

Gandhinagar | Agencies

The Gujarat government has taken the initiative to issue digital health cards for monitoring the cognitive development and nutrition level of school children.

Under the ShalaArogya-National Child Health Program (SHRBSK), Gujarat has become the first and only state in the country to implement such a system.

The launch of this comprehensive health check-up campaign took place on June 12, 2023, coinciding with the 20th ShalaPraveshotsav (School Enrolment Drive). Over the next 30 days, more than 1 crore school children across Gujarat will undergo health check-ups as part of this special campaign, ensuring their well-being. SHRBSK is a joint initiative between the central and state governments, catering to children from newborns up to 18 years of age. It covers students in Anganwadi centres, primary schools, secondary/higher secondary schools, as well as school dropouts. Through this program, the state government offers free health check-ups, diagnosing



various ailments including anaemia, malnutrition, skin diseases, learning disabilities, developmental delays, and other illnesses.

The ShalaArogya-National Child Health Program comprises 992 mobile health teams, each consisting of doctors, pharmacists, and health workers. These teams will conduct health check-ups of students across the state. Children diagnosed with ailments during the campaign will receive free treatment at government health institutions, ranging from Primary Health Centres to super specialty hospitals.

Key features One of the key features of this initiative is the

introduction of the 'Digital Health Card.' Designed to monitor students' nutrition levels and cognitive development, the digital health card will provide insights into various health parameters such as height, anaemia levels, and nutrition status. SHRBSK mobile health teams and community health officers will collaborate with school nodal officers to update students' health details on the digital health card, which will be accessible to both the students and parents. Furthermore, nodal teachers and community health officers will work together to facilitate Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA ID) for all students during the campaign. Integrating health and academic reports Gujarat's government is also integrating health and academic reports. The integration of data between the Health and Education departments aims to ensure the holistic growth and development of every student. From this year onward, health check-ups of school children will be conducted every three months, providing accurate and updated information about their well-being throughout the year.

NIA arrests PFI master weapons trainer in Karnataka

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday said that they have arrested a Popular Front of India (PFI) master weapons trainer, living under an assumed identity in Karnataka, for his involvement in the Nizamabad terror conspiracy case. The case pertains to a criminal conspiracy hatched by the leaders and cadres of banned outfit PFI to recruit and radicalise youth and provide them with arms training to promote and carry out terrorist activities with the ultimate objective of establishing Islamic rule in India.



Mohamed Yunus alias Yunus (33) of Nandyal, was working in the inverter business of his elder brother. When his house was searched in September 2022, he was found to be absconding along with his wife and two minor sons," said the official.

The NIA investigations have revealed that he had shifted his entire family from Andhra Pradesh and was hid-

ing out in the Cowl Bazar area of Bellary district of Karnataka, where he had assumed a new identity - Basheer, and a new profession as a plumber. Yunus was a master weapons trainer and was providing weapons training to the youth recruited by PFI in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana region. He was also the PE Training State Coordinator for these two states in the Nizamabad PFI case. "Yunus, who has been giving evasive replies during NIA interrogation, has named one Shaikh Ilyas Ahmed as also being involved in the PFI Weapons Training programme. Ilyas is currently absconding," the NIA said.



MODI GOVT'S SHAMELESS DRUM BEATING ABOUT NORTHEAST HAS DROWNED VOICES OF HUMANITY IN MANIPUR: KHARGE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Wednesday once again trained its guns at the Centre over the fresh killings in violence-hit Manipur, questioning the Modi government's "shameless drum beating" about northeast India.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, tweeted: "Nine people have lost their lives in Manipur violence, yesterday. Modi government's shameless drumbeating about Northeast India has drowned the voices of humanity in Manipur."

"Even as a beautiful border state of India is plunged into an unending spiral of raging fire, Prime Minister Modi has turned the other way -- Miscreants have ransacked five lakh ammunition pieces and 4,573 weapons from police armouries, and hundreds of places of worship have been destroyed."

He said that it is "unthinkable" that troops of Assam Rifles, which are operationally under Indian Army, have been left stranded and had to be supplied rations by army helicopters and the blockade of National Highway-2 has resulted in "massive logistical challenges".

Keeping up his attack, Kharge said: "Measures announced by Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) were too little and too late and failed to deliver on the ground. Modi has remained a mute spectator.



Modi has not even had the time to chair a meeting on Manipur. But, the Congress party shall keep questioning Modi government's rank incompetence".

Questioning why has the 'double engine' BJP government failed to restore peace and normalcy in Manipur, he asked if this was so because the BJP "intends to widen the fissures between ethnic groups for its cheap political gains?" and cited news reports of NDA's NEDA Chairman and Assam CM

Himanta Biswa Sarma and RSS' National Executive Member taking the help of insurgent groups to fight previous elections are clearly saying so.

He also questioned that why hasn't the Prime Minister not called an all-party meeting to deliberate political solutions? "It is high time the Modi government takes responsibility for their crimes perpetrated on the people of Manipur and becomes accountable," Kharge added.

Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary communications in-charge Jairam Ramesh said: "The agony of the people of Manipur continues unabated. Their agony is the nation's pain but clearly not the PM's - he continues to maintain silence. HM's belated visit and outsourced interventions to Assam CM are not having any significant impact."

The Congress leaders remarks came after at least 11 people were killed and 23 others injured when suspected militants attacked the Khamelock village in Manipur. A police official said that heavily armed militants attacked the village late on Tuesday night and fired at the villagers with automatic weapons killing nine people on the spot and injuring 23 others, including women.

Two people succumbed to their injuries during treatment. Manipur has witnessed devastating ethnic violence since May 3, killing over 120 people and injuring more than 350, besides destroying thousands of houses, large numbers of private and government vehicles and properties.

2,000-bed hospital to come up in Hyderabad, CM says efforts on to strengthen healthcare

Hyderabad | Agencies

Telangana celebrated Health Day on Wednesday as part of its formation day celebrations by laying foundation stone for 2,000-bed facility at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao laid foundation stone for Dashabdi block which will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,571 crore.

CM KCR, who also launched KCR Nutrition Kits scheme, said the government will continue its efforts to strengthen the healthcare sector and make it a role model for the country.

He stated that the performance of the doctors, nurses and senior officials of the state's Health Department during Corona was admirable. KCR said that, "In order to provide the best services to the people, we should be ready to face any pandemic like Corona."



He said that when the condition of patients infected with corona in private hospitals worsened, they sent patients to Gandhi Hospital. He said Gandhi Hospital's doctors saved the lives of such patients. The Chief Minister suggested the Health Department to improve Public Relations (PR) and prepare plans to ensure the doctors and medical staff reach out to people extensively.

He said the bed strength in NIMS has increased from 900

to 1500. With the construction of the new block, another 2,000 beds will be added.

"We are building big hospitals in the state. We are also building a super specialty hospital like no other in the world in Warangal," he said. Four super specialty hospitals will come up in four sides of Hyderabad under Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS).

He claimed that the excellent medical services right are available in the state and there is no need for anyone to go abroad for treatment. The Chief Minister pointed out that 70 per cent of deliveries are taking place in government hospitals against 30 per cent earlier. Maternal mortality and infant mortality has come down.

Health minister Harish Rao pointed out that the allocation for the health sector in 2014 was Rs. 2,100 crores and it went up to Rs. 12,367 crores in 2023-24.

ED seizes cash, documents in Uttarakhand paper leak case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Wednesday that it recently conducted searches at various locations in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in connection with the paper leak of exams conducted by the Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Selection Commission (UKSSSC).

The search operation resulted in seizure/freezing of cash as well as bank balances amounting to Rs 1.14 crore. The ED had initiated the investigation based on FIRs registered by the Uttarakhand Police against various persons regarding paper leak of exams conducted by the UKSSSC in Dehradun.

"During the investigation, it came to light that RMS Techno Solutions (India) Pvt



Ltd, Lucknow, was the printing press where the question papers were being printed. The company played a major role in the leak. The exam papers were sold to a number of candidates for Rs 10-15 lakh each by the middlemen and employees of RMS Techno Solutions. Huge amount of money was taken by the accused persons from the potential candidates in lieu of leaking the papers to them," the ED said.

An ED official said that during the course of investigation, it was also revealed that the accused persons built properties worth crores of rupees in a short span of time. The ED action has resulted in seizure/freezing of cash as well as bank balances amounting to Rs 1.14 crore along with various incriminating documents, property papers and corroborative evidence to prove the offence of money laundering.

Centre 'deliberately not providing' rice to Karnataka, alleges Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru | Agencies

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said that the Centre is "doing politics" in regards to the free rice distribution scheme and "deliberately not providing" the commodity to the state.

Addressing mediapersons in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah said: "Food Corporation of India's (FCI) deputy manager has informed that it has seven lakh tonne rice in stock. In spite of having stock, why is the Centre not supplying rice? BJP leaders are anti-poor. They are resorting to all these tactics to bring a bad name to the Congress government."

"We are requesting the Chhattisgarh government to supply rice," he stated.

"We had a discussion with the FCI's deputy manager. He had assured the state Food and Civil Supplies Minister K. H. Muniyappa and us to supply rice. He had also written a letter on June 12 and promised to supply rice with the consent from the Centre. After this development, the Central government has taken a political decision," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah alleged.



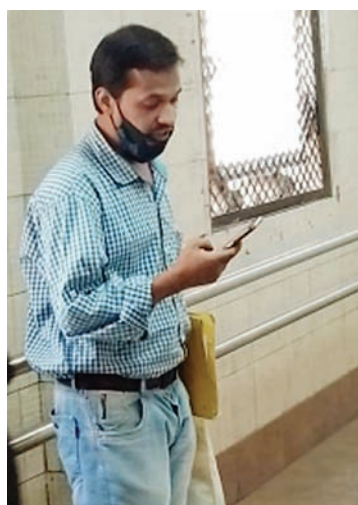
"It was agreed to provide 2,08,425 metric tonnes of rice to Karnataka. But, they have written a letter

on June 13 saying that the states can't be provided wheat and rice under the Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS). The Central government has taken a political decision deciding not to give rice to Karnataka, only to bring bad name to the Congress government," Siddaramaiah charged.

"The Centre is carrying out a conspiracy to ensure that the free rice scheme is not implemented in the state. Whatever conspiracy it might be, we will try to implement the scheme. The Tamil Nadu government has not given 100 per cent assurance in terms of providing rice. Muniyappa will reach Telangana and a clear picture will come out after discussion with the CM and ministers there," he claimed.

The five guarantees are already announced and their commencement dates are also being declared. The first guarantee of free travel for women is already in place. "We have promised 10 kilograms of rice for Antyodaya card holders. Presently, the state government is providing five kilograms of rice. We had been told that five kilograms would be given in addition. If we have to give free rice, 2.28 lakh metric tonne rice is required," said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Conversion racket: 60 religious videos found in accused Kaleem's mobile



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The investigators are scanning the bank account details of Mohammad Kaleem, a B.Tech graduate who was apprehended on

June 9 following a complaint of religious conversion filed against him by a shelter home's caretaker, Sandeep Sagar, sources in Delhi Police said on Wednesday.

Sagar, the caretaker at the Turkman Gate night shelter, alleged that Kaleem had been pressuring him to convert to Islam by offering inducements such as a government job, wedding proposal and financial incentives.

The police have also found 60 religious videos in Kaleem's mobile phone.

"He had created WhatsApp groups in the name of welfare programmes in which videos and conversion content were regularly posted. When the investigators scanned his phone, around 60 religious videos were recovered from it which he had even shared on the WhatsApp groups," sources said.

The sources also said that after Sagar claimed in the complaint that he was even offered Rs 1 lakh to get

converted, the police have taken the details of Kaleem's bank accounts to find out if he was getting any funding through hawala or e-wallet.

According to sources, the accused has also informed the police about three other bank accounts in Agra, Bharatpur and Seelampur madrassas. However, the accounts are yet to be scanned by the police.

The investigators suspect that Kaleem was getting funding to run the conversion racket.

As per the FIR, Sagar had also met two persons at the shelter home, Feroz and Zeeshan, who used to live there. Kaleem used to visit the Turkman Gate night shelter to meet Feroz and Zeeshan. The trio would collect money for a madrasa in Delhi.

"Kaleem forced me to watch some videos on YouTube. He told me that Hinduism has no virtues. He also told me that if I convert to Islam, he would arrange a marriage for me. Additionally, I was promised Rs 1

lakh per month and a government job if I did what he said," Sagar alleged in the FIR.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central), Sanjay Kumar Sain, had said that suspicious items have been recovered from the cellphone of Kaleem.

As per the FIR, Kalim had forced two Hindu youth, Sujit Kumar and Vicky Sharma, to convert to Islam. Kalim told them that Hinduism had flaws and also made significant efforts to lure them into his trap.

Sagar has also alleged that recently Kalim succeeded in converting a Hindu youth named Sanjeet Kumar to Islam. Sanjeet is now living under the name Abbas.

The investigators have reportedly found videos of controversial preacher Zakir Naik in Kaleem's phone.

"One of the WhatsApp groups was ostensibly about drug de-addiction. But there was nothing related to de-addiction in it but only contents related to conversion," sources said.

BJP-RSS maligned UPA by promoting Anna Hazare, Kejriwal: Gehlot

Jaipur | Agencies

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday accused the BJP-RSS of maligning the atmosphere against the erstwhile UPA government.

"By promoting Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal, the BJP-RSS created an environment against the UPA government. It also defamed the UPA by raising the issues of 2G spectrum, Coalgate etc. Today, no one takes the names of these 'scams'. Did anyone go to jail? There was so much hue and cry over Lokpal, but it is hardly discussed in the country today. However, government changes in the name of religion," Gehlot said while addressing the Gandhi Darshan Sammelan here on Wednesday.

Targeting the Central government, Gehlot said that 'critics' are being treated as 'traitors'.



"I like when me or my government is criticised. It may be that there are some areas where there is scope for improvement. What's the problem with that? If I don't like criticism, how will the truth come out? The allegations levelled by the Twitter co-founder (Jack Dorsey) are serious, the situation is not good," said Gehlot.

To recall, during an interview on a YouTube channel on Monday, Dorsey was asked if he had faced any pressure from foreign governments.

Dorsey had replied: "India,

for example, India is one of the countries which had many requests around farmers protests, around particular journalists which were critical of the government, and it manifested in ways such as 'we will shut Twitter down in India'... 'we would raid the homes of your employees', which they did; 'we will shut down your offices if you don't follow suit'. And this is India, a democratic country."

Gehlot further alleged that the Constitution is being torn to pieces in the country.

"Those in power at the Centre do not like criticism, and want to eliminate the opposition. If there is no opposition in a democracy, what is the point of having a government," Gehlot asked.

The Chief Minister also claimed that democracy is in shambles in the country.

"It is very easy to win elections in the name of religion and caste, but it is not an act of bravery," Gehlot said.

Bribery case: CBI arrests Navy's auditor, data entry operator, two others

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said on Wednesday that it has arrested a senior auditor and a data entry operator, both working in the accounts office of the CDA (Navy) in Visakhapatnam, along with two private individuals, including a contractor, in connection with a bribery case.

A senior CBI official said that a case was registered against Telikicherla Ramana Kumar, the senior auditor, and Besetti D Danti Nokeswara Rao, the data entry operator, on allegations of bribery.

The senior auditor had allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 26,000 from Bhanupratap Yadav, the contractor, in order to clear pending bills amounting to Rs 26 lakh. Yadav sent Rs



26,000 through his representative to the accused.

The CBI set a trap and arrested the senior auditor and the data entry operator while they were accepting the bribe. Subhash Mishra, the representative of the contractor, was also apprehended while making the payment. Subsequently, the contractor himself was also caught.

Searches were conducted at the premises of the accused, leading to the recovery of certain incriminating documents.

All the four arrested individuals were produced before the Court of Principal Special Judge for CBI Cases in Visakhapatnam and remanded to fourteen days in judicial custody.

2020 Delhi riots: Police files 5th supplementary charge sheet

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi Police on Wednesday filed fifth supplementary charge sheet before a Delhi court in the case related to the northeast Delhi riots that occurred in February 2020.

In November 2020, the Delhi Police had filed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act case against Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, and others, post which the court took cognisance of the case.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat, who is overseeing the riots' cases said that copies of the charge sheet should be provided to all the accused individuals and their counsels. He said that those who were not present could obtain their copies from the Ahlmad (record keeper) by acknowledging receipt before the next hearing.

The court noted the presence of all the accused individuals and addressed a request for exemption from personal appearance for two of the accused, Devangana Kalita and Safoora Zargar.



ASJ Rawat then scheduled the next hearing for July 14 and ordered that all the accused individ-

uals be brought before the court in person from judicial custody.



MAHA ADS STORY: AFTER POLITICAL DAMAGE, SHINDE IN 'DAMAGE-CONTROL' MODE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Day after the ruling Shiv Sena's ad blitzkrieg resulted in a political carpet-bombing, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Wednesday lapsed into a 'damage-control' mode.

The party issued a fresh, 'politically correct' advertisement, distributing due credit to all, including the BJP's Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is seen grinning and waving in the photo, with Shinde shown on the left.

In contrast to sharing space only with Prime Minister Narendra Modi the previous day, the ads on Wednesday have become roomier, accommodating even Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the late Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, and Thane strongman and Shinde's 'guru' the late Anand Dighe.

Besides the Shiv Sena's 'Bow-and-Arrow' symbol, even the BJP's 'Lotus' blooms at the top with the twin slogans: "Peoples' choice only for Shiv Sena-BJP alliance", "Our heads at the feet of the people, Long Live Maharashtra".

Surprisingly, the bottom of the ad has squeezed in all the Shiv Sena cabinet ministers -- though the BJP ministerial team is missing -- with a message expressing "deepest gratitude to the people of Maharashtra".

Other findings of the survey -- conducted by ZeeTV -- are mentioned,



saying odi remains the choice of 84 per cent of the people, 62 per cent nodding that the 'double-engine government' has given a fillip to the state's development, 46.4 per cent of the respondents rooted for the ruling alliance, 34.6 per cent only for the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, and 19 per cent for the others.

Tuesday's ads in which Shinde had unceremoniously dumped Fadnavis, the late Thackeray, Shah, Dighe or even his own team-mates, had sparked off a huge political ruckus with the MVA leaders leering and jeering at the ruling alliance.

In the controversial ads, Shinde appeared to unabashedly grab full credit as being the state's "most popular" leader, and catapulting himself above Fadnavis and below the Prime



Minister with the line: "Modi in rashtra; Shinde in Maharashtra" ("Modi in India, Shinde in Maharashtra"). The BJP was understandably rattled and outraged, with Fadnavis reporting "sick" with an ear ache to skip events with the Chief Minister on Tuesday.

The Shiv Sena proclaimed that Shinde was the popular choice for the Chief Minister post with 26.1 per cent of the voters' nod, pipping Fadnavis, by a margin of 2.9 per cent, who plays the second fiddle by securing 23.2 per cent. There were more shocks for the BJP, with the contention that Modi and Shinde are getting huge affection from the people in the survey, virtually making them a "dream-team".

"The partnership of Modi-Shinde -- that has resulted in many public welfare projects -- has secured the top position in a recent survey," said the ad, rattling BJP circles. It added that 49.3 per cent of the people here have selected the partnership of Shinde-Fadnavis, patting itself on the back. As many as 30.2 per cent of the voters rooted for BJP and 16.2 per cent preferred the Shiv Sena, or a total of 46.4 per cent, in the survey, showing a large photo of Modi-Shinde, but all others were conspicuously missing from Tuesday's ads.

In the 2014 and 2019 Assembly elections, the BJP had fought the polls on the plank of "Narendra (Modi) in India, Devendra (Fadnavis) in Maharashtra".

However, now Shinde virtually eased out Fadnavis from that slot as per the survey results, and perched himself there with the brand new slogan of "Modi in rashtra, Shinde in Maharashtra".

The full-paper ad figures in many leading Marathi papers and comes days after a row was kicked up over the Chief Minister's son and Thane MP, Shrikant Shinde's threat to quit, and the bickering over the much-delayed cabinet expansion plans.

These ads come barely a fortnight ahead of the first anniversary of swearing-in of Shinde-Fadnavis regime on June 30, after the Shiv Sena (UBT)-Congress-Nationalist Congress Party MVA government led by former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was toppled.

Raj Thackeray 'mutes' midnight birthday bash, cuts 55 kg cake at home

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra Navirman Sena President Raj Thackeray celebrated his 55th birthday by cutting a 55 kg cake brought by his supporters who raised slogans for his good health and wished him full-throated 'Many Happy Returns' at his home at midnight on Wednesday.

The workers, hailing from across Mumbai and around the state thronged Raj Thackeray's home in Shivirth in Dadar, and raised loud slogans of "Happy Birthday To You!", carried posters, photos and banners with "We Love You!" lighting fireworks, singing, dancing and making merry on the streets. As they gave the auspicious 'midnight knock' on his door, a smiling Raj stepped out and was greeted with lusty cheers and compliments, but he signalled with his hand to lower the decibel levels of the celebrations.

"My grandson Kiaan is down with a fever and he is sleeping... Please keep the celebrations muted..." appealed Thackeray, and the crowd immediately lapsed into near-pindrop silence,



with whispers all around, as his wife Sharmila also stepped out and joined her birthday-boy hubby.

The well-wishers came up with big and small gifts, including a golden replica of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's seal, which Raj accepted graciously though he had earlier appealed to people to only bring saplings that his followers could plant or study material that could be donated to poor students.

After a while Raj smiled and cut the cake, ate some and distributed the rest to his

enthusiastic activists, who left after some more festivities, albeit quietly.

This morning, Shivirth was decorated with flowers, balloons and festoons, a marquee erected outside the home to host hundreds of people turned up to meet, greet and wish him since dawn.

A party leader said that another huge cake was brought with an image of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and Raj symbolically 'cut' his throat amid cheers and clapping by the gathering.

Why no action against BJP leaders: Sanjay Raut

Team Absolute | Mumbai

MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday questioned action against DMK Minister Senthil Balaji. In a reaction to the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) raid and subsequent custody of Senthil Balaji, Sanjay Raut asked that why no action was taken on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ministers despite several complaints made by the Opposition parties, reported on Wednesday. Sanjay Raut said that his party keeps sending complaints against BJP leaders with evidence to the central agencies but he is yet to hear a word from them. "We keep sending complaints against their (BJP) people, with evidence. When will the probe against them start?" he questioned.

Citing his own example Sanjay Raut said, "I have sent complaints against three ministers of Maharashtra to the ED on money laundering. I have not even received a reply from them. Why are there no raids against them?"

Sanjay Raut further added that the central government uses the agencies against all opposition leaders who are vocal against them. Along with himself, he also cited Nationalist Congress Party's Nawab Malik, Aam Aadmi Party's Manish Sisodia, Satyendra Jain and several opposition leaders as exam-



ples. "Whoever is opposing them (BJP) will be raided, be it Nawab Malik, Manish Sisodia, Satyendra Jain, Anil Deshmukh...or even myself. This is not new," Sanjay Raut added.

Several opposition leaders reacted to the ED's treatment of Senthil Balaji, who broke down while being taken into custody for questioning in connection to an alleged money laundering case in the wee hours of Wednesday. The ED took the DMK leader for questioning, after raiding his premises on Tuesday. When the ED brought Balaji to Omandur government hospital in Chennai for medical examination amid tight security, high drama was witnessed outside the hospital. Balaji could be seen crying in pain while lying in a car as his supporters gathered there to protest against the ED action.

PARTS OF THANE TO FACE 24 HOUR WATER CUT ON JUNE 15

The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) on Tuesday announced that the water supply will be suspended in some areas of Thane for 24 hours on Thursday, June 15.

Team Absolute | Thane

According to TMC, there will be no water supply from 12 pm on June 15 (Thursday) to 12 pm on June 16 (Friday). Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) supplies water to some areas under the Thane Municipal Corporation which include Mumbra, Diva, Kalwa, Majiwada, Manpada and Wagle Estate, the civic body said. "Considering the current storage capacity of the Barvi Dam, water supply will be suspended from 12 pm on June 15 (Thursday) to 12 pm on June 16 (Friday)," the TMC said.

The major affected areas which will face 24-hour water cut include Kalwa, Rupadevi Pada, Kisan Nagar No. 2, Nehru Nagar and Kolsheet.

The TMC said that citizens should note that the water supply will be at low pressure for the next one to two days after the water supply is



restored. The civic body has also asked residents in the city to store water and use it judiciously. Earlier, the TMC

had said that it has collected a record property tax of Rs 200 crore in just 66 days. Thanekar's unprecedented response to property tax payment is

commendable, said Thane Municipal Commissioner Abhijit Bangar.

"The TMC had prepared the payments for the current (2023-24) financial year on April 1, 2023, and informed the citizens through SMS. An updated facility for downloading, printing, and online payment of property tax was provided through this SMS. The citizens gave a spontaneous response to this," Bangar added.

According to the civic body, to facilitate the payment of property tax to the citizens, initiated tax collection centres in all ward committee offices and the said centres are open during office hours and on public holidays. An appeal was made regarding the payment of tax by ensuring that the said property payments have been received or not. The property tax department of Thane Municipal Corporation has been given a recovery target of Rs 900 crore this year.

Four held for using fake documents to get jobs in police department

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Four people were arrested in Maharashtra's Raigad district for allegedly using fake documents to get jobs in the police department, officials said on Wednesday. Thousands of candidates appeared for written and physical tests in December 2022 in Alibag for the posts of 272 police constables, said a bulletin by the department. After the final selection of candidates, authorities began verification of their documents. During scrutiny, it was found that four of them had submitted bogus project affected certificates. The Alibag police registered a case



against them for cheating and other charges under the Indian Penal Code.

The four were arrested on Tuesday and a court remanded them in police custody till June 17, the bulletin added.

Meanwhile, in March, the Powai police in Mumbai had registered an FIR against two candidates who had allegedly

cheated to get more marks in the physical exam during the drive at Marol area of Andheri east.

The police had earlier said that only one of the two used both the cards with a chip that calculates candidates' running time. The duo were later disqualified. According to the police, on March 1 the candidates were to get tested in running and short put. Police Inspector Rajendra Kalbhor, attached to the Local Arms at Worli, was present to check all candidates' records. He is the complainant in the case. To check the running timing, the recruitment drive officials use the chip cards.

MAN TRANSPORTING CATTLE LYNCHED BY 'GAU RAKSHAKS' IN NASHIK

Mumbai: A 23-year-old man transporting cattle was lynched allegedly by a group of 'gau rakshaks' (cow vigilantes) in Maharashtra's Nashik district following which six persons have been arrested, police on Wednesday. The alleged crime came to light on June 10 when Lukman Ansari's body was recovered from a gorge at Ghatandevi in Igatpuri area, an official said. Police have taken into custody six gau rakshaks so far and a search is on for more accused in the case, he said. All the accused persons were associated with the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal, a right-wing outfit, he said. Ansari along with his two aides was transporting cattle on their tempo on June 8 when they were intercepted by about 10-15 "activists" at Vihigaon in Sahapur of Thane district, the official said.

The group then took control of the tempo and "rescued" four bovine animals before driving the vehicle towards Ghatandevi in Igatpuri, he said. They stopped the tempo at a secluded place and allegedly started assaulting all three. While his aides managed to flee, Ansari could not escape.

If people want, Maha govt can consider reducing number of 'dry days', says excise minister

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra excise minister Shambhuj Desai on Tuesday hinted that the government is open to reducing the number of "dry days" when liquor sale is not allowed if such a demand is made by people.

A dry day is declared by the government when liquor sales and its service are prohibited. National holidays such as Independence Day, and Republic Day as well as the birth and death anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi are counted among dry days. Some festivals and religious days are also declared as dry



days by the state government.

Responding to a query from reporters in Mumbai regarding the plans to reduce the number of dry days as it causes some inconvenience

to liquor consumers, the minister said, "If people make a demand then we will consider it. But the demand has to come from the people." The minister did not elaborate.

RBI rejects Akash Suri's appointment as CEO of JC Flowers Yes Bank ARC

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a major setback to Yes Bank, sources close to developments have revealed that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has rejected the appointment of Akash Suri as the CEO of the JC Flowers Yes Bank ARC.

Suri, before being appointed as CEO of the JC Flowers ARC, was the group president and national head of Yes Bank's asset reconstruction business.

In July 2022, Yes Bank entered into a partnership with New York based JC Flowers to form an ARC for the sale of identified stressed loans of the bank.

In December last year, Yes Bank transferred Rs 48,000 crore worth of



stressed loans to the ARC. The transfer of bad loans was done under the 15:85 structure, which means that the bank gets 15 per cent of loan value upfront from the ARC, while the remaining

85 per cent is in the form of securities. JC Flowers has promised to pay the bank Rs 11,183 crore for the entire pool of stressed loans, resulting in 23 per cent recovery to the bank.

Bombay HC frowns at PNB for inaction on diamantaire Nirav Modi's loan frauds

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has pulled up the Punjab National Bank (PNB) for not taking steps to recover the huge amounts of money availed as loans by the fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi.

A division bench comprising Justice Revati Mohite-Dere and Justice Gauri Godse emphasised that it was a question of the 'huge public money' that is involved in the case.

The court on Tuesday was hearing separate pleas filed by the PNB and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), both staking claims over Modi's properties worth Rs 500 crore that are attached.

These appeals are made against the October 2022 order of the Special PMLA Court allowing the ED to con-



fiscate 12 out of 21 properties, with the PNB objecting saying it has the right over those (12) assets since the bank was the creditor.

The ED had also appealed against

the Special PMLA Court order and claimed its rights even over the remaining nine properties, besides the 12 it was allowed to seize, since it was the probe agency in the case.

Of the total 48 properties linked with Modi, the ED was allowed to attach 12 and PNB the remaining to dispose off the assets and recover its dues. The ED claimed in its plea that the bank, being a creditor, was not entitled to unsecured assets and the agency had the first right over the freehold properties.

Countering, the PNB claimed its first right over the assets as it had extended the loans, which were defaulted and hit the bank adversely.

The PNB also referred to an order of the Debt Recovery Tribunal saying it had awarded some of Modi's assets to the bank.

The high court has now asked the ED and PNB a fortnight to file their respective replies and posted the matter for further hearing after three weeks.



EDITOR'S SPECS

Microplastics getting deposited in human respiratory tract: Study

Microplastics, containing toxic pollutants and chemicals, are increasingly getting deposited in our human respiratory tract, and can pose serious health risks, warned a study.

Researchers in 2022 showed that humans might inhale about 16.2 bits of microplastic every hour, which is equivalent to a credit card over an entire week. And these microplastics -- tiny debris in the environment generated from the degradation of plastic products -- usually contain toxic pollutants and chemicals. To understand its effects, a team of Australian researchers developed a computational fluid dynamics model to analyse microplastic transport and deposition in the upper airway.

They explored the movement of microplastics with different shapes (spherical, tetrahedral, and cylindrical) and sizes (1.6, 2.56, and 5.56 microns) and under slow and fast breathing conditions.

"The complicated and highly asymmetric anatomical shape of the airway and complex flow behaviour in the nasal cavity and oropharynx causes the microplastics to deviate from the flow pathline and deposit in those areas," said Mohammad S. Islam, from the University of technology, Sydney. "The flow speed, particle inertia, and asymmetric anatomy influence the overall deposition and increase the deposition concentration in nasal cavities and the oropharynx area," he added. Breathing conditions and microplastic size influenced the overall microplastic deposition rate in airways. An increased flow rate led to less deposition, and the largest (5.56 micron) microplastics were deposited in the airways more often than their smaller counterparts. The authors believe their study highlights the real concern of exposure to and inhalation of microplastics, particularly in areas with high levels of plastic pollution or industrial activity. They hope the results can help inform targeted drug delivery devices and improve health risk assessment.

MADE IN INDIA 'LIQUID CORNEA' TO SOON UNDERGO HUMAN TRIALS

RACHEL V. THOMAS

After seeing about 80 per cent success in animal trials, a team of Indian doctors are soon set to launch human trials on the made in India 'liquid cornea' for people with corneal blindness -- a type of visual impairment due to diseases of the cornea.

'Liquid Cornea' is developed by Bengaluru-based Pandorum Technology in collaboration with Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital and aims to give millions the gift of sight. Cornea is the transparent part of the eye that covers the iris and the pupil and allows light to enter the inside.

"We will be applying for Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approval in the next three to four months," Dr Virender Sangwan, Director of Innovation, Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, said on Wednesday.

"We have seen around 80 per cent success rate in the animal trials. We will be able to ascertain success in humans after we begin the trials. This is a first of its kind technology in India which has been made by an Indian company, with the support of Indian hospitals and by Indian doctors and scientists for the Indian people.

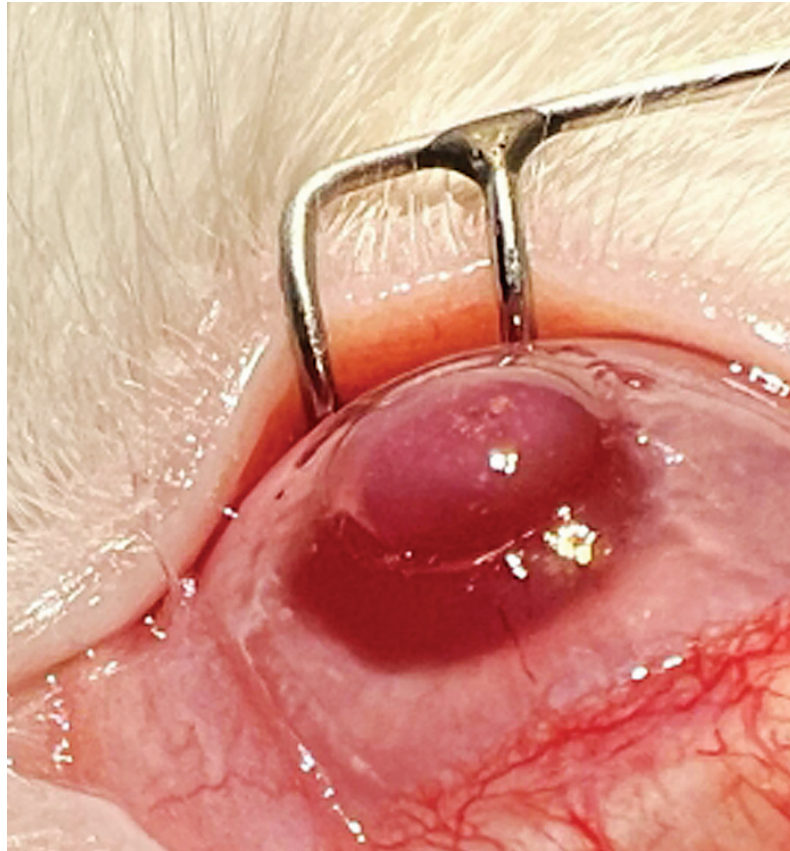
"This will help reduce the waiting list for transplants, address the lack of supply of corneas needed for transplants to take place. It will also effectively eliminate corneal blindness" said the eye expert.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), corneal opacity accounts for over 4 per cent of blindness worldwide, leading to more than 1.5-2 million cases each year.

India has a huge burden of bilateral (1.2 million) and unilateral (5-6 million) corneal blindness. Each year, the burden increases by 30,000 new cases of blindness.

According to the Eye Bank Association of India, more than 1,00,000 corneal transplants are required annually, but only 25,000 are actually done.

Dr Sangwan explained that the liquid cornea was made in the laboratory using "biomaterials such as collagen, protein, peptide -- the building materials of the body".



It is a class of products powered by tissue-specific exosomes and tissue-mimetic biomaterials, to promote regeneration of healthy functional cornea.

When this is applied as liquid drops on the cornea, it solidifies in less than 10 minutes using visible light and integrates to the patient's cornea. Inside the solidified matrix, the biopolymer acts as sacrificial material supporting sustained release of exosomes which suppresses the ulceration defining condition like inflammation, reverses fibrosis, regenerates nerves and restores corneal thickness. "A bio-printed cornea or liquid cornea will allow patients a chance to regrow damaged corneas with minimal surgical intervention. It doesn't need any stitching, we don't need any donor cornea, and the drop fills the gap like a liquid in a mould," Dr Sangwan said, in a statement.

Currently, cornea transplant is done via cadaver donors. But, "unfortunately,

40 per cent of the donated corneas do not meet the standards for the transplant".

"A bioengineered cornea's advantage is that it is not from another human being, so it won't get rejected when the transplant happens. It does not have rejection potential which donor corneas have and also bioengineered corneas are not limited in supply like donor corneas are," said.

While noting that it's too early to talk about the affordability of the bioengineered cornea to the common man, Dr Sangwan said "our endeavour is that it should not be more expensive than a corneal transplant", which in India approximately begins at Rs 42,750.

After seeing the results on adult patients, the trial will move to paediatric patients. "Our aim is to use it to address all types of corneal scars which are caused by infections and injuries," he noted.

HOW DONATING BLOOD IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

While donating blood is a selfless act and a humanitarian gesture, it also helps improve the health of the donor, said experts here on World Blood Donation Day on Wednesday.

The World Blood Donation Day is celebrated around the world on June 14 to raise global awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products, and to express gratitude for blood donors for their voluntary life-saving gift.

Healthy adults above 18 years of age can donate blood once every three months. Donating blood can help in the early detection of certain health conditions, such as anaemia or infectious diseases, which may otherwise go unnoticed.

Regular blood donation is also linked to lower blood pressure, helps maintain healthy iron levels in the body, and lowers risk for heart attacks, the experts said.

"Blood donation has numerous health benefits for the donor. It reduces the risk of heart disease, lowers the risk of cancer, improves blood flow, leads to early detection of disease through health screening before donating blood, enhances psychological well-being, regulates iron levels in the body, and monitors your general health status," Dr Rajiv Tomer, Blood Bank, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals, said.

It is estimated that someone in India needs blood every two seconds. With India poised to become the most populous country in the world now, access to safe blood is critical. Over 12,000 people die every day in the country due to the non-availability of blood. In many cases, people who need transfusions do not have timely access to safe blood. This makes blood donation a life-saving exercise.

The theme this year is 'Give Blood, Give Plasma, Share Life, Share Often'. It holds tremendous relevance, especially for patients requiring life-long transfusion support.

"Even a single person's blood donation can make a large difference in the lives of individuals battling conditions like thalassemia, sickle cell disease, or certain types of cancer depend on regular blood transfusions to sustain their health," Dr. Kalpana Velaska, Senior Consultant & Head Transfusion Medicine, NH SRCC Children's Hospital, said.

"By donating blood and blood products, we offer these patients a lifeline, replenishing their depleted supply of red blood cells, platelets, granulocytes, stem cells, coagulation factors etc. Moreover, plasma donations are crucial for patients who require specialised treatments like immunoglobulin therapies," she added.

However, the experts also underlined the importance of safe blood transfusion practices. They stressed on the importance of embracing screening technologies like Nucleic acid testing (NAT) testing which is a crucial step toward ensuring the safety and integrity of our blood supply.

"The safety of blood needs immediate attention, and issues need to be addressed like Transfusion Transmitted Infections (TTIs) which come with blood transfusions concerning the overall healthcare system," Dr Seema Sinha, HOD - Transfusion Medicine, Fortis Hospital Noida, told.



international

SUDAN'S WARRING PARTIES REJECT INITIATIVE FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT TO CONFLICT

Khartoum | Agencies

Sudan's two warring parties have expressed objection to an initiative proposed by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for a political settlement to the ongoing conflict.

At the 14th ordinary session of the IGAD Heads of State and Government, which was held in the Red Sea nation of Djibouti, an initiative including a roadmap for the resolution of the Sudan conflict was adopted, reports Xinhua news agency.

The roadmap included the establishment of a quartet committee, to be chaired by Kenya, to follow up on the Sudanese file, arrange face-to-face meetings between Sudan's two rival factions, and initiate an inclusive process toward a political settlement of the conflict within three weeks.

However, Sudan's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday objected in a statement to Kenya's chairmanship of the quartet committee, which also includes Ethiopia, Djibouti and South Sudan. The statement demanded keeping



South Sudan's President Salva Kiir Mayardit as the chairman.

"Sudan's delegation to the session expressed disagreement and objection to a number of paragraphs in the final communique as those paragraphs were not discussed or agreed on, and thus the delegation asked the IGAD secretariat to omit them," the

Ministry said in the statement.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), for its part, objected to the multi-forums for a political settlement, calling for uniting the initiative with the Saudi-US brokered one.

Youssef Izzat, the political adviser to the RSF commander, said on Tuesday in a statement that it "is

committed to the Saudi-US initiative as the forum to discuss ceasefire issues and permanent political solution".

"We stand with uniting the initiative with the Saudi-US initiative to which we adhere," Izzat added.

In remarks before the IGAD summit, African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat warned that if the conflict in Sudan does not stop immediately, a civil war would set in, chaos would prevail, and the country would totally collapse. Mahamat added that the African Union encourages a comprehensive national dialogue led by the Sudanese themselves.

Sudan has been witnessing deadly armed clashes between the Sudanese Army and the RSF in the capital Khartoum and other areas since April 15, which has left 863 people dead and 3,531 others injured, according to the Sudanese Doctors Union's update. At least 1.6 million people have been displaced, fleeing to safer locations inside and outside Sudan, according to UN figures.

Zelensky, IAEA chief discuss security risks to Zaporizhzhia nuke plant

Kiev | Agencies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met visiting International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Director-General Rafael Grossi to discuss security risks to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP) in the wake of the Kakhovka dam breach last week.

During the talks on Tuesday, Zelensky said that the security risks to the plant have significantly increased due to the destruction of the dam and the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, reports Xinhua news agency.

The ZNPP, which has been controlled by Russian forces since March 2022, is located some 140 km northeast of the Kakhovka plant.

Zelensky welcomed the presence of the IAEA's inspectors at the ZNPP and Grossi's intention to personally visit the plant to assess the situation on the ground.

Zelensky and Grossi also discussed specific steps aimed at reducing the risks and preventing incidents at the ZNPP.

The Ukrainian President supported Grossi's proposal to send IAEA experts to Ukraine to assess the consequences of the Kakhovka incident, saying that Ukraine would provide them with all needed assistance.



Grossi tweeted that after the conversation with Zelensky, he will travel to the ZNPP to assess the situation after the Kakhovka dam flooding.

The breaching of the dam on June 6 have led to mass evacuations as water levels downstream rapidly increased. Massive flooding also killed nine people in the town of Oleshky. Officials have said that 30 towns and villages along the river have been flooded and nearly 2,000 homes have been submerged in the city of Kherson -- the region's capital controlled by Ukraine.

Of the 30 flooded towns and villages, 20 are controlled by Ukraine and 10 are occupied by Russia. Kiev and Moscow have traded accusations over the dam's destruction, without providing concrete proof that the other is culpable.

PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT'S PLANE RETURNS TO BASE AFTER 'MINOR' TECHNICAL PROBLEM

Manila, Philippine

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's plane encountered a "minor" technical problem minutes after it took off on Wednesday, forcing the pilot to return to an air base near Manila and change the aircraft.

Marcos was scheduled to fly to South Cotabato province to attend the launching of the South Cotabato Consolidated Rice Production and Mechanization Program, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The G280 command and control aircraft that flew this morning with the president onboard had to return to base a few minutes after takeoff due to a minor technical issue on the aircraft's flaps operations," Philippine Air Force (PAF) spokesperson Colonel Maria Consuelo Castillo said.

She said the problem was "nothing serious". Since the PAF maintains the highest standards of flight safety, the spokesperson added the pilots decided to do a precautionary return to the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City and have the aircraft thoroughly checked.



THOUSANDS RELOCATE AS BIPARJOY APPROACHES PAKISTAN'S COASTAL AREAS

Islamabad | Agencies

Thousands are being relocated from the coastal areas in Pakistan's Sindh province ahead of extremely severe cyclonic storm Biparjoy's expected landfall in the country, as well as in India, on Thursday.

Thousands of families in different areas of Sindh, including Thatta, Sujawal and Badin, have already left their homes and moved to safer places.

According to officials, the category 3 storm is expected to make landfall on Thursday evening between Karachi (Pakistan) and Mandvi (India), bringing with it extremely strong winds of 140 to 150 kph and gusts up to at least 170 kph as well.

Biparjoy is expected to maintain its northward trajectory until Wednesday and then it is anticipated to re-curve eastward and make landfall at Keti Bandar in Thatta district and the Gujrat coastline in India.

"The areas most likely to be affected include Thatta, Badin, Sajawal, Tharparkar, Karachi, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Hyderabad, Ormara, Tando



Allahyar and Tando Mohammad Khan," weather experts said.

Authorities have started deploying the Pakistan Army, Navy, Rangers and district administration towards the coastal areas, who have initiated emergency response services for the relocation of thousands of families living along the coastline of Sindh.

"We have set up relief camps in schools and other government build-

ings," said Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has also briefed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and other relevant government quarters about the preparedness to tackle the super cyclone, save lives and ensure provision of relief to thousands of families.

"Ships and boats have been moved from some coastal areas, while hospitals

have been put on high alert," said Sherry Rehman.

"About 100,000 people will be evacuated by Wednesday morning. Till now, at least 56,985 people had been shifted to safer places from Thatta, Sajawal and Badin districts by Tuesday night," the NDMA said.

"We have set up at least 37 relief camps in at least three districts of the Sindh province. Thousands of people had voluntarily relocated themselves to the relief camps and other sites", Sindh Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah said. "Seven relief camps had been set up in Keti Bandar; three in Ghobadari, 10 in Shaheed Fazli Rahu, three relief camps in Badin, 10 in Shahbandar and four in Jati," he added.

Meanwhile, light to heavy rains coupled with dust storms have started hitting vulnerable districts.

Power supply was suspended in different parts of the rain and sand storm hit areas in Sindhas incidents have been reported of main transmission line poles, collapsing due to extreme wind pressure, disrupting the electricity supply.

SYRIAN ARMY CONFIRMS ISRAELI STRIKE IN DAMASCUS

Damascus, The Syrian army confirmed that a fresh Israeli missile attack was launched on Wednesday against military sites in the capital Damascus, seriously injuring a soldier. The missiles came from the direction of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, hitting sites southwest of Damascus, causing damage, said the army in a statement. It added that the Syrian air defence system intercepted some of the missiles, reports Xinhua news agency. Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said the attack hit weapon depots run by the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group. For years, Israel has carried out attacks against what it has described as targets for Iran-backed Shia fighters in Syria, hitting airports and military bases alleged to house weapon shipments for the fighters.



DECISION TO GIVE E-SCOOTIES TO STUDENTS SECURING FIRST POSITION IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan chaired the meeting of the Cabinet at Mantralaya today. The Cabinet has decided to provide e-scooties to the students who have secured first position in all the government higher secondary schools of the state to encourage them under the new scheme. If more than one student has the highest marks then all of them will get the benefit of the scheme. The scooty will be provided in areas where it is not available. About 9 thousand students will be benefited from the scheme. A provision of Rs 135 crore has been made in the budget for the year 2023-24 for the implementation of the scheme. It may be mentioned that a provision has been made for the new scheme to facilitate students to reach schools and reduce dependence, to encourage them for higher education and to instill self-confidence in them. About 9 thousand students will be benefitted from the scheme. A provision of Rs 135 crore has been made in the budget for the year 2023-24 for the implementation of the scheme. It is worth mentioning that a provision has been made for a new scheme to increase convenience



for students to reach schools and reduce dependence, to encourage them for higher education, to instill self-confidence. Income limit for scholarship to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students is now Rs 8 lakhs. As per the announcement of Chief Minister Chouhan, the Cabinet ratified the order issued by the Scheduled Castes Welfare Department on April 15, 2023 'increasing the income limit for scholarship to the students of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from Rs 6 lakhs to Rs 8 lakhs

and foreign study scholarship to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students of Humanities subjects as well. Along with this, approval was granted to increase the annual income limit of post matric scholarship for Scheduled Tribe students studying in non-government institutions to Rs.8 lakh. It is worth mentioning that the income limit has been abolished by the Tribal Affairs Department for Scheduled Tribe students studying in government and government-aided educational institutions. With the increase in the income limit, students

belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will get wide opportunities to pursue education.

'Cooperative Policy of Madhya Pradesh, 2023' approved. The Council of Ministers has approved the 'Cooperative Policy of Madhya Pradesh, 2023' and has authorized the Cooperative Department to prepare and implement a time-bound action plan. This cooperative policy aims to pave the way towards making cooperatives a people's movement in the state. Committees will be formed in new areas through co-operatives and employment opportunities will be created. Changes will also be made in the cooperative law of the state as per the requirement and action will be taken to remove the internal and structural deficiencies of the cooperatives. Along with this, information technology will be used on a large scale in the cooperatives. Agricultural credit, urban credit, cooperative marketing, cooperative housing, consumer cooperative, cooperative seed production and marketing, small forest produce cooperative societies, dairy cooperative, cooperative fisheries, etc. are major areas in cooperative policy.

Maximum public participation should be ensured on International Yoga Day in the state

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Ramkishore 'Nano' Kawre has instructed the district officers of the AYUSH Department to ensure maximum public participation in the mass yoga practice on June 21, 2023, the International Day of Yoga, in the state. Minister of State Kawre said that it is a matter of pride for Madhya Pradesh that the national level programme of International Yoga Day is going to be held in Jabalpur. He said that there should be programmes of group yoga practice at all the district headquarters of the state according to the dignity. Minister of State Kawre asked the district officials to coordinate with the Collector to ensure the grandeur of the programme. Principal Secretary Kalpana Srivastava, Commissioner Ayush Sonali Ponkshe Vayangankar and departmental officers were present in the meeting. Special sessions will be held at historical and archaeological places. It was told in the meeting



that on International Day of Yoga, there will be special sessions of mass yoga practice at places of historical and archaeological importance in the state. Instructions were given that the citizens should practice yoga at these places according to the protocol. It was told that the national level Yoga Day programme will be held at the Garrison Ground in Jabalpur. Connect voluntary organisations too. Minister of State Kawre asked the district officials to take the help of voluntary organisations on International Yoga Day. It was told that Ramchandra Mission and Heartfulness Institute have started an Ekam Abhiyan (integrated campaign) in every village panchayat with

the help of Jan-Abhiyan Parishad. A programme has been fixed to connect one crore people with yoga on International Yoga Day in the state. Instructions to pay attention to awareness and publicity through video conference, the Minister of State for AYUSH directed the district AYUSH officers to focus on awareness and publicity to connect the general public with yoga in the coming days. He also asked to reach the preparations being made for International Yoga Day to the general public through the media and social media. This year the theme of the 9th International Yoga Day is "Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

Hundreds of ABVP activists rally to DAVV

STAGE PROTEST AGAINST PAPER LEAKS & DELAYED RESULTS



Team Absolute | Indore

Activists of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), in large numbers, rallied to Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV) on Wednesday afternoon and staged a protest

against paper leak, delayed results. Heavy police force was deployed to avoid any law and order situation. The protesters, who gathered at DAVV from across 8 districts of Indore division, sought to know the reason behind the university's paper

leak, exams not being conducted on time and delayed results. They also demanded from DAVV to set up a call centre for listening to complaints of students. Heavy police force deployed. Heavy police force and quick response force personnel were present on the spot to control the situation. Notably, paper leak has become a headache for the university authorities with exam papers getting leaked 30 mins prior on Whatsapp. As the leaking of the question paper continued this year, especially in BCom exams, the university constituted a committee to probe into the matter.



ALONG WITH CM CHOUHAN, PANDIT PRADEEP MISHRA PARTICIPATES IN REGULAR PLANTATION

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today planted saplings at Smart Garden located in Shyamla Hills along with renowned Katha-vachak Pandit Pradeep Mishra, environment lovers and social workers. Pandit Pradeep Mishra praised Chief Minister Chouhan for planting saplings daily to protect the environment. Chief Minister Chouhan planted saplings of Neem, Khirmi and Amla today. Vijay Uike and Rakesh Jain planted saplings on their birthday, apart from social workers Prateek Jain, Oshin, Rajat and Gunjan Jain along with CM Chouhan.

Inquiry committee to hand over report of fire accident in Satpura Bhawan to state government in two days

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The high-level inquiry committee set up to probe the Satpura Bhawan fire accident will submit its inquiry report to the state government in two days. The inquiry committee visited the third to sixth floors of the west wing of the fire-affected Satpura Bhawan for the third time at 12.30 pm on Wednesday. A total of 14 samples were collected for forensic examination, which were sent to the State Level Forensic Science Laboratory at Sagar for examination. Instructions have been given to keep the collected samples sealed and safe after testing. The statements of 7 employees-officers were recorded by the inquiry committee on Monday. Statements of about 20 employees-officers including senior engineers and fire safety inspector of E&M wing of Public Works Department were registered today and yesterday.



The state government has been informed to take necessary action regarding the structural strength assessment of the Satpura Bhawan by the inquiry committee and to start the offices of the eastern wing of the Satpura Bhawan unaffected by the fire. Investigation committee took samples. Burnt, half-burnt ash near AC room of Virendra Singh, Deputy Director, Tribal Welfare Department, located on the third floor of Satpura Bhawan, control sample of burnt, half-

burnt ash near AC, similar burnt-half burnt coal pieces near the AC, documents found lying in half-burnt state, control sample of documents found lying in half-burnt state, half-burnt white paper near the southern wall of Virendra Singh's room, control sample of half-burnt white paper pieces, MCB board located in room with wire in burnt-half burnt condition, burnt, half-burnt switch of AC with wire, burnt, half burnt small board of AC with wire and burnt, half burnt large board of AC with wire.

'Biparjoy' Induces Heatwave, Weather Likely To Remain Unchanged Till June 16

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh is experiencing the impact of scorching heat due to the 'Biparjoy' storm in the Arabian Sea and the prevailing hot weather in Rajasthan. This effect is expected to persist for the next three days, namely June 14th, 15th, and 16th. Regarding Bhopal, on June 14th, there may be intervals of sunshine and sporadic light rain. Clouds may also appear on June 15th, but on June 16th and 17th, intense heat is expected. Subsequently, the rainfall phase will commence.

However, relief from the heat is anticipated in the state starting from June 17th as the weather is set to change. During the next three days, there is a possibility of light rainfall in some parts of the state, facilitated by localized systems. Monsoon is predicted to enter the state only after June 20th.

Senior meteorologist H.S. Pandey explained that the storm has absorbed



all the moisture, resulting in clear skies and direct sunlight. This, in turn, intensifies the heat. Additionally, Rajasthan's hot weather is causing the warm winds in MP, with greater impact observed in the districts bordering Rajasthan. Chhatarpur district, including Khajuraho and Nagaon, will experience conditions similar to a heatwave on Wednesday. The current

temperature here is the highest in the state, and the next three days are likely to bring even more intense heat. MP will witness a change in weather. The hot winds will give way to cooler breezes, providing some respite from the heat. According to Pandey, some cities in the state will experience thunderstorms and lightning situations in the afternoon. Mild rainfall

occurred in Sagar, Damoh, Seoni, and Gwalior on Tuesday, courtesy of localized systems. On Wednesday, there may be light showers in certain areas as well.

Warm Nights: On Tuesday night, the temperature in Nautanwa reached as high as 31.5 degrees Celsius. Reeva-Tikamgarh recorded a minimum temperature of 31.0 degrees, while Umara 30.8 degrees. More than half of the state has a minimum temperature of 25 degrees Celsius or higher. Khajuraho experienced the highest temperature during the day, reaching 45.2 degrees Celsius. Gwalior, Damoh, Satna, Sagar, Nagaon, and Shivpuri had temperatures exceeding 43 degrees. Bhopal reached 41.4 degrees, while Jabalpur also remained hot.

A total of 22 cities in the state witnessed temperatures ranging from 40 to 45.2 degrees Celsius. Additionally, some cities received light rainfall, including Sagar, Damoh, Seoni, and Gwalior.

Haj, Umrah Booking Racket Busted, 2 Held From Mumbai

Team Absolute | Indore

City crime branch arrested two persons from Mumbai for duping people on the pretext of Haj and Umrah, an official said on Tuesday. The accused have duped a man from the city of Rs 50 lakh on the pretext of flight for Umrah and return ticket from Jeddah in Saudi Arabia to Mumbai.

According to a crime branch officer, Tanveer, who runs a tour and travel agency in the city, had lodged a complaint that some unidentified persons who posed as agency owners of a tour and travel company in Delhi contacted him and said that they could arrange for flight tickets for Haj and Umrah at cheap rates. Taken in by their smooth talk the victim deposited Rs 50 lakh in their bank account. The complainant informed the police that the accused later cancelled his flight booking but did not return his money.

A case under sections 419, 420 and 109 of the IPC and 66-D of the IT Act was registered against unidentified persons.

During the investigation, the crime branch managed to gather information about the accused and arrested them from Mumbai. The accused have been identified as Muzakkir Khan and Saif Khan of Badaun in UP.



The accused informed the police that they had contacted the complainant and the complainant had sent Rs 50 lakh to the bank account given by the accused. The accused allegedly confessed to having duped other people too. They informed the officers that they had taken Rs 10.24 lakh from one Tanveer of Kolkata on the pretext of Umrah. Later, they duped Jave of Devariya in UP of Rs 25.5 lakh for Visa, Rs 3 lakh were taken from Amir of Basauli in UP, Rs 2.5 lakh were taken by the accused from one Haji Shamim on the pretext of providing Visa and Rs 1 lakh were taken from one Farid of Badaun on the pretext of Visa. Thus, the accused have duped many people. The crime branch officials are investigating the case further.

ON MINISTERS' DEMAND, MP GOVT LIFTS BAN ON TRANSFER OF IAS & IPS OFFICERS

Bhopal: The state government has lifted the ban on officers' transfers from June 15 to June 30, on ministers' long pending demand. The rider is that transfers shall only be intra-district.

This decision was taken in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday. According to information, the ministers have been insisting for the removal of the ban on transfers of IAS & IPS officers.

Moreover, the cabinet gave its approval to the cooperative policy and with this; Madhya Pradesh became the first state in the country to have the cooperative policy.

The cooperative department has identified various sectors to cover under the policy. These new areas include tourism, rural bus operation, banking sector etc.

FARMERS PAID RS 121 CR AS CROP INSURANCE PAYMENT

Team Absolute | Indore

As many as 9,049 farmers of the district received more than Rs 23.22 crore as farm loan interest waiver. The farmers also received Rs 120.70 crore payments as crop insurance under the crop insurance scheme.

Tuesday was a day of great relief for the farmers of the district as they benefitted under various farmer-friendly schemes of the state government.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan deposited the amount of Mukhyamantri Krishak Interest Waiver Scheme and Crop Insurance in their bank accounts through a programme organised in Rajgarh. Defence minister Rajnath Singh was especially present in the programme. The main programme of the district was organised in Depalpur where MP Shankar Lalwani was the chief guest. In this programme, interest



of more than Rs 23.22 crore of 9,047 farmers was waived off. An amount of Rs 120.70 crore was also paid to the farmers of the district under the Crop Insurance Scheme.

Addressing the programme, MP Lalwani said that the Chief Minister has started many schemes in the interest of farmers. With these schemes, the self-sufficiency and income of farmers will increase. He said that special efforts are also being made to provide employment opportunities to the youth. The Chief Minister has also started Mukhyamantri Seekho-Kamao Yojana and more and more youth should take advantage of this scheme, he said. Lalwani also distributed certificates of benefits to the farmers. Similarly, programmes were also organised in all the service cooperative societies of the district. The live telecast of Kisan Mahakumbh organised in Rajgarh was also shown during this programme.



EMINEM'S DAUGHTER ALAINA SCOTT MARRIES LONG-TIME PARTNER MATT MOELLER

Los Angeles | Agencies

American hip hop icon Eminem's elder daughter Alaina Marie Scott, has married longtime partner Matt Moeller. Alaina, 30, recently took to Instagram to officially announce the wedding and shared the pictures. The photos included artistic shots of Scott and Moeller kissing on a rooftop and then again in an elevator, hugging by a vintage car, flashing their wedding rings, sharing their first dance and posing with their wedding party, which included Eminem's other daughter, Hailie, who served as one of the maids of honour, reports Page Six.

Eminem, otherwise known as Marshall Mathers, adopted Alaina in the early 2000s before her mother, Dawn Scott, died of suspected drug overdose in 2016. Dawn was the sister of Eminem's ex-wife Kim. Eminem and Kim also share a daughter, 27-year-old Hailie Jade. Eminem is also the adoptive father of 21-year-old Stevie Laine Mathers.

The marriage took place on June 9 in Detroit, Michigan. Alaina wrote in the caption: "June 9, 2023 simply one of the best days of my life in this lifetime and in the next, my soul will always find yours."

In his 2004 hit 'Mockingbird', Eminem alludes to Alaina and expresses his heartfelt love and commitment to his daughters. In even more joyful news for the rapper, his second daughter Hailie Jade accepted her long-time boyfriend Evan McClintock's marriage proposal in February.



Demi Lovato returns to her pronouns as explaining them was 'exhausting'

Thailand | Agencies

The 'Cool for the Summer' singer-songwriter Demi Lovato is back to using she/her pronouns in addition to they/them pronouns last year after announcing her nonbinary identity in 2021. The singer decided so because it made her feel "exhausted" while explaining her gender identity to people, reports People magazine.

"I constantly had to educate people and explain why I identified with those pronouns. It was absolutely exhausting," Lovato, told GQ Hype Spain, translated from Spanish to English. "I just got tired. But for that very reason I know that it is important to continue spreading the word."

As per People, she also spoke about

wishing there were more gender-neutral spaces for both artists and other people alike: "I face this every day. For example, in public toilets. Having to access the women's bathroom, even though I don't completely identify with it."

Lovato continued: "Or it also happens when filling out forms, such as government documents or any other where you have to specify your gender. You only have two options, male and female, and I feel like none of that makes sense to me. I see myself conditioned to choose a woman because there are no more. I think this has to change. Hopefully with time there will be more options."

People further states that during the introduction to an episode of the 4D with Demi Lovato podcast released in May 2021, Lovato came out as non-binary before diving into a personal conversation with Alok Vaid-Menon, a gender non-conforming writer and performer.

"Over the past year-and-a-half, I've been doing some healing and self-reflective work. And through this work, I've had the revelation that I identify as non-binary. With that said, I'll be officially changing my pronouns to they/them," said Lovato.

"I feel that this best represents the fluidity I feel in my gender expression and allows me to feel most authentic and true to the person I both know I am, and am still discovering," the singer added.

Halle Berry shares mirror selfie in a sexy high slit dress

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oscar winning actress Halle Berry's recent style serve is far from subtle. The actress, 56, shared a mirror selfie wearing what appears to be a champagne-coloured satin gown with an exceptionally high slit on her on Twitter.

"Subtle Tuesday serve," she captioned the post with a winking emoji. In addition to strappy heels, the 'Moonfall' actress debuted long ombre hair - a departure from her signature, asymmetrical platinum pixie cut, reports People magazine.

The Cleveland native was seen wearing her shorter haircut in photos she posted on Instagram just last week with her boyfriend Van Hunt. The loved-up images show her and Hunt, 53, snuggled up and sharing a kiss.

As per People, the couple both dressed casually for the selfie, wearing grey hoodies. While the actress wore delicate earrings and a coordinating necklace, her musician beau accessorised with a bucket hat.

"Don't be the girl a man wants, be the woman a man needs!," Berry wrote in her caption. Berry and Hunt went official with their relationship in September 2020. Last month, Berry shared a hilarious video where she and her stylist, Lindsay Flores, struggled to fit custom boots on the actress' feet.



Luke Bryan defends Katy Perry amid 'American Idol' backlash



Los Angeles | Agencies

After an 'American Idol' season filled with highs and lows for judge Katy Perry, her fellow judge Luke Bryan is coming to her defence.

The 'Dark Horse' singer has been a judge since the show's revival in 2018 - but during the most recent season, she sparked backlash among fans for various comments she made to contestants,

at one point even drawing flak, reports People magazine.

In a recent interview with Fox News, Bryan praised Perry, who he said is used to shaking off negative attention.

"Katy Perry's been dealing with stuff like that her whole career," he said, quoted by People. "We all get it. I mean, we're judging kids that people at home fall in love with. We're not gonna bat 1,000 as judges."

The country star, 46, said he believes that he and Perry, 38, as well as fellow judge Lionel Richie, are often put in a tough position, as it falls to them to be critical of contestants that viewers adore.

"I think we get set up. As judges, you know, we kinda fall on the sword a lot of times," he said. "And get set up to where people can get very vocal on socials and stuff. My thing is, I think when me and Lionel and Katy sit down at the desk, in our hearts, we're doing the best we can." As per People, Perry was the subject of some heat from viewers this season, which began during auditions, when she joked that contestant Sara Beth Liebe - a mother of three children - had been "laying on the table too much."

Liebe went on to accuse Perry of "mom-shaming" in a TikTok video, and later quit the competition, though the 'Firework' singer tried to convince her to stay. Liebe later expressed gratitude towards the show and towards Perry, implying that the two were on good terms.

Kristen Stewart writing script for stoner girl comedy with fiancée Dylan Meyer

Los Angeles | Agencies

'Twilight' star Kristen Stewart has revealed that she and girlfriend Dylan Meyer, who have announced plans to get married, are writing the script for a stoner girl comedy.

The 'Spencer' star told Interview magazine: "Me and Dylan are writing a movie. It's a stoner girl comedy, and it's really f**** stupid. I think you'll like it. But the reason I even thought of this is because our producer is our best friend. We're starting a company."

The Oscar-nominated actress didn't share anything further about the project, reports E! News. Kristen, 33, got engaged to Dylan in 2021 after two years of dating.

She also co-wrote the script for upcoming film 'The Chronology of Water', adapted from American author Lidia Yuknavitch's memoir of the same name. 'The Chronology of Water', which also marks Kristen's film directorial

debut, has Imogen Poots in the lead role. The film is produced by Ridley Scott.

Her fiancée Meyer had earlier co-written Amy Poehler's 'Moxie'. Meyer is the daughter of Academy Award-nominated screenwriter Nicholas Meyer.



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Bella Thorne



INDONESIA OPEN: LAKSHYA BEATS LEE ZII JIA, SETS UPS SECOND-ROUND CLASH WITH SRIKANTH

Team Absolute | Jakarta

June 14 (IANS) Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen defeated Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the opening round of the Indonesia Open 2023 badminton tournament to set up a second-round clash with compatriot Kidambi Srikanth, here on Wednesday.

Lakshya registered a 21-17, 21-13 win over world no 11 Malaysian in the round of 32. On the other hand, former world No. 1 Srikanth beat Chinese shuttler Lu Guang Zu 21-13, 21-19 in his opening round match. The 21-year old Sen and Lee engaged in a close battle in the first game. With the scores tied 17-17, the Indian won four consecutive points to take the lead in the match. Lee didn't show much confidence in the second game. The Indian took advantage of the situation and dominated the proceedings to wrap up the win in 33 minutes. Later in the day, Srikanth hardly faced a challenge from Lu Guang Zu and comfortably took the first game. The second game was a closely-fought affair as the Chinese rallied from 11-18 down to level the scores at 19-19. But the Indian ace held his nerves to win the match in 46 minutes. Another Indian in the men's sin-



gles, Priyanshu Rajawat received a walkover by Thai player Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand in their first-round match of the Super 1000

event. In the women's singles, India's Aakarshi Kashyap fell 10-21, 4-21 to world No. 2 Korean An Se Young, who is eyeing her

sixth BWF World Tour title this year, in the round of 32. Former world champion PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy and men's doubles pair

of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy sealed their place in the second round on Tuesday.

Intercontinental Cup: India take on Lebanon in a possible prelude to final



Team Absolute | Bhubneshwar

June 14 (IANS) Having already sealed their place in the Intercontinental Cup final, the Indian senior men's football team will take on Lebanon in their last group match at the Kalinga Stadium, here on Thursday. After seeing off Mongolia 2-0 in the opening game, the Blue Tigers edged Vanuatu 1-0 on Friday thanks to an exquisite Sunil Chhetri strike late on, which was accompanied by a joyous celebration as he announced his wife being in the family way. Lebanon were held to a frustrating stalemate by Mongolia earlier in the day, which meant six points were enough for India to qualify for the final with a game to spare.

However, any thoughts of the India-Lebanon clash being a dead rubber must be thrown into the bin. India head coach Igor Stimac only targets a win against the Cedars and is banking on his best eleven to get the job done. "We're playing at home, and we come out in every game with the only aim of winning it. It doesn't matter how Lebanon fared in their previous game. They found it tough to play two games at four in the afternoon. For us, it's going to be a difficult match, as some of their players have enormous quality," said Stimac, on the eve of the game. "They do have weaknesses also, of course, which we could see. So, it will be an interesting game, maybe not beautiful, but definitely interesting," he added.

'Nightmare for all players': Ian Chappell hits out at Ashes schedule, labels it 'ridiculous'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

June 14 (IANS) Former Australian Test captain Ian Chappell has hit out at the packed schedule of the upcoming Ashes series, calling it a nightmare for all the players as the five-Test series will be wrapped up before August.

The first Test will be played at Edgbaston from June 16, with the fifth and last Test starting on July 31 at The Oval. Overall, both sides could play 25 days of cricket within a span of 46 days.

Speaking to Wide World of Sports, Chappell said the way the Ashes schedule had been assembled was 'stupidity'. He emphasised that while the series has always been physically demanding, this year's schedule was unnecessarily quick.

"It's ridiculous, the schedule, I mean the schedule's been ridiculous for a long time but that is stupidity. There's not a Test played in August so that tells you how quickly they're playing them," Chappell said.

The 78-year-old further stated that he doesn't see the fast bowlers playing all five Tests, given the packed schedule.

"It's a nightmare for all players, both physically and mentally, partic-

ularly the fast bowlers and I don't think there's any way in the world that either side is going to get through five Tests using the same bowling players all the way. I think the extra players are going to come in handy and that's one thing that'll probably suit Australia," Chappell added.

Meanwhile, former Australia Test cricketer Steve O'Keefe agreed with Chappell's viewpoint and recollected the exhaustion experienced by Mark Wood while playing four matches in the previous Ashes series. "I'd like to think not but I do agree with Ian that the scheduling is pretty poor and it's going to be a big ask. Mark Wood, he played four Tests in Australia and he even said himself that he felt exhausted after playing that - I'm not sure why, some of those Tests ended in three days, particularly the one in Hobart so I'm not sure what he was carrying on about there.

"I think the locks for Australia will be Cummins and Lyon, Cummins it's going to be a big ask for him to play five but I think he's prepared - listening to his commentary before this Test series he said I'd like to come in under prepared (rather) than over prepared," he said.

Oval, Headingley, Old Trafford among venues for India's next two Test tours of England

Team Absolute | London

June 14 (IANS) The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Wednesday that The Oval, Headingley and Old Trafford are among the venues for India's next two Test tours of England, set to happen in 2025 and 2029.

While announcing the venues for England's home international matches for men's and women's from 2025-31, ECB said that Lord's, The Oval, Edgbaston, Headingley and Old Trafford will be the venues for the 2025 India-England Test series.

During the 2029 India tour of England, Lord's, The Oval, Edgbaston, Old Trafford and The Ageas Bowl will be hosting the five Test matches. India is the only side apart from Australia against whom



England are scheduled to play a five-match Test series in both home and away formats.

India's tours of England are played for the Pataudi Trophy, while England's tours of India are played for the Anthony de Mello Trophy. India last won a Test series in England in 2007, winning three-game series by

1-0. They are also slated to tour England for white-ball matches in 2026 and 2028.

In terms of the Ashes, England will take on Australia in a five-Test series at Lord's, The Oval, Edgbaston, Trent Bridge and The Ageas Bowl in 2027, while England women's team will meet their Australian counterparts in a

Test match at Headingley as part of a multi-format series in the same summer.

In 2031, the Men's sides will contest five Ashes Tests at Lord's, The Oval, Old Trafford, Headingley and Trent Bridge, while the Women's multi-format Ashes series will include a Test match at The Ageas Bowl.

"This year's Men's and Women's Ashes are only days away, but fans can already start looking forward to more great clashes up and down the country in the years ahead. For the first time, we are announcing long-term allocations for Women's international matches as well as Men's.

We have seen huge growth in attendances for Women's matches in recent years, with this year's Women's Ashes smashing previous records, and we want to build further on this in the years ahead.

By announcing arrangements for the next seven years, we are also giving venues long-term certainty so that they can invest sustainably into stadium improvements and improved fan experiences," said Richard Gould, ECB Chief Executive Officer. England Women will play at Lord's during each of the seven years during this period, with other major venues including The Oval, Edgbaston, Headingley, Old Trafford, Trent Bridge and The Ageas Bowl each hosting the team at least four times during this period.

England Women's internationals will also continue to be hosted at other venues around the country which have historically hosted games. ECB added that for the first time, the same process has been used for allocating men's and women's international matches, over the same period.

Indian women cricket team for blind to participate in IBSA World Games, Birmingham

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

June 14 (IANS) Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI) announced its participation in the upcoming International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) World Games 2023, Birmingham.

The games are scheduled to be held from August 18 - 27 and blind cricket has been included in the World Games for the very first time. Indian men's and women's teams for the blind have already registered for the tournament.

The teams are expected to get trained in the coming months in Bengaluru.



CABI announced a strong 16-member women's team that will participate in the games while the men's team will be announced

shortly. The team comprises of 6 players each from B1 and B3 categories and four players from B2 category.

The Women's team had recently played a five match bilateral series against Nepal in Kathmandu in preparation for the World Games.

Speaking on the participation of the national team in the World Games, Dr Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar, President, CABI said, "This is a proud moment for Blind cricket in India as our team will be participating in the World Games where cricket has been included for the first time. The players will have great exposure through this games and I hope that they will put on a great performance and make our country proud."

Brahim Diaz returns to Real Madrid: all you need to know about the 23-year-old

Team Absolute | New Delhi

June 14 (IANS) Brahim Diaz is back in the Spanish capital and set for a second chance to establish himself as a regular for Real Madrid.

The 23-year-old attacking midfielder, who first joined the 34-time LaLiga champions from Manchester City in 2019, has spent the last three seasons on loan in Italian football with AC Milan in search of minutes and invaluable experience.

He has gained plaudits for his performances in Italy, playing 124 matches in all competitions and scoring 18 goals for the Rossoneri. He



won the Serie A title last season, becoming only the third player ever to win LaLiga, Serie A and the Premier League after Cristiano Ronaldo y Danilo, and this year he reached the Champions League semi-finals.

He now returns to the Santiago Bernabeu and will likely slot into the now

departed Marco Asensio's role in the team. Brahim is a very creative player, and can complement the attacking firepower of Brazilian duo Vini Jr and Rodrygo well. His idol as a child was Real Madrid legend Sergio Ramos. Brahim had his room full of photographs and posters of the former Real Madrid captain, but he has nothing to do with the Real Madrid legend in footballing terms. He is a versatile attacking midfielder. He can play on the right wing - the position in which he feels most comfortable - on the left flank, as a playmaker, and even as a striker if necessary.

MLC 2023: Pollard to lead MI New York; Rashid, Boult and Rabada among other star players

Team Absolute | New York

June 14 (IANS) Former West Indies big-hitting all-rounder and legendary T20 cricketer Kieron Pollard will captain MI New York in the inaugural edition of the Major League Cricket (MLC) to be played in the USA, the franchise announced on Wednesday.

The squad also includes Afghanistan's T20I captain Rashid Khan, former West Indies skipper Nicholas Pooran, New Zealand fast bowler Trent Boult and the Australian duo of the big-hitting Tim David and pacer Jason Behrendorff. The team will also feature South Africa pacer

Kagiso Rabada, young batter Dewald Brevis, and veteran Namibian all-rounder David Wiese, who has previously represented South Africa as well. All the players except for Wiese also play across multiple MI Teams -- Mumbai Indians, MI Cape Town and MI Emirates. In the MLC draft in March, MI New York drafted nine local players in former captain Steven Taylor, all-rounder Nosthush Kenjige, current USA captain Monank Patel, wicket-keeper Shayan Jahangir and fast bowler Kyle Phillip, as well as Hammad Azam, Ehsan Adil, Sarbjeet Ladda and Saideep Ganesh. Former SA & MI player and

MI Cape Town General Manager Robin Peterson will be the head coach, joined by Mumbai Indians legend Lasith Malinga, as bowling coach. J Arun Kumar and James Pamment will take charge as batting and fielding coaches respectively. Both Arun Kumar and Pamment were a part of the coaching team as assistant batting coach and fielding coach at Mumbai Indians in IPL 2023. "We are thrilled to unveil team MI New York in the upcoming Major League Cricket season. Stalwart Pollard is leading the team which has international superstars Rashid Khan, Nicholas Pooran, Trent Boult, and Kagiso Rabada.

Moeen Ali returns as England name playing XI for first Ashes Test; pick Broad over Wood

Team Absolute | Birmingham

June 14 (IANS) Off-spin all-rounder Moeen Ali's return to Test cricket was confirmed while Stuart Broad got preference over Mark Wood as England on Wednesday named their playing eleven for the first Ashes Test against Australia at Edgbaston.

In the playing eleven announced by England two days away from Ashes series opener, Ali will now be making a return to Test cricket in place of injured Jack Leach at his home ground. The spin all-rounder accepted an SOS call from captain Ben Stokes post Leach being ruled

out due to a stress fracture in lower back.

Pacers James Anderson and Ollie Robinson also come back into the side after missing out on the ten-wicket win over Ireland at Lord's due to nursing their groin and ankle niggles, with Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue making way for the duo.

Broad took a five-wicket haul against Ireland at Lord's, and will get a chance to outsmart David Warner after having dismissed the veteran Australia opener seven times in ten innings during the last Ashes series in England in 2019.

On the other hand, Wood has not played any competitive cricket since leaving his IPL 2023 stint with Lucknow Super Giants early, to return home for the birth of his second child. Rest of England's top seven is unchanged, with Ben Duckett and Harry Brook set to make their Ashes debuts, while Jonny Bairstow will be the wicket-keeper.

Australia haven't won an Ashes series in England since 2001 and will be aiming to do so in 2023 after the last series in 2019 ended in a draw. England, led by Stokes, are looking to regain the urn for the first

time since 2015. They are coming on the back of winning 11 of 13 Tests under captain-coach duo of Stokes and Brendon McCullum.

After Edgbaston hosts the first Ashes Test from June 16-20, the rest of the games will take place at Lord's (June 28-July 2), Headingley (July 6-10), Old Trafford (July 19-23) and The Oval (July 27-31).

England's playing XI for first Ashes Test: Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (c), Jonathan Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Stuart Broad, Ollie Robinson, and James Anderson



SARA ALI KHAN SHARES THROWBACK KEDARNATHPIX ON SSR DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sara Ali Khan, has shared throwback pictures of herself with late actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The actress took to her Instagram on Wednesday to share two pictures, one which shows her enjoying a helicopter ride with Sushant, and the other of her reading the script sitting next to him.

She wrote in the caption: "On our way to Kedarnath for the first time. On my way to shoot for the first time. And I know neither are ever going to feel the same again. But somewhere between action, cut, sunrise, rivers, clouds, moonlight, Kedarnath and Allah Hoo I know you're there. Keep shining amongst your stars. From Kedarnath to Andromeda."

Sara made her Bollywood debut alongside Sushant in the 2018 film

'Kedarnath'. The film was well received by the audience.

Sushant passed away on June 14, 2020. He was found dead at his Mumbai house. His death sparked a massive outrage across the country at a time when everyone was confined to their homes in the pandemic. The case, which was also transferred to CBI, opened a can of worms and also put Bollywood on NCB's radar for alleged substance abuse.



Mrunal Thakur, Vijay Deverakonda pair up for new film

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Mrunal Thakur, who will be soon seen in the upcoming streaming anthology 'Lust Stories 2', is set to team up with Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda in a yet-to-be-titled film. After collaborating with DulquerSalmaan in 'SitaRamam' and with Nani in 'Nani 30', this will mark Mrunal's third collaboration down south. The film is currently untitled and will begin

shooting soon as the actors having done the mahurat of the film together.

Further details with regard to the title and plot of the film are currently under wraps, and will be unveiled soon. The film is being helmed by ParasuramPetla and is being produced by Sri Venkateswara Creations.

Meanwhile, in 'Lust Stories 2', Mrunal will be seen sharing the screen with AngadBedi and Neena Gupta.



RICHACHADHA CALLS 'FUKREY' SPECIAL AS IT INTRODUCED HER TO 'THE LOVE OF HER LIFE'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress RichaChadha, who is celebrating the tenth anniversary of her comedy film 'Fukrey', has shared that the film holds a special place in her heart because it gave her one of the most loved characters and also introduced her to her life partner, Ali Fazal.

What started off as a friendship in 2013, grew into love story and the couple tied the knot in a grand ceremony last year.

Expressing excitement about the anniversary of comedy flick 'Fukrey', RichaChadha said: "It's incredible that it has already been 10 years since 'Fukrey' was released. This film has been a game-changer for me in so many ways."

She further mentioned: "Not only did it give me the opportunity to portray a character like BholiPunjaban, which has become an iconic role in my career, but it also introduced me to the love of my life, Ali."

'Fukrey' will forever hold a special place in my heart."

ANIL KAPOOR WAS AT FIRST SCEPTICAL ABOUT PLAYING SHAILENDRARUNGTA

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The crime thriller series 'The Night Manager' has received a positive reception. One of the show's biggest highlights is Anil Kapoor's performance as the classy and stylish antagonist ShailendraRungta, which impressed audiences and critics alike.

While Anil Kapoor has immersed himself into the role, the actor was initially sceptical of playing the antagonist.

Elaborating further, the creator of the show, SandeepModi said: "When I first approached Anil Kapoor for the role of ShailendraRungta, he was reluctant to play the villain. He has always been this larger than life hero, so he was slightly sceptical to play an outright antagonist."

He continued: "But once he sunk into the character, he made it his own and brought the smallest of nuances to his role. From suggesting the name of the character to bringing a factor of relatability and Indian-ness, it is safe to say that Shelly Rungta aka Anil Kapoor is the most heroic villain we have ever seen."

SandeepModi is known for being larger than life in his scripts and productions, using a derring-do approach for his characters and screenplay such as in 'Aarya' and 'The Lottery', something that manifests itself in 'The Night Manager' as well.

A remake of the British crime thriller series starring Tom Hiddleston, which was in turn adapted from the eponymous English novel, the show was praised for its production, characterisation, themes, screenplay, performances and capturing the spirit of the original British show while also adapting it for an Indian audience etc.



Ram Charan, Upasana celebrate 11th wedding anniversary, Chiranjeevi blesses them

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ram Charan, who swayed the audience with his work in Oscar-winning 'RRR', is celebrating 11 years of marital bliss with his wife UpasanaKamineniKonidela on Wednesday.

The two got hitched on June 14, 2012 in a big fat wedding. The ceremony was attended by the hot shots of the film industry. And now, the two are set to embrace parenthood as they're about to

welcome their baby. On the occasion of their 11th anniversary, Ram's father and Telugu megastar, ChiranjeeviKonidela took to Twitter to extend his best wishes for the couple as he showered his blessings on them. The megastar tweeted: "Hi Charan and Upsy! On this special day, we wish you both a happy wedding anniversary. You both have made us proud and happy beyond measure. As you step into the journey of parenthood, we wish you all the best. May your love for your child be a story that others will love to attest. Love and blessings, Mom and Appa."

'Salman, KJo helped me when I needed advice,' says MimohChakraborty

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Mithun Chakraborty's eldest son Mahaakashay Chakraborty, better known as Mimoh, had a love-hate relationship with success and film industry. Clocking 15 years in the fraternity, he opened-up about his true friends in this cut-throat business line. Mimoh made his foray into the world of entertainment with 'Jimmy', the film tanked within a day of its release. Since his debut in 2008, till now, he has done only a handful films with only one hit, 'Haunted 3D'.

Talking about his debut and clocking 15 years in industry, Mimoh said: "I am here for the long haul, my debut movie released in June 2008, and this June I completed 15 years in the industry, (I have) been here for this long, it is unbelievable."

He also opened up about Salman Khan and Karan Johar going out of their way to help him when he

needed advice or someone to guide him.

He said: "Salman Khan and Karan Johar are the two people who have actually helped me. Salman Khan loves my dad a lot, so I messaged Bhai a few times and he invited me over to chill with him. Salman Khan always gave me good advice, and I really don't want to get into details of how much help he has been, but he has done a lot for me. Unfortunately, none of the projects took off, but Salman Khan really pushed me and motivated me."

"Karan Johar has gone out of the way to help me and my brother Namashi, he introduced me to a lot of people, gave me good connections, put me through

some good agencies," he added.

When asked about his future projects, Mimoh said: "I have seen so many rejections that I don't want to talk about any project until it starts rolling."



Srishty Rode