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DENSE FOG TO CONTINUE OVER NORTHWEST INDIA FOR 3-4 DAYS: IMD

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department on Wednesday said that dense to very dense fog is likely to continue over Northwest India for the next 3-4 days while light, isolated rainfall is likely over Northwest and Central India between December 31 to January 2.

The weather forecast agency said that the minimum temperatures are in the range of 7-10 degree Celsius over most parts of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan and 11-12 degree Celsius over most parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha and interior Odisha.

"These are 2-3 degree Celsius above normal over some parts of Punjab, Delhi, West Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and over many parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Gujarat and northeast India," said the IMD.

According to the IMD, at 8:30 a.m on Wednesday dense to very dense fog was reported in most parts of Delhi, Punjab, many parts of Haryana, Chandigarh and some parts of Uttar Pradesh and in isolated pockets over Jammu & Kashmir, northwest Rajasthan and northwest Madhya Pradesh. At Delhi's Palam and Ayanagar area, visibility was at 25 metres, at Safdarjung it was at 50 metres and at the Ridge it was 200 metres.

In Punjab's Bathinda the visibility was zero, while in Amritsar, Ludhiana,



Patiala it was 25 metres, in Haryana's Hisar, Bhiwani and Karnal, the visibility dropped to 25 metres while in Ambala it was 50 metres.

In western Uttar Pradesh's Agra and Bareilly the visibility was zero while in Meerut it was 50 metres. Eastern Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow and Varanasi recorded visibility at 25 metres.

The IMD further predicted that dense to very dense fog conditions are very likely to continue during night/morning hours in many parts of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh till Friday morning and in some parts for subsequent three days.

"Dense to very dense fog conditions are likely to continue in some parts of Uttar Pradesh until Friday morning and dense fog in isolated pockets for subse-

quent three days. Dense Fog conditions are very likely to continue in isolated pockets of Odisha on Thursday morning; over north Rajasthan, northwest Madhya Pradesh during the morning hours on Thursday and Friday and over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura during morning hours of Thursday and Sunday," said the IMD.

The IMD also predicted that a fresh Western Disturbance is likely to affect Northwest India from Saturday.

"Under its influence and its interaction with lower-level easterly winds, light, isolated rainfall is likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, East Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh,

Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha from Sunday to January 2," said the IMD.

"Under the influence of a fresh easterly wave, a fresh spell of light to moderate rainfall is very likely over south Tamil Nadu and Kerala from Saturday to January 2. Isolated heavy rainfall is also likely over south Tamil Nadu on Saturday and Sunday," the IMD added.

SEVERAL INJURED IN 12-VEHICLE PILE-UP ON YAMUNA EXPRESSWAY

Greater Noida: Several people were left injured in a 12-vehicle pile-up on Uttar Pradesh's Yamuna Expressway early on Wednesday morning due to dense fog that resulted in low visibility, authorities said.

The incident occurred near the Dayanapur Village of Jewar police station area. Noida police officers reached the spot and initiated an inquiry into the accident.

All the injured persons were taken out of the damaged vehicles and have been admitted to a nearby hospital for treatment.

According to official information, a pick-up van collided with a canter due to the dense fog following which many vehicles coming from behind collided with each other one after the other. After receiving information about the pile-up, relief and rescue teams reached the spot.

Rahul's Manipur to Mumbai 'Bharat Nyay Yatra' from Jan 14

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will embark on the 6,200 km 'Bharat Nyay Yatra' from Manipur on January 14. It will cover 85 districts in 14 states and conclude in Mumbai on March 20.

Addressing a press conference here at the party headquarters, Congress General Secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said, the yatra will be flagged off by party President Mallikarjun Kharge from Imphal on January 14. The Nyay Yatra will be for securing economic, social and political justice for the people of the country.

Venugopal said, following the unanimous resolution of the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision making body, on December 21 that Rahul Gandhi should do the second phase of the Yatra from East to West, it was decided that he (Gandhi) should do the second phase of the yatra from Imphal to Mumbai.

Replying to a question about choosing Manipur as the starting point, he said, the state was an important part of the country and also the party wanted to begin the process



of healing the wounds of the people of Manipur.

Venugopal said, while in the first phase, Rahul Gandhi covered about 4,000 kms from Kanyakumari to Kashmir covering 12 states, this time he will cover 6,200 kms covering 14 states. "This time the mode of the 'yatra' will be a bus with off and on walking stretches," he explained. He said that the Nyay Yatra will cover states of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh,

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Ramesh said during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul Gandhi raised the issues of economic disparities, polarization and dictatorship, the Nyay Yatra will focus on social, economic and political justice for the people of the country.

He said, after spreading the message of unity, love and harmony through Bharat Jodo Yatra, Gandhi will seek justice for the people of the country.

Replying to a question whether the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) parties will also participate in the yatra, Venugopal said, the final details were being worked out. Ramesh pointed out, during the Bharat Jodo Yatra leaders of various political parties had also participated in that yatra.

RAHUL VISITS WRESTLERS' IN JHAJJAR

Jhajjar: Amid the ongoing controversy over Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday visited the Virender Arya Akhara in Haryana's Jhajjar and also interacted with the wrestlers there.

Rahul Gandhi arrived at the Akhara in the morning in Jhajjar's Chhara village. There he interacted with the wrestlers on their issues and the problems they face, sources said.

He also participated in wrestling. Meanwhile, speaking to the media, wrestler Bajrang Poonia said, "He (Rahul Gandhi) came to see our wrestling routine. He also did wrestling." Poonia also said that he came to see the day-to-day activities of a wrestler.

Now, epilepsy drug given in Delhi Govt hospitals fails quality test

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a major embarrassment for the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi Government, yet another drug being used in a government hospital was found to be substandard.

The medicine that failed the test is critical for the treatment of epilepsy and seizures and according to officials, a series of drugs are not meeting prescribed standards.

A few days after Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena referred the matter of non-standard drugs being procured and supplied in Delhi Government Hospitals and Mohalla clinics to the CBI, one more drug sample was failed by the Regional Drug Testing Laboratory (RDTL), Chandigarh.

According to officials, this time it was found that the anti-epilepsy drug called Sodium Valproate being supplied in Delhi Government Hospitals was "not of standard quality." This report was issued by the Government



analyst i.e. RDTL on December 22 after the L-G recommended a CBI enquiry in the matter of substandard drugs in Delhi Government hospitals. According to officials, Saxena in his note to the Chief Secretary mentioned that it is concerning that these medicines are being given to lakhs of patients.

The L-G raised his concern over the hefty budgetary allocation in procurement as well.

BULLS BACK WITH A BANG, SENSEX TOPS 72K-MARK FOR FIRST TIME

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai: With a massive rally of 701 points, Sensex soared to new highs by crossing the 72,000 points mark for the first time on Wednesday.

At close on Wednesday, Sensex was up almost 1 per cent, or 701 points, at 72,038.43, while Nifty hit record high of 21,654.75, registering an increase of 1 per cent or 213 points. Ultratech Cement was up 4 per cent, while Hindalco was also up 4 per cent. Metal stocks were strong in trade on Wednesday and apart from Hindalco, JSW Steel was up 3 per cent. Tata Steel was also up more than 1 per cent, while Tata Motors was up 3 per cent.

Credit to retail, services drives double digit growth in banks: RBI report

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) in 2022-23 expanded by 12.2 per cent, driven by credit to retail and services sectors while deposit growth also picked up, although it trailed credit growth, according to the latest RBI report on banking trends in India released on Wednesday.

The capital to risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of SCBs was 16.8 per cent at end-September 2023, with all bank groups meeting the regulatory minimum requirement and the common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio require-



ment. The improvement in asset quality of banks that began in 2018-19 continued during 2022-23 and H1:2023-24, with gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio at 3.2 per cent at end-September 2023. The report which presents the performance of the

banking sector, including co-operative banks and non-banking financial institutions, during 2022-23 and 2023-24 so far, also highlights that higher net interest income and lower provisioning boosted net interest margin (NIM) and profitability in 2022-23.

The combined balance sheet of urban co-operative banks (UCBs) expanded by 2.3 per cent in 2022-23, driven by loans and advances, and their capital buffers and profitability improved through 2022-23 and Q1:2023-24.

The consolidated balance sheet of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) expanded by 14.8 per cent in 2022-23, led by double digit credit growth. Profitability and asset quality of the sector also improved in 2022-23 and in H1:2023-24, even as the sector remained well-capitalised with CRAR higher than the regulatory requirement, the report said.

PUNJAB SEIZED HIGHEST-EVER AMOUNT OF HEROIN THIS YEAR AT 1,161 KG: POLICE

Chandigarh | Agencies

Intensifying the war against drugs, Punjab Police has set a new benchmark by seizing highest-ever 1,161 kg heroin in this year, Inspector General of Police Sukhchain Singh Gill said here on Wednesday.

"This is for the first time that 65 drug consumers, caught with little quantity of drugs, availed provision of section 64-A of the NDPS by pledging to undergo the rehabilitation treatment," he said. Gill, who was addressing a yearend media briefing, said from January 1 to December 26, the police have arrested 14,951 drug smugglers and suppliers, including 2,424 big fish, after registering 10,786 FIRs.



Apart from big haul of 1,161 kg heroin, the police have recovered 795 kg opium, 403 quintals poppy husk, and 83.17 lakh tablets, capsules, injections and vials of pharma opioids from across the state, he said, adding the drug money of Rs 13.67 crore was seized. "Punjab Police have also seized 294 properties of Rs 127 crore (Rs 110.64 crore immovable and Rs 16.45 crore movable property) of big smugglers this year, while 90 more proposals for forfeiture of properties of Rs 26 crore are pending with the competent authority," the IGP said.

He said as part of the ongoing special drive to arrest proclaimed offenders and absconders in NDPS cases, the police have arrested 673 offenders and absconders since January 1.

OVER 10K SANTAS TAKE PART IN XMAS PAGEANTRY

Thrissur | Agencies

Termed as Buon Natale (in Italian, Merry Christmas), the cultural capital of Kerala -- Thrissur, witnessed another record-breaking event when more than 10,000 Santas walked down the streets of Swaraj Round.

The event was organised by the Catholic Archdiocese of Thrissur in association with its citizenry and was first staged in 2013 and was flagged off by late President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

In 2014, it entered the Guinness World Records for having the maximum number of people dressed up as Santa Claus and since then, barring the Covid phase, the event saw participation of many people. On Wednesday, the event witnessed a massive turnout of peo-



ple. "Last year, our Church finished in third place and this time we have been practicing for the past one month to take part in the event. This time we expect to finish first," said a parish priest who had come with members of his parish and was walking down the streets.

Maha reports 2 Covid deaths, 87 new cases, 10 JN.1 infections

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Sparking fresh concerns, Maharashtra on Wednesday reported two Covid-19 deaths and 87 new cases, while 10 persons were diagnosed with the new variant, JN.1, health officials said.

The state has JN.1 patients in Thane (5), Pune (3), Akola and Sindhurg (1 each), comprising 8 males, 1 female and one minor boy aged 9 years. One patient from Pune had a recent travel history to the USA. From January 1, 2023, till date, Maharashtra has recorded 136 Covid deaths, including over 71 per cent aged above 60, a majority (84 per cent) with comorbidities and the rest without any other health problems. Among the two fatalities reported on Wednesday, one patient was from Pune and the other from Sangli, with a death rate of 1.81 per



cent. Of the new cases, the highest 39 were reported from Pune circle, followed by Mumbai circle (36), Nagpur and Kolhapur circle (4 each), and Latur and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar circle (2 each), said the health department. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Maharashtra has recorded a total of 81,72,287 cases and a staggering 148,566 deaths - both highest in the country.

After resounding victory in Assembly, MP BJP gets ready for Lok Sabha elections

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After securing a resounding victory in the Assembly election earlier this month, the Madhya Pradesh BJP leadership has sped up its preparations for the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls.

The state leadership has started holding meetings with different segments of the BJP's organisation pertaining to the youth, women, and different morchas like - OBCs, STs and SCs. The cadres are being prepared for the crucial 2024 poll battle for the Lok Sabha to ensure that the party retains power at the Centre.

The MP BJP unit was already in poll-mode for the last one year and won 163 out of 230 Assembly seats, even as preparations for Lok Sabha elections were also running parallel to it, claimed state BJP President



VD Sharma. Sharma, along with state in-charge Sunil Bansal, held a series of meetings of district heads of the party, during which they were conveyed messages from the central leadership and assigned specific

tasks. Sources said the state BJP leadership has prepared Assembly constituency-wise plans. Special attention would be paid to those constituencies where the party lost and close contests were witnessed in the Assembly election.

Sharma said the BJP cadres are getting ready to ensure the party's victory in all 29 Lok Sabha seats and to secure a 51 per cent vote share. The BJP has received nearly 48 per cent votes share in the 2023 Assembly election held on November 17. The development came days after the BJP's central leadership held a two-day meeting of its office-bearers from across the country.

The BJP has laid out a detailed road map for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and for the party, the Assembly polls that just ended were a trial run that went as per its plans.



DEFENCE MINISTER REVIEWS SECURITY SITUATION ALONG LOC, LAUDS SOLDIERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday visited the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir to take stock of the security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in wake of the killing of four soldiers in an encounter with terrorists in Poonch district on December 21.

Rajnath Singh, who was accompanied by Army chief, General Manoj Pande, carried out a first-hand assessment of the prevailing situation as well as the counter-terror operations in the area, a Defence Ministry official said.

He was given a detailed brief on the prevalent security situation, counter-infiltration grid, and operational preparedness.

Various aspects of operational challenges were discussed with the commanders on ground as he called for professional conduct and due diligence while carrying out operations.

The Defence Minister also paid tributes to the soldiers killed in action and conveyed his deepest condolences to the families of the bravehearts.

He assured the troops that the government stands with the armed forces and the nation will forever be indebted to the unparalleled valour and sacrifice of the soldiers. He termed the welfare of the armed forces as the government's top priority, stressing that addi-



tional efforts are being made to bolster the security and intelligence framework, the official added.

Rajnath Singh said: "Indian Army is not an ordinary army. The soldiers are

our protectors. It is their duty to not only safeguard national interests, but also to win the hearts of the people."

He exhorted the troops to remain extra vigilant, so that no untoward inci-

dent occurs in future, reiterating that there should be zero tolerance to terrorism.

He also met families of the deceased persons, residents of village Topa Peer of Buzfliaz in Poonch, and assured an expeditious investigation into the incident culminating into deliverance of justice.

Rajnath Singh expressed satisfaction for the high level of synergy between the security forces, civil administration, J&K Police, Central Armed Police Forces and other security agencies in projecting a clear message of resoluteness towards improving of the security environment, that is conducive to fostering a new era of development in the Union Territory.

He also complimented the local people for their steadfastness and contribution towards joining the mainstream efforts undertaken by the government while emphasising that unity in thought process, alignment and collective resolve for the good of the nation is the most important foundation for achievement of shared aspirations of peace and development in the UT.

Preceding the visit of the Defence Minister, the Army chief had visited the area on Monday and exhorted all ranks of the army to conduct operations in the most professional manner, the Defence Ministry official added.

Congress to sound war-cry for 2024 polls from Nagpur mega-rally on Thursday

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Senior Congress leaders have started arriving in the Orange City for the mega-rally scheduled on Thursday to mark the grand old party's 138th foundation day, party functionaries said here on Wednesday.

Maharashtra Congress President Nana Patole said that historically, whenever a crisis confronted the country, it was from Nagpur that the Congress launched its war against the problems.

Speaking to the media, he said the current situation facing the nation is no different with democracy and Constitution, and all four pillars of democracy under severe threats.

"It is the responsibility of the Congress to safeguard and preserve our democracy and its democratic institutions... We shall issue the message of change tomorrow and resolve to bring down the tyrannical and arrogant BJP government," Patole said.

The Congress event shall be held at the 'Bharat Jodo Maidan' in the presence of party President Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, top



party office-bearers from all states, all state Chief Ministers, ministers, elected representatives and others.

Patole reminded how the Congress won India's independence with the sacrifices of thousands of freedom fighters that ultimately forced the British rulers to leave the country. "The contributions of the Independence movement is huge. In the 60 years of Congress rule, all top leaders and Prime Ministers, from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Manmohan Singh, strived to make India a global power... Unfortunately, in the past 10 years of the BJP rule, the country has plummeted on all fronts," said Patole. He also accused the BJP of exploiting caste-religion issues and creating social-communal divides

and disturbances that have led to a decline in the country's image, even as other burning problems of inflation, unemployment, safety of women, farmers' woes, education, health, etc. are ignored.

"At the same time, by misusing the central agencies like ED, CBI, I-T, the Opposition is being intimidated and their voice is smothered if they speak out against the government. But, just as the powerful British were forced to quit, even the dictatorial BJP will be packed off with Rahul Gandhi's slogan of 'Daro Mat' (Fear Not) in the 2024 elections," declared Patole. Patole and other senior party leaders took a detailed review of the arrangements for the Congress rally, which they said could attract several lakhs of people from the state and elsewhere.

After CPI(M), Mamata likely to skip Ram Temple inauguration on Jan 22

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will in all probability skip the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22.

Although the Chief Minister has not made any announcement to this effect, Trinamool Congress spokesman Kunal Ghosh made a statement on Wednesday ruling out the possibility of not only the Chief Minister, but also any leader from the party attending the inauguration function.

"There is no question of attending the inaugural function. I don't know if any invitation has come, but I know for sure that there is no question of attending the programme," Ghosh told mediapersons when asked whether the Chief Minister will go for the January



22 event.

Ghosh also said that although they worship Lord Ram with a lot of devotion, the party does not endorse using BJP's strategy to exploit the sentiments of the people about Lord Ram to fulfil its own political agenda.

"The BJP is trying to sail through the forthcoming Lok

Sabha elections by exploiting people's sentiments. But we do not endorse their stand," Ghosh said.

On Tuesday, the CPI(M) politburo had issued a statement announcing that the party's General Secretary, Sitaram Yechury, will not attend the inauguration programme.

Kannada activists remove English signboards in B'loru; seek prominence of local language

Bengaluru | Agencies

The 'Maha Abhiyan' campaign organised by a group Kannada Rakshana Vedike (KRV) demanding prominence for Kannada language on signboards turned violent on Wednesday with the activists smashing the English signboards and vandalising property, advertisement boards and hoardings.

The activists have targeted Starbucks, Third Wave, Toyota, House of Masaba, Forest Essentials, Theobroma and others.

The KRV claimed that thousands of English signboards were "destroyed and plucked out" across the city.

"We will wait till February 28 to install sign boards giving prominence to Kannada language. If not, a stronger protest would be organised to get rid of those sign boards,"



KRV President, T.A. Narayana Gowda, warned.

"We apologise for the inconvenience faced by the people of Bengaluru. I assume that they will understand the organisation of large-scale protests to ensure usage of Kannada language on sign boards," he said. "If false cases are lodged against Kannada activists, we will organise protest against the government," he added.

The development has evoked a huge backlash from the people and activists. Many have expressed shock over the turn of events in the state capital and police becoming mute spectators to vandalism and destruction by Kannada activists. Karnataka Police had earlier beefed up security in Bengaluru on Wednesday in the wake of the KRV demanding prominence to local language on signboards of commercial buildings and malls in the city.

Reunion at Jayshree Periwal International School

Jaipur | Agencies

The Annual Jayshree Periwal International School Alumni Meet serves as a junction for the school's glorious graduates to come together for a night defined by endless laughter, entertaining performances, and invigorating games. The 2023 Alumni Meet was no different. For the Annual Alumni Meet that was held at Ashok Club this year, graduates from all four corners of the world met to relive the bonds they had formed as students aspiring to attend the most prestigious colleges and universities all over the world.

Clearly JPIS has been successful in providing these students with the platform they need to reach these avenues, as many of the graduates present at the event belonged to universities from around the



world, such as the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi University, Stanford University, Wharton and Columbia University. The lively and bustling discussions were punctuated by the students updating their old friends with stories about their experiences and pursuits at college.

Those who had graduated not only from school but also from col-

lege shared the experiences they had accrued in the myriad fields they have gone on to find success in. The graduates may possess diverse viewpoints and opinions, but the one thing they all agreed on was that JPIS played a huge role in developing the confidence needed to succeed professionally in life.

While it had been years since many of the graduates had flown the nest to spread their wings elsewhere, they embraced each other in a manner akin to friends who had never been apart! At the event, they embraced not only their friends, but also the teachers and faculty members that guided them with unwavering support. All in all, the Meet struck a charming chord with the alumni, who cherished each and every second they spent in the company of childhood friends and teachers.

CENTRE DECLARES MUSLIM LEAGUE JAMMU KASHMIR UNLAWFUL ASSOCIATION UNDER UAPA

New Delhi | Agencies

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday announced that the government has declared Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masrat Alam faction) as an unlawful association under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In a post on X, the Home Minister said, "The 'Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masrat Alam faction)' or MLJK-MA is declared as an 'Unlawful Association' under UAPA."

"This organisation and its members are involved in anti-national and secessionist activities in J&K supporting terrorist activities and inciting people to establish Islamic rule in J&K," Shah said. "The Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's message is loud and clear that anyone acting against the unity, sovereignty, and integrity of our nation will not be spared and face the full wrath of the law," the Minister announced.



Bengal minister describes Mamata as 'incarnation' of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, stokes controversy

Kolkata | Agencies

West Bengal education Minister Bratya Basu is in the midst of a controversy after he described Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as "incarnation of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu".

A video went viral where Basu was seen and heard speaking at a public programme at Purbasthali in East Burdwan district, "Chaitanya Dev always spoke of the unity of all religions. He never advocated for dividing people on the basis of religion. Similarly Mamata Banerjee also believes in all-inclusiveness. She never encourages divisive politics. So if there is a perfect incarnation of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in West Bengal it is Mamata Banerjee."

His comments have evoked strong reaction from the opposition leaders.

"Such comments have been prompted by Bratya Basu's desperate attempts to remain in the good books of the chief minister. It is more unfortunate that such comments come from an educated person and acclaimed thespian like him," said BJP's councillor in Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Sajal Ghosh. The CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakraborty said that



Basu's comments prove to what level the Trinamool Congress leaders can stoop to please their supreme leader. "It is nothing new and the state education minister has maintained the legacy of the other party leaders in Trinamool Congress," Chakraborty said.

This is not the first time that Trinamool Congress leaders have described the chief minister with great souls of the nation.

UP to plant 35 crore saplings in 2024 : Yogi Adityanath

Lucknow | Agencies

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that the state will have 35 crore tree saplings planted in the first week of July 2024, under Plantation 2024.

The Chief Minister also mentioned the need for steps to revive rivers that are close to being extinct. "Plantation should be done in the catchment area of rivers and special efforts should be made for Ghaziabad's Hindon river," he said and added that to increase the green cover, 'baal van', 'amrit van', 'yuva van' and food forests should be set up in different parts of the state.

The Chief Minister has asked the officials to ensure that more farmers get benefits of the agroforestry carbon finance project.



He also directed officials concerned to launch an awareness campaign in schools and colleges against the use of harmful plastic.

In the past six years, over 168 crore trees have been planted in the state. 'Ped lagao, ped bachao' will be the theme for the drive in 2024.

REFUSAL TO MARRY IS NOT ABETMENT TO SUICIDE: ALLAHABAD HC

Prayagraj | Agencies

The Allahabad High Court has held that if there is no other factor, just refusal to marry does not come within the purview of abetment to suicide, therefore it will not be called an offence under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Allowing a petition filed by one Ambesh Mani Tripathi, Justice Neeraj Tiwari quashed the proceedings against the applicant under Section 306 (abetment to suicide) of the IPC read with section 3/4 Dowry Prohibition Act, going on in the Bhelupur police station of Varanasi district.

The case was being heard by additional chief standing counsel (ACJM), court, Varanasi.

It was alleged that the girl concerned committed suicide when the applicant refused to solemnize the marriage, which had been fixed earlier.

The counsel for the applicant argued that considering Section 306 of the IPC, if the version stated in the FIR is treated to be correct, no case is made out for abetment to suicide. A suicide note has



also been recovered in which deceased only stated that due to denial of marriage, she committed suicide and for that, applicant has no concern and not responsible.

He next submitted that denial of marriage may not come within the category of abetment to suicide in light of Section 306 IPC read with section 107 IPC (definition of abetment).

While setting aside the entire criminal proceedings against the applicant,

the court in its judgment observed, "Section 107 IPC read with section 306 IPC is very much clear for abetment of a thing."

Instigation is the first condition, second condition is engagement of one or more persons in any conspiracy and further, an act or illegal omission in pursuance of conspiracy and the third thing is intention to do by any act or illegal omission. All these legal ingredients are fully missing in this case."

"In fact, only denial of marriage not coupled with any other fact does not come within the purview of abetment as defined in Section 107 IPC, therefore, it would not be an offence under Section 306 IPC. The judgments of apex court as well as many other courts, after considering the provisions of section 107 of IPC with section 306 IPC has taken the consistent view about abetment of suicide, which are supporting the case of applicant," the court stated.



xMVA launches 'Kisan Aakrosh Morcha' for farmers' demands in Pune

Team Absolute | Pune

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) launched its 4-day, 100-km long 'Kisan Aakrosh Morcha' to press for the demands of farmers, from Shivneri Fort -- the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj -- to the Pune Collectorate, here on Wednesday. Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MP Dr. Amol Kolhe started the march along with legislators and leaders of the MVA allies -- Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) -- by offering respects at Shivneri Fort, accompanied by thousands of tillers, including many women and youth, carrying banners and placards.

The long-march from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily will be punctuated with public meetings at various locations en route and culminate in a massive public rally to be addressed by NCP President Sharad Pawar on December 30 in Pune.

Interacting with the media, Dr. Kolhe and others listed the farmers' major demands for taking out the



protest procession.

"The ban on onion export must be lifted immediately and a long term policy should be formulated for onion exports. Farmers should get uninterrupted daytime power supply for agriculture especially in pest-prone areas. The arbitrariness of crop

insurance companies must be reined in and the cultivators should get compensation for losses immediately," said Dr. Kolhe.

He questioned why the farmers are not entitled to full crop loans waiver in view of the huge losses they suffered during the Kharif (monsoon)

and Rabi (winter) crop seasons this year, when the government has written off dues worth Rs 25 lakh crore of big corporate houses.

Dr. Kolhe sought a formal education loan policy for farmers' children and equal subsidy for all milk-producing farmers, and urged implementation of all promises made by the ruling alliance in Maharashtra which claims to be a 'government of farmers'. Slamming the Bharatiya Janata Party, Dr. Kolhe said that the farmers are in great distress owing to the faulty policies of the Centre and the state governments which are only concerned about staying in power.

"We are inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who had given full protection to the tillers but the BJP government which invoked his name to come to power had spelt ruin for the cultivators," said Dr. Kolhe.

Addressing groups of farmers en route, he said that this fight is for all the brothers, mothers, sisters of the agriculturists who are being oppressed by an unjust system, and the struggle will not fall on deaf ears.

Jarange-Patil to unveil proposed 'Mumbai agitation' plans today

Team Absolute | Jalna (Maharashtra)

The Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil said here on Wednesday that he would announce details of his proposed Maratha agitation plans to lay a 'siege' of Mumbai on December 28.

He called upon all Marathas in the state to "get out of your homes... head for Mumbai... for the sake of the future of your children," sparking concerns in political circles, with the Lok Sabha 2024 elections looming ahead.

Speaking to the media, he said that the deadline for giving the Maratha reservation had ended on December 24 but the state government has remained non-committal on the issue so far.

"We are aware that the government will not give us the quotas... The government is doing their job, we are doing our," claimed Jarange-Patil flatly.

He reiterated that the Marathas and Kunbi (OBC) castes are "same" and lakhs of historical evidence and certificates to this effect have also been found



in different districts.

"We have been consistently saying that the Marathas and Kunbis are the same... So we should

be given quotas from the Kunbi (OBC) Caste. Will any reservation stick if it crosses the 50 per cent ceiling," countered Jarange-Patil.

"There is no going back now... This is to safeguard the future of our next generations... All (Marathas), come out of your homes and head for Mumbai..." he declared.

His aides said that as per earlier announcements, Jarange-Patil is planning to lay 'siege' to Mumbai with efforts to bring one crore Marathas, marching from all over the state and squatting on the outskirts of the country's commercial capital in early January 2024.

It may be recalled that earlier this month, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had assured that after all formalities are completed, the state government would convene a Special Session of Legislature to announce the Maratha reservations in February 2024. The CM sent a delegation to meet Jarange-Patil seeking more time to implement the quota assurance, but the latter spurned the overtures saying "no more deadline extensions".

Olympic, World Champion Pole Vaulters Katie Moon become ambassador for Mumbai Marathon 2024

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Two-time pole vault World Champion and 2020 Olympic gold medalist Katie Moon is the International Event Ambassador for the 19th edition of the Mumbai Marathon to be held January 21. Promoted by Procam Global, Mumbai Marathon is a World Athletics Gold Label Race. It is one of the top 10 marathons in the world. With a prize money of USD 405,000, Mumbai Marathon 2024 will witness participation from across the globe. "While running the race of life, every step is an opportunity to inspire and make a difference. I am deeply honoured to be named the International Event Ambassador for Tata Mumbai Marathon 2024, where each stride carries the spirit of resilience, determination, and community. I look forward to inspiring and being inspired by the incredible participants as we come together to cele-



brate the power of human potential and the pursuit of excellence. Let's lace up Mumbai, and run towards a healthier, and happier future!" Katie said.

The solo Olympic medalist, Katie, has clinched three medals at the World Athletics Championships: a silver in the 2022 World Indoor Championships in Belgrade, and a gold medal at

the 2022 Eugene and 2023 Budapest World Athletics Championships. In 2023, she also won the top slot in the Diamond League. Katie hit a streak with two medals in 2018 alone: a gold at the Toronto NACAC Championship and a silver in the London Athletics World Cup. In the consecutive year, she pocketed a silver in the 2019 Lima Pan American Games. In her early childhood, she competed as a level 4 gymnast and diver, while in pole vaulting, she graduated with a state record of 3.97 m (13 ft 0 in). "We are thrilled to welcome Katie Moon to our Tata Mumbai Marathon family as the esteemed International Event Ambassador. With her unparalleled sporting spirit, competitiveness, passion for excellence, and dedication to making a positive impact, we're confident she'll inspire countless others to join us on this incredible journey!" Vivek Singh, Jt MD, Procam International said.

Woman loses over Rs 3 lakh trying to buy dry fruits online



Team Absolute | Thane

A 54-year-old woman from Panvel in Maharashtra lost more than Rs three lakh to an online fraud while buying dry fruits, police said on Wednesday.

As per the woman's complaint, she came upon an advertisement for a dry-fruits store on Facebook on September 20 and ordered some dry-fruits.

When she contacted the number mentioned in the advertisement, the person at the other end instructed her about how to make a

payment through a UPI-based app.

After she followed his instructions, he told her that the transaction had failed. But later she found out that Rs 3,09,337 had been withdrawn from her bank account.

She tried to contact the person again but he could not be reached on the phone, she told the police.

A case of cheating under IPC section 420 and relevant sections of the Information Technology Act was registered at Panvel police station on Tuesday and the probe was underway, police said.

4 Karnataka pilgrims killed, 6 hurt in SUV-truck crash en route to Shirdi



Team Absolute | Solapur (Maharashtra)

In a tragic incident, at least four pilgrims from Karnataka were killed and another 6, including a toddler, injured when their SUV rammed into container truck on the Karmala-Ahmednagar Road on Wednesday, police said.

The tragedy occurred near Pande village around 6 am when the vehicle from Karnataka was speeding from Gulbarga via Solapur towards the famed Shri Saibaba Temple of Shirdi in Ahmednagar district, as its occupants slept inside.

As per initial information, the SUV crashed into an oncoming container truck with full force and so powerful was the impact that it was thrown into a ditch beside the road and overturned, trapping many of the occupants. Hearing the screams of the survivors, local villagers rushed to the spot and helped them out, even as a team of Karmala police led by Jyotiram Ganjwate reached the tragedy site, and saw the SUV was virtually reduced to a heap of metal. While at least four pilgrims had succumbed on the spot, another six injured have been admitted to the Karmala Sub-District Hospital, where the condition of two is described as critical. The victims have been identified as: Sharda Hiremath, 67 of Hubli, Jemi Deepak Hiremath, 38 of Gulbarga, Srishal Chandaga Kumbhar, 55, and his wife Sashikala, 50. The injured include an eight-month-old Nakshatra V. Kumbhar, Kaveri V. Kumbhar, Soumya S. Kumbhar, 26, Sridhar Srishal Kumbhar, 24, Sasikumar T. Kumbhar, 36, and Shrikant R. Chavan, 27. The cause of the road disaster is not clear and the Karmala police have registered an accident case with further investigations underway. The families of the deceased victims, all in Gulbarga district of Karnataka have been informed of the tragedy, while the bodies have been sent for an autopsy.

Western Railway to run special suburban services on New Year Eve



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Western Railway's Mumbai division on Wednesday said that it will run special Mumbai local trains on New Year Eve.

In an official statement, the Western Railway said that to clear extra rush of passengers on the occasion of new year, Western Railway will run eight special local trains during the intervening night of 31st December, 2023 and 1st January, 2024 including four from Churchgate to Virar and four from Virar to Churchgate.

The Western Railway also shared the time table of special Mumbai local trains that will operate on the New Year Eve. It said that the down Mumbai local trains from Churchgate to Virar will begin at 1:15 am and up suburban services from Virar to Churchgate will start from 12:15 am.

Meanwhile, the Central Railway's Mumbai division on Tuesday said that it will

run special suburban services on New Year Eve on 31.12.2023 to 01.01.2024 midnight for the benefit of passengers.

The Central Railway, in an official statement said that the following trains have been arranged for the passengers.

Main Line Special train will depart Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at 01.30 hrs and arrive Kalyan at 03.00 hrs. Special train will depart Kalyan at 01.30 hrs and arrive Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at 03.00 hrs.

Harbour Line Special train will depart Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at 01.30 hrs and arrive Panvel at 02.50 hrs. Special train will depart Panvel at 01.30 hrs and arrive Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at 02.50 hrs.

The Central Railway said that all these specials will halt at all stations. "The passengers are requested to follow Covid appropriate behaviour for their's and other's safety," the Central Railway said.

The Central Railway will be installing panic switches at 117 railway stations on its network, a top official said in Mumbai on Thursday.

Speaking at his first news conference after taking charge of the post, Central Railway general manager Ram Karan Yadav said two panic switches will be installed on each platform at 117 stations.

In case of emergency, a passenger can press the button to seek help from the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

A senior CR official said the Central Railway has signed an MoU with RailTel for the installation.

"On pressing the panic button, the RPF control will get an alert and immediate help will be sent to the passengers by checking the CCTV," the official said.

The work is expected to be complete within a year.

Gujarati actor-producer nabbed for molesting minor in Mumbai hotel

Team Absolute | Mumbai

An actor-producer from Gujarat was arrested in Mumbai for allegedly molesting a minor girl after luring her with an offer for a film role, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred late on Monday when the 17-year old girl,

also from Gujarat, was alone in a hotel room in the western suburbs. The accused is known to the victim's uncle and she met him hoping to get a break in films. On Monday, finding her alone in the hotel room in Andheri,

the actor-producer allegedly molested her. Later, the shaken girl lodged a complaint

with the D.N. Nagar Police Station in Andheri west.

A police team swooped onto the hotel where the accused was staying and arrested him. He has been charged under various sections of the IPC and POCSO and further probe is underway, according to the officials.

GAS CYLINDER EXPLODES NEAR SYMBIOSIS COLLEGE IN PUNE, FIRE UNDER CONTROL

Team Absolute | Pune

A gas cylinder blast destroyed a storage site near Symbiosis College in Pune today. A huge fire broke out after the LPG cylinder exploded. In visuals, several cylinders are seen in the area. Officials said the fire has been brought under control. There are no reports of injuries. More details are awaited.

Prakash Ambedkar's VBA eyes 25 pc share of Lok Sabha seats in Maha

Team Absolute | Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

The Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), led by Prakash Ambedkar, on Tuesday demanded 12 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra from the INDIA bloc "if the Opposition seriously wants to defeat" the Bharatiya Janata Party led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Unveiling a seat-sharing formula, state VBA President Rekha Thakur said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party-SP, the Shiv Sena-UBT, besides the VBA, should contest 12 seats each in Maharashtra to dislodge the BJP. The statement was issued after the VBA state executive meeting held here

- just two days ahead of the Congress' 'Hai Taiyaar Hum' mega-rally planned in Nagpur on its 138th foundation day celebrations to kickstart the campaign for parliament elections. Detailing the formula, Thakur, and her colleagues Siddharth Mokle, Farooq Ahmed, and Priyadarshi Telang said that in the present political circumstances, no party in the country, including the Congress, can independently capture power or elect a PM on its own. Even in Maharashtra, the MVA is not an option as two constituents - the Shiv Sena-UBT and NCP-SP - have been weakened by the vertical splits they suffered in 2022 and 2023 respectively, and the Congress could get only one MP elected in 2019 parliament polls.

However, the last Lok Sabha elections proved that the VBA not only has a vote-bank but its base has increased significantly among the underprivileged section in the past five years, he said. "Our clear agenda is to defeat Modi in the 2024 election. There is no need for the MVA to be overconfident in the current situation. The BJP is threatening the Opposition parties with central investigation agencies and to put them in jail for even minor mistakes," said Ahmed. Mokle said that the BJP is dividing the society and attempting to undermine the Constitution which could affect the security of the underprivileged classes, deprived sections, tribals, Muslims and other minorities, etc., and its time to take the right decisions now.





EDITOR'S SPECS

World clock gifted to Ram temple in Ayodhya

A vegetable vendor from Lucknow has developed a world clock, capable of telling the time of nine countries. The vendor has gifted the first clock to the Ram temple as a token of reverence, ahead of the Ram temple consecration in Ayodhya on January 22. Anil Kumar Sahu, 51, who sells vegetables on a cart near Hahemann crossing here, developed the world clock in 2018 and got its design patented with the Government of India. He gifted the 75 cm clock to the general secretary of the Ram Temple Trust Champat Rai. Sahu exhibited his work at a state level science model competition organised by the Council of Science and Technology (UPCST), Lucknow at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Scientific Convention Centre in October. Sahu has also gifted two more clocks, one each to Hanuman Garhi and Ayodhya Junction railway station. "Apart from Ayodhya, I have dedicated clocks in Khatu Shyam Mandir in Lucknow, Kotwa dham and Kunteshwar Mahadev Mandir in Barabanki," he said. Sahu, originally from Fatehpur, explained that the clock could show the time of nine countries simultaneously and has a single hand. Starting from India, this clock shows the time in China, Tokyo (Japan), Moscow (Russia), Dubai (UAE), Mexico, New York and Washington DC. He said he got the idea from reading newspapers since the age of 15 years. "I developed this clock to prove India is a world leader," he said, adding that he would like to give one to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well and get it internationally patented.

Climate change upsets the apple cart of orchardists in Himachal Pradesh

Sanjeev Kumar

"Climate change and the resultant warm winters have been seriously impacting our apple crop's productivity and quality. Over the last two to three decades, production has gradually come down by about 30 per cent. The lifespan of traditional varieties of apple (Mollies, Gala, Anna and Golden) trees has reduced," said Chatter Singh Kalet (64), an orchardist from Madavag in Chopal sub-division of Shimla district, while listing out the problems inflicting the Rs 6,000-crore apple economy of Himachal Pradesh.

Himachal Pradesh Sanyukta Kisan Manch co-convenor Sanjay Chauhan (56) told 101Reporters that more than four lakh families are associated with apple farming, contributing around 13 per cent to the GDP of the hill state.

"However, less or no snowfall between December and February and untimely rains and hailstorms during the flowering or fruit-setting period from March to June have triggered a fall in production."

Sujat Chauhan (43), an apple grower from Theog, said less snowfall this year means apple trees will not get the required chilling hours.

"This hurts us more as we will have to shell out extra bucks to buy pesticides to reduce the impact of ecosystem imbalance in the form of pest attacks and diseases."

"Around three years ago, a 50-kg bag of fertiliser cost Rs 800 to 1,100. However, the same bag now costs Rs 1,500 to 2,000. This means the price has been increasing by almost 30 per cent year after year. Pesticide prices have soared from Rs 400-500 to Rs 800-900 per drum," Sujat said.

Not just winters, the monsoon season has also left the apple economy in tatters. Persistent and untimely spells of rain and hailstorm from March-April to June have led to widespread losses in Shimla, Mandi, Sirmour, Kullu, Chamba and Kinnaur districts.

A horticulture development officer, on condition of anonymity, pegged the total number of horticulture farmers affected in Shimla, Kullu and Mandi districts at 59,338.

"The total losses is worth Rs 162 crore, while the total area affected in the rains is 25,237 hectare. The government only grants compensation to farmers who have suffered losses above 33 per cent," he informed.

According to the state government data (June 24 to October 2), apple crops in 808 hectare in Shimla district and 475 hectare in Mandi district were affected by monsoon fury. State Horticulture Minister Jagat Singh Negi told 101Reporters that apple crop suffered extensive damage in heavy rains, thus bringing down the production by half this year as compared to the previous year.

The faceless villain

The highest-ever production figure of 5.11 crore boxes of apples in Himachal Pradesh was registered in 2010, but since then it has never crossed that mark. The lowest production was in 2018 as the state produced only 1.65 crore boxes. From this season onwards, the Himachal Pradesh government has decided that apples will be sold on the basis of kg and not boxes.

Each box carries 20 to 22 kg of apples. However, farmers used to make very little money from the market. The per box system fleeced them as only fixed rates were offered to them. By selling a



box of low quality apple at per kg rate this season, a farmer could make Rs 1,200 to 1,400. When the box system was in place, the same box could fetch only Rs 700 to Rs 1,000.

The impacts of climate change on apple production are highlighted in a 2020 study.

"There is an average increase in temperature of about 1.5 degree Celsius till October, whereas, 2-10 per cent reduction in rainfall and 50-100 ppm increase in CO2 concentration have been observed, which reduce the apple yield."

The study noted that climate change led to the shifting of apple belt in hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh to places situated in even higher altitudes such as Kullu, Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti, Sirmour district's Rajgarh area, Shimla district's Theog and Kotkhai and some areas in Solan district. It also highlighted that the population of pollinators such as honeybees and butterflies has declined due to high temperatures at higher hills, thus impacting apple production.

It said in Himachal Pradesh, there is a loss in yield by 40 to 50 per cent due to increased temperature and reduced chilling hours. Chilling period/requirement is the minimum period of cold weather required to resume normal spring growth of an apple tree following the winter period.

"In apples, there is a decrease in yield due to water shortage (80 per cent) and evaporation rate (20 per cent) leading to a reduction in chilling hours. This causes shifting of apple belts towards higher hills of Himachal Pradesh as most cultivators require 1,000 to 1,600 chilling hours at or below seven degree Celsius," the study detailed.

At lower elevations, apple cultivation has been affected and large areas have been deemed unfit for the crop. Climate change has also affected the quality of the fruits as too much heat messes up with its colour.

A 2011 study on the impact of climate change on apple crop in Himachal stressed that daily temperatures of 70°F and higher for four or more hours received by the tree during the previous 24 to 36 hours can actually negate chilling.

"Apple and stone fruit trees develop their vegetative and fruiting buds in the summer and as winter approaches, the already developed buds go dormant in response to both shorter day lengths and cooler temperatures," said the study.

The buds remain dormant until they have accumulated suffi-

cient chilling units of cold weather. If the buds do not receive sufficient chilling temperatures, trees will develop delayed foliation, reduced fruit set, increased buttoning and reduced fruit quality.

"We have almost reached the threshold of the climate change situation this year. The change in temperatures from February to June period calls for a rejuvenation plan for orchards by providing new planting material or subsidies to shift to high-density cropping," Sanjay said.

Sujat said persistent rains at the time of flowering caused a drop in temperatures while the trees at that time required sunny weather with 15 degree Celsius or higher temperature.

"This badly affected pollination and fruit-setting, resulting in apple production falling by 40 to 50 per cent this year."

Rising pest attacks

Warmer winters are also leading to various diseases in apple trees. Sujat said farmers were witnessing higher incidences of Scab, Alternaria (leaf and fruit) and even mite attacks now than in the past.

Echoing such concerns, S.K. Bhardwaj, Head of Environment Science Department, YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry at Nauni in Solan district, told 101Reporters that the lack of favourable weather conditions calls for crop diversification.

"Farmers should also focus on pulses, vegetables or livestock farming, while going for high-density apple varieties that can withstand climatic challenges," he said.

Livestock rearing, and cultivation of pulses, fruits and vegetables can supplement the income of orchardists as they can deal with the adverse weather conditions better. Further, these can be managed by farmers themselves unlike in the case of apple where labourers need to be employed for the upkeep of orchards.

The situation in Himachal Pradesh, popularly known as the 'Fruit Bowl of India', is a wake-up call for the government, agri-horticulture universities and farmers to gear up to deal with climatic challenges. Horticulture Minister Negi said the department was urging farmers to go for high-density apple cultivation through new rootstock varieties to sustain challenges posed by global warming. He also exhorted farmers to join Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme to cover their losses in case of adverse weather conditions.

Royal Delicious, Red Delicious, Richared, Golden Delicious, Red Golden, Red Chief, Vance, Oregon Spur and Super Chief are among the high-density apple varieties. Against the 250 to 300 apple trees that can be accommodated in a plot measuring one hectare, 2,000 to 3,000 high-density trees can be grown in the same plot. These varieties give higher yields than traditional varieties, though the initial input costs on irrigation systems, plantation and nets are high.

The farmers have been getting their insurance claims, but the process is a bit lengthy and cumbersome for them. Meanwhile, Sandeep Kumar Sharma, a scientist at Meteorological Centre, Shimla, said the long-range forecast for Himachal Pradesh has predicted normal to above-normal precipitation in the ongoing winter season.

international

8 killed, 1 missing in wild thunderstorms on Australia's southeast coast

Sydney | Agencies

At least eight people have lost their lives in Australia, with one still missing, as wild thunderstorms ripped through the country's southeast coast during Christmas and Boxing Day.

In Queensland, the death toll rose to six following the conclusion of a large-scale search and rescue operation on Wednesday in the Moreton Bay area, Xinhua news agency reported.

"At 5:30 p.m. yesterday afternoon, Boxing Day, a huge storm came over Moreton Bay near Green Island just off Wellington Point. A 39-foot motorized yacht has capsized during the storm," state police's Acting Chief Superintendent Andrew Pilotto said in an update on a "horrific" and "tragic" boating event.

Eleven adult males were on board for an annual fishing trip, he said.

Eight of them were trans-



ported to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Over the last 18 hours, three people have been recovered deceased from the waters from the incident.

He also noted that the wind blew at over 100 km an hour, which "for Moreton Bay is horrific".

In a separate press conference, Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll released information about another incident in Gympie's river area where three women were swept away in floodwaters.

called to Caves Road in Buchan after 5:00 p.m. local time on Tuesday after reports of flash flooding. Search operation started after the flood waters receded, and police found a woman dead at the scene. On Tuesday morning, a tree branch fell at a private property on Rusks Road, Caringal, killing a 44-year-old man on the scene. Despite easing signs of winds, hail and rainfall, several flood alerts are still in place for parts of Queensland and Victoria. According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, a couple of areas need to watch out for severe storms possible on Wednesday, primarily around the border between Victoria and New South Wales, as well as in central and northern parts of the Queensland coast. "By Wednesday afternoon, we're starting to see the end in sight for this thunderstorm outbreak," said the bureau Senior Meteorologist Angus Hines.

She confirmed that one has survived, while one was found deceased and one is still missing.

"In addition to that, a nine-year-old girl has been reported missing in the Rochdale South area as well and also was located deceased overnight," Carroll added. On Monday, a woman in her 50s was killed by a falling tree at the Gold Coast. In the state of Victoria, severe thunderstorm and flood warnings were issued during the holiday period, with two deaths having already been reported. Emergency services were

Rockets fired again from Lebanon into north Israel, Hezbollah claims responsibility

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Several rockets were fired into northern Israel on Wednesday morning with the Iran-backed terror outfit Hezbollah claiming responsibility.

According to sources in Israel Defence Ministry, the Iron Dome Air Defence system had thwarted the missiles directed into Israel and that no casualties or injuries were reported in the air strikes.

According to Arab media outlets, Hezbollah has claimed of targeting Israeli military position near a Navy base in the area.



Even though Hezbollah is firing rockets and missiles into Israel on regular intervals and being counter-attacked, the possibility

of a war in the northern Israel is bleak.

The US and the Israel government had warned Iran and Hezbollah that if a war front is opened in northern area of Israel, it could get out of hand.

With Israel already engaged in a bitter war with Hamas in Gaza Strip, the possibility of opening a northern front is almost ruled out.

The Israel Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, has said that Israel was facing a multi-front war and that the war with Hamas could be extended for a few more months.

Russian defence enterprises double production of Su-57 fighters

Moscow | Agencies

Russian defence enterprises have fulfilled the country's orders in 2023 and doubled the production of Su-57 fighters, local media quoted Yuri Slyusar, General Director of the United Aircraft Corporation, as saying.

"We have fulfilled the state defence orders. We have fulfilled all signed contracts according to the schedule. Everything has been delivered on time, and sometimes even ahead of the schedule," he told



local media. He noted that some orders have increased significantly, and the production of Su-57

aircraft has doubled under the state defence orders this year, Xinhua news agency reported.

Slyusar said that the Russian defence ministry has received all the ordered aircraft, and the state defence orders would increase in 2024.

A 5th-generation multirole fighter capable of aerial combat as well as ground and maritime strike, the Su-57 incorporates stealth, super-maneuverability, super-cruise, integrated avionics, and large internal payload capacity.

Israel expands ground offensive in central Gaza, UN warns of 'catastrophic' humanitarian crisis

Jerusalem | Agencies

Israel has declared the expansion of its ground offensive in the central Gaza Strip, as the United Nations warned that the escalation of attacks is exacerbating a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged Palestinian enclave. Israel previously urged the residents of Gaza to move from the northern region to the central and southern regions, which it claimed as "safe zones". However, the Israeli forces later expanded their strikes across the strip, including the central and southern parts, Xinhua news agency reported. In a statement on Tuesday, UN Human Rights Office's spokesperson Seif Magango reported that more than 50 strikes occurred in central Gaza on December 24-25, targeting the refugee camps of Bureij, Nuseirat, and Maghazi, where two strikes hit seven residential buildings, killing at least 86 people. "An unknown number of people are still believed to be trapped under the rubble," Magango said. The escalated Israeli bombardment, said Magango, is "deepening an already catastrophic humanitarian situation," with all roads connecting the three camps destroyed, hindering the delivery of relief aid. Shelters and hospitals, operating at a minimal capacity, are grappling with critical overcrowding and limited



resources. Palestinian health authorities have reported that approximately 21,000 people, predominantly children, women, and the elderly, were killed during the 81-day conflict, with thousands more missing and presumed to be buried under the rubble. A majority of the 2.3 million population has been displaced, and the UN reports widespread hunger. Meanwhile, an Israeli military spokesperson told reporters that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) believes that "thousands" of Hamas militants are located in the refugee camps of central Gaza. IDF Chief of the General Staff Herzi Halevi said in an address to soldiers that the attacks will now concentrate on central and southern Gaza. According to Halevi, the military "is close to completing the dismantling of Hamas' battalions in the northern Gaza Strip."

Childbirths in S.Korea hit lowest-ever tally in Oct

Seoul | Agencies

The number of babies born in South Korea fell to the lowest point for any October to date, data showed on Wednesday.

A total of 18,904 babies were born in October, down 8.4 per cent from a year earlier, according to the data from Statistics Korea.

The October tally marks the lowest number for any October since the agency began to compile related data in 1981, Yonhap news agency reported.

In the first 10 months of the year, the number of newborns stood at 196,041, down 8.1 per



cent from a year earlier, marking the smallest number on record during the cited period.

South Korea reported the first natural fall in its population in 2019, and the trend of

postpone or give up on getting married or having babies in line with changing social norms and lifestyles, as well as in the face of high home prices, a tough job market and an economic slowdown.

The number of deaths grew 3.4 per cent on-year to 30,793 in October, and the country, accordingly, suffered a natural decline in population by 11,889.

The number of marriages, meanwhile, rose one per cent on-year to 15,986 cases in October, and divorces also increased six per cent on-year to 7,916.



CENTRAL BJP SETTLES IN NEW MP CM, BUSTLE TO START AFTER PORTFOLIO ALLOCATION TO MINISTERS

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

It's been almost half-a-month since Chief Minister Mohan Yadav along with his two Cabinet colleagues and deputies - Rajendra Shukla and Jagdish Devda took oath after the BJP registered a landslide victory in Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections held on November 17. Having been promoted as the head of the Council of Ministers from among several of his senior party colleagues, Mohan Yadav apparently took forward his regime, testing everything that came his way.

As of now, he is totally reliant on the party's central leadership and is just following directions received from New Delhi.

After taking oath as Chief Minister, Yadav made frequent visits to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister Amit Shah and the BJP's National President JP Nadda.

With the Cabinet expansion being done on December 25, governance of the state will resume gradually once the portfolios are allocated to the Ministers. Until then, Yadav is making all efforts to get everything streamlined for the smooth running of the administration.

Some top bureaucrats have been reshuffled and Yadav has met every senior politician of his party, even those who lost the election.

Well-aware of the fact that his governance would be compared with that of his predecessor Shivraj



Singh Chouhan, who headed the state for over 16 years, Yadav is trying to win the confidence of his party colleagues.

However, not much is happening in state politics right now and all key decisions are being taken by the BJP's central leadership. The bustle in Madhya Pradesh's politics is likely to begin after the portfolio allocation.

lio allocation.

The race for acquiring top ministries like home and urban development has already begun among the heavyweight leaders in the state.

Madhya Pradesh's new Cabinet is a combination of young and senior leaders. Of them 17 are first-timers, including stalwarts like the BJP's National General Secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, ex-Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel and former state President Rakesh Singh.

Significantly, out of 31, only nine Ministers from former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Cabinet have been retained, including the Chief Minister and his two deputies Shukla and Devda.

Apart from the combination of new and old leaders, the BJP has tried to balance castes and regions in its Cabinet selection.

Notably, to make it easier for Yadav to gain control, the BJP's top leadership has clipped Chouhan's wings and very few of his loyalists have been inducted into the Cabinet.

Some former Ministers who had strong influence in the state's politics, like Gopal Bhargava, Bhupendra Singh, Jayant Malaiya and some others, have been dropped.

The new CM, whose political journey began with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has the backing of Modi and Shah. However, it remains to be seen if he can dominate his Cabinet colleagues, especially the senior-most and influential leaders and how governance takes place in the future.

Chouhan vacates CM House to his successor Mohan Yadav

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday vacated bungalow B-6 located in Shyamla Hills in the city - designated as the CM House.

He has shifted into B-8, 74 Bungalow located in Arera Hills in Bhopal. Arera Hills is residential address for several other ministers and top bureaucrats.

Chouhan has been residing in bungalow - B-6 Shyamla Hills, designated as CM House since he became Chief Minister first time in 2005. He had then replaced his senior colleague Babulal Gaur. Chouhan was shifted from CM House after the party had lost the assembly election to the Congress in 2018. However, the BJP returned to power after the Kamal Nath-led Congress government was toppled in March 2020. After taking oath of Chief Minister for the fourth term in March 2020, Chouhan had returned to the bungalow B-6 again. Now, after registering a landslide victory in MP, the BJP has replaced Chouhan with Mohan Yadav as Chief Minister, forcing him to vacate the bungalow for his successor.

Importantly, the new residence of ex-CM Chouhan has been reconstructed before he shifted into it. The bungalow, which was allotted to former state BJP president (late) Nandkumar Chouhan, has been merged into B-8, which is now the new address of ex-CM



Chouhan.

Before leaving the CM House on Wednesday, Chouhan offered his daily prayer and met all employees associated with the CM House. After vacating his bungalow, Chouhan said, "I had taken a lot of decisions here for the welfare of my people and state. I wish Mohan Yadav and his team all the luck to take the state's development and progress to new heights. I am going back happy, with tons of memories and love of those who helped me throughout my journey as CM."

CM Mohan Yadav had made a courtesy visit to Chouhan on Tuesday after 28 MLAs took oath as ministers on Monday. Yadav, who was higher education minister in Chouhan's cabinet, was residing in a government bungalow known as Vindhya Kothi near MLA guest house.

Tendu leaf collectors in will get Rs 4,000 per bag

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh government has taken a big decision in the matter of tendu leaf collectors. Now the tendu leaf collection rate has been increased to Rs 4,000 per standard bag. The Forest Department has issued orders in this regard.

This decision of the state government will provide economic benefits to about 35 lakh tendu leaf collectors of the state in the collection year of 2024. Tendu leaf collectors will now get additional remuneration of Rs 162 crore compared to last year. Tendu leaf collection and trading in the state is done through Madhya Pradesh Minor Forest Produce Association. Every



year about 16 lakh standard bags of tendu leaves are collected in the state. Villagers living near forest areas get employment facilities every year in the months of May and June through tendu leaf collection.

The remuneration rate for tendu leaf collection in

Madhya Pradesh in 2017 was Rs 1,250 per standard bag. The state government increased this rate from time to time. With this decision of the state government, tendu leaf collectors will now get an increased rate of remuneration of Rs 4,000 per standard bag.

CHIEF MINISTER DR. MOHAN YADAV FOR SPREADING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav has instructed the concerned authorities to speed up initiatives for spreading vocational education in the state. He said that the "New Education Policy-2020" centres focus on vocational education (vocational studies) on the initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav was reviewing the activities of the School Education Department in Mantralaya.

Dr. Yadav said that after completing school education, students should be motivated for employment and self-employment by pursuing them to have vocational studies while taking admission for higher education. With this the education system can be made more meaningful. Decisions in selection for new CM Rise schools should be taken on practical basis and the design and all other arrangements in the construction of schools should also be completed efficiently.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav apprised



himself of regular courses, management of CM Rise Schools and the welfare of the students. He directed the

department to submit an action plan as per the Sankalp Patra. Principal Secretary School Education, Rashmi

Arun Shami gave a presentation on the schemes. Senior officials were present.

CHIEF MINISTER DR. YADAV'S INSTRUCTIONS:

- Implement the new education policy speedily.
- Make attempts to ensure that MP remains on top in school education sector.
- Resolve departmental issues in coordination with concerned departments.
- Pay attention to quality education.
- Undertake regular inspections at the ground level.
- Remove obstacles in the construction of CM Rise School.
- Ensure implementation of new education policy at ground level.

MPPSC Result: Priya Pathak of Satna topped, selected for the post of Deputy Collector, seven girls in top ten

Team Absolute | Indore

Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MP PSC) has declared the final result of State Service Examination-2019 late on Tuesday night. Selection list has been released for 87 percent posts (included in the main part). Due to the OBC reservation case pending in the court, appointments to 13 percent posts have been stopped. There are 7 girls in the top-10.

The selection list was to be released for a total of 484 posts, but out of these, eligible candidates were not found for 12 posts (disabled and other quota), hence the final result has been released for 472 posts. For the remaining posts, the list will be released after the court's decision. Now the way has been cleared for these candidates of 2019 as well as the candidates of 2020 to get appointed.



ment. In the list of Deputy Collector category released by the Commission, Priya Pathak of Satna is at first place,

Shivangi Baghel of Rewa is at second place and Pooja Soni of Panna is at third place. Apart from these, names of Rahul Kumar Patel, Nidhi Mishra, Harneet Kaur Kalsi, Saurabh Mishra, Saloni Agarwal, Ritika Patidar, Ashutosh Mahmedev Singh Thakur are in the merit list. In the list of candidates selected for the post of DSP, the first name is Ruchi Jain, second is Lalit Bairagi and third is Harsh Rathore.

Priya Pathak is a resident of Hardua village in Nagaud tehsil of Satna district. His father Krishna Sharan Pathak is a teacher in Government Primary School, Khamrehi. Mother is a housewife. He studied till 5th class from Saraswati Vidyalaya of the same village and till 12th from Rahikwara Nagaud Navodaya Vidyalaya. Graduation in 2017: B.Sc Biotechnology and Master's degree in Political Science from Devi Ahilya Bai University, Indore.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) built in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, had become a cause of trouble for the common people, due to which the new government of the state has decided to remove it.

Not only the opposition but also the leaders of the ruling party are raising questions on this. Former Chief Minister Uma Bharti has demanded an investigation into the wastage of crores of rupees.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav took the decision to remove BRTS after a meeting with public representatives of Bhopal on Tuesday.

After this decision, former Chief Minister Uma Bharti wrote on Twitter, "The decision of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's government to remove the BRTS corridor is practical and praiseworthy. Why these were built at all, it should be investigated because such mistakes cost the government hundreds of crores." The capital's BRTS is 24 kilometers long and traffic is affected at many places due to this route."



Earlier, Congress leaders have also raised questions on this matter. Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha has also demanded an investigation. Chief Minister Yadav said that discussions were also held on the plan for phased removal of different parts of the length of BRTS in the capital and work on leveling the road and development of routes suitable for easy traffic.

ANURAG JAIN READY TO BE THE CHIEF SECRETARY! RETURN ORDERS MAY BE ISSUED SOON

Bhopal: The name of Anurag Jain, a senior 1989 batch IAS officer of the Indian Administrative Service and Secretary of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways at the Center, has again been included in the race to become the Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh. Sources reveal that he has agreed to become the Chief Secretary of MP.

Currently, Anurag Jain is in Bhopal. It is believed that his visit may be related to this purpose. However, today he also went to inspect a work on the National Highway.

According to information received from sources, he can meet prominent people in Bhopal today. Let us tell you that recently when Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav was on his visit to Delhi, Anurag Jain met him. Since then there are speculations that he could be the next Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh.



Sensational death of sub inspector, second case of silent attack in four days

Team Absolute | Indore

The second sensational case of death due to silent attack in a week came to light when a police sub-inspector, who had returned from duty, suddenly woke up after some time of sleeping with children and hiccupped three times. He died foaming at the mouth. This sudden incident at night has shocked everyone.

Just four days ago, an entrepreneur who had gone to have dinner in a hotel with his family, died while sitting at the dining table even before he could start eating, the video of which had gone viral on social sites. Now this is how the assistant sub-inspector died suddenly. There is an atmosphere of mourning in the family including the police department. Assistant Sub Inspector Praveen Bhuria who was posted in the Rural DIG office. Was admitted to Madhya Pradesh Police in the year 2010. At present, the police have established a route and started investigation.

According to Neha Bhuria, wife of Assistant Sub Inspector Praveen Bhuria, who died in this sensational



case of death with silent attack, last night suddenly she hiccupped thrice and then a slight peep came out of her mouth. He was immediately given first aid and neighbors were called and he was taken to Bombay Hospital. But as there were no vacant ICU beds there, he was taken to another hospital.

Where the doctor declared him dead during first aid. Neha Bhuria said that after returning from duty at night, she had eaten home-cooked food and after having fun with the children, she slept and then suddenly this incident happened at night. The entire family is shocked after this incident.

History-sheeter murdered by stabbing more than a dozen times

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Last night, due to old enmity in Bagsevania area, four accused brutally murdered a history-sheeter by stabbing him more than a dozen times. Minors are also included among the accused, police are making efforts to nab them after registering a case. According to the information received from the police station, Bharat Gatkane's father Haridas Gatkane (28), who lived in Amrai complex, used to work in catering. Bharat, who had criminal tendencies, was included in the goonda list of the police station, about 17 cases were registered against him. Last night at around 10.30 pm, he was sitting in the ground near Aradhana Vidyapeeth School and drinking alcohol with his friend Gaurav. At the same time, accused Tanishk, Karan Adiwali and his two other associates reached there

and started abusing Bharat and without giving him a chance to recover, started attacking him with knives. Bharat had suffered fatal injuries on his back, chest, head, shoulders and palms due to more than a dozen knife attacks. The four accused fled from there, leaving him almost dead. The seriously injured youth was taken to AIIMS for treatment where doctors declared him dead. Police reached AIIMS Hospital at 10 pm on information received from Dr. Devi Leena and registered a case of murder against the accused Tanishk, Karan Adiwali and his two other associates on the complaint of the deceased's brother Ajay that he had choked. According to the police, at present it has come to light that there was an old rivalry between the deceased Bharat Gatkane and the accused. Police teams are continuously raiding the possible hideouts of the absconding accused to arrest them.



Why star chef Nigella Lawson gets 'self-conscious' when she says 'microwave'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Celebrity chef Nigella Lawson, who three years ago mispronounced "microwave" as "mee-krow-wah-vay" on an episode of her cooking show, has addressed the infamous yet viral incident.

The British chef, 63, was explaining the steps on how to make brown butter colcannon when the interesting pronunciation slipped from her mouth.

"I still need a bit of milk, full fat, that I've warmed in the mee-krow-wah-vay," she said in the clip, which quickly caused an uproar on social media.

"I wasn't quite aware I'd said it because that's what I call it at home," Lawson said in an episode of BBC Breakfast, which aired on Christmas, reports.

At the time, people were debating if Lawson really pronounces "microwave" that way, so the chef clarified that she does but "not because I think that's how it's actually pronounced."

Now, Lawson said the whole ordeal



has changed the way she pronounces the word again.

"It's made me quite self-conscious. I tend to refer to it as the 'you know what' now," she said.

Despite some critics, she said that many supporters got in touch with her saying that they relate to her silly mishap.

"And what's quite interesting is that a lot of people got in touch with me to tell me what their family mispronunciations

are because so many families do have that," she explained.

"They mispronounce a word either because a child in the family could never say it properly and that's become part of their family language or just because they make jokes and they stick."

In 2021, Lawson told People she understood why some viewers thought she was serious about the pronunciation. "I did it with a straight face, I suppose," she said.

Kanye West shares apology note written in Hebrew, 'regrets' anti-Semitic remarks

Los Angeles | Agencies

Rapper Kanye West took to social media to issue a public apology written in Hebrew and said that he "deeply regrets" his anti-Semitic remarks.

"I sincerely apologise to the Jewish community for any 'unintended outburst' caused by my words or actions," the 46-year-old wrote, translated to English.

"It was not my intention to hurt or demean, and I deeply regret any pain I may have caused."

Kanye went on to vow that he's "committed to starting with myself and learning from this experience to ensure greater sensitivity and understanding in the future."

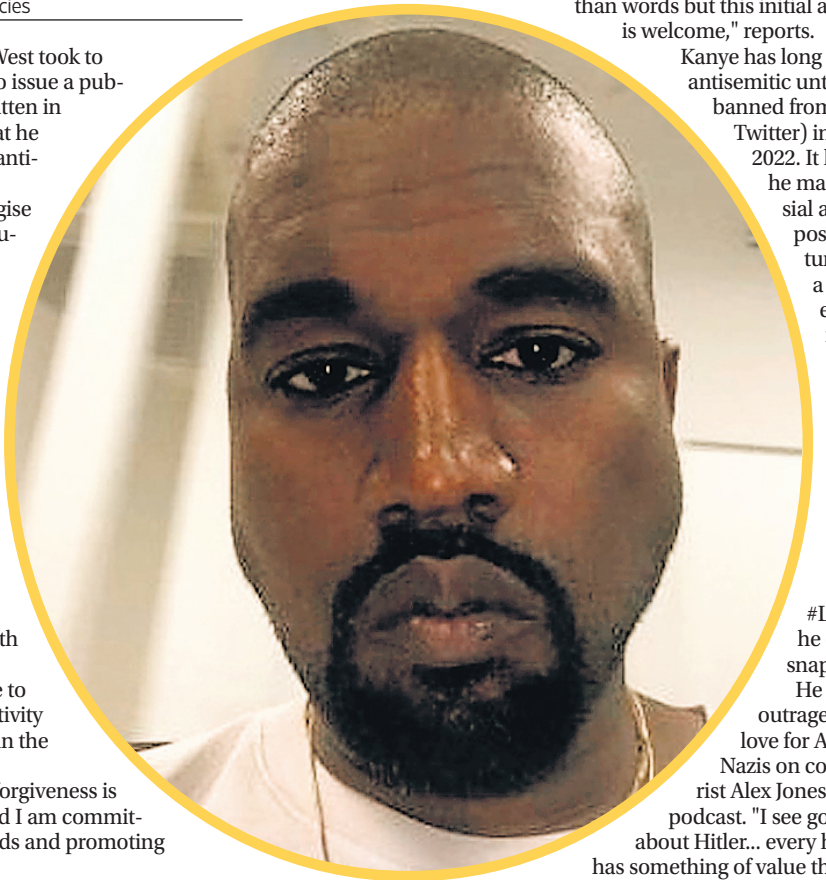
He added: "Your forgiveness is important to me, and I am committed to making amends and promoting unity."

Catching wind of his post, the Anti-Defamation League responded through a statement: "After causing untold damage by using his vast influence and platform to poison countless minds with vicious antisemitism and hate, an apology in Hebrew may be the first step on a long journey towards making amends to the Jewish community and all those who he has hurt."

The ADL continued: "Ultimately, actions will speak louder

than words but this initial act of contrition is welcome," reports.

Kanye has long been labeled antisemitic until he got banned from X (formerly Twitter) in December 2022. It happened after he made a controversial and offensive post, which featured an image of a Nazi swastika embedded inside the Star of David. "YE24 LOVE EVERY-ONE



#LOVESPEECH," he captioned the snap at the time.

He also sparked outrage for showing love for Adolf Hitler and Nazis on conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' "Infowars" podcast. "I see good things about Hitler... every human being has something of value that they

brought to the table, especially Hitler," he said. "I do love Hitler, I do love the Zionists - I love everyone."

After explaining that he loves everybody equally, he said: "I like Hitler... they (the Nazis) did good things too, we've got to stop dissing the Nazis all the time." He continued: "The Jewish media has made us feel like the Nazis and Hitler have never offered anything of value to the world."

Original copy of Steven Spielberg's 'Schindler's List' is on sale for \$1.8 million

Los Angeles | Agencies

The original copy of Liam Neeson and Ben Kingsley-starrer 'Schindler's List', which bagged seven Oscar honours, is on sale again for \$1.8 million (Rs. 14,99,98,500).

The copy is hitting the market again following a price cut. The rare historical relic is currently on sale for \$1.8 million through memorabilia company Moments in Time via a collector who obtained the list from the family of Itzhak Stern, Schindler's accountant and right-hand man.

Over the years, the list has been up for sale a few times with its asking price always over \$2M the highest being \$2.5M though it's never had any takers, reports.

The collector hopes the lowered price is more affordable with the site gushing over the opportunity to "acquire an item of truly incredible magnitude."

This list, dated April 18, 1945, is the penultimate list of a total of 7 coming in at 14 pages long and listing 801 names. It's also one of the only 4 lists in existence, one is housed at the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., the other two are in Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Center Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem.

The sale of this item is especially relevant today given the rapidly emerging anti-Semitism amid the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The documents were used by German industrialist Oskar Schindler, who saved more than 1,200 Jews' lives during the Holocaust by employing them in his enam-



elware and ammunition factories.

Tagged as one of the best films ever made, 'Schindler's List' is a 1993 epic historical drama based on the 1982 novel Schindler's Ark by Australian novelist Thomas Keneally.

The film follows Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who saved more than a thousand mostly Polish-Jewish refugees from the Holocaust by employing them in his factories during World War II.

It was nominated for twelve awards at the 66th Academy Awards, and won seven, including Best Picture, Best Director (for Spielberg), Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Original Score.

Shakira 'excited' to have her 21-foot-tall statue in Colombian hometown

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Shakira said that she was "very excited" while showing off the honor she received from her hometown.

The 46-year-old Grammy winner took to her Instagram page to share her thoughts on her statue that was built in her hometown Barranquilla.

In a new post, she wrote: "I'm very excited about this tribute to Colombian woman and the Barranquilleras inside and outside my land!" adding a red heart emoji.

In the post itself, Shakira uploaded a video featuring the 21-foot-tall statue, which was created by artist Yino Marques. The statue channeled her iconic dance move from the music video of her hit 'Hips Don't Lie' that was released back in 2005, reports.

The clip also documented Shakira's parents William Mebarak Chadid and Nidia Ripoll Torrado

as well as Mayor of Barranquilla Jaime Pumarejo taking a look at the statue for the first



time. In addition to the three, a number of the superstar's fans were seen posing in front of the statue.

Earlier that same day, the 'Waka Waka' singer released a series of photos highlighting the massive statue. While the first picture saw her parents smil-

ing and holding each other's hands in front of the statue, the second snap offered a closer look at the sculpture. Meanwhile, the third photo captured the mayor striking a pose in between her parents.

Shakira also let out a photograph of the statue's dedication.

On it, a message read in part: "A heart that composes, hips that do not lie, an unmatched talent, a voice that moves masses and bare feet that march for the good of childhood and humanity." She did not forget to share a picture of her brothers with her father and the mayor.

Accompanying the post, Shakira described the photos one

by one in the caption: "1. It makes me happy to share this with my parents and especially my mother on her birthday. 2. (sparkles emoji). 3. My parents, the mayor and I back there watching!. 4. Oh and this dedication. This is too much for my little heart. 5. My fathers and my brothers with our mayor."

'Parasite' actor Lee Sun-Kyun found dead in South Korea

Los Angeles | Agencies

South Korean actor Lee Sun-kyun, who starred in the 2020 Oscar best picture winner 'Parasite', has been found dead, according to police.

The actor, 48, is believed to have been found unconscious in a car at a park in central Seoul on Wednesday, reports.

According to the agency, it is unclear if Lee took his own life, but police received a report that he had left home after writing a note.

He had been under investigation for alleged drug use since October.

It was reported that he was suspected of taking drugs with an employee at a bar in Seoul. He had said that though he had taken what she had given him he had not known that they were illicit drugs.

The hostess had reportedly told the police that he used drugs at her home multiple times - something he denied. He had earlier requested through his lawyer to take a lie detector test.

His drug tests had returned negative or inconclusive results, the report added.

Police said that they regretted that Lee had died in the midst of investigations, but that the investigation was "conducted with (his)

consent", News1 Korea reported.

Lee's agency, HODU&U Entertainment, said: "There is no way to contain the sorrow and despair. We respectfully ask that you refrain from spreading false facts based on speculation... so that (Lee's) final journey will not be unfair."

There has been extensive interest around the investigation, which caused considerable damage to Lee's reputation. He was dropped from No Way Out, a mystery TV series that began shooting in October.

The actor, who was married to and had two sons with actress Jeon Hye-jin, had an acting career spanning more than two decades.

He rose to international fame as Park Dong-ik in 'Parasite', the father in the wealthy Park family which was later infiltrated by members of a poor family posing as unrelated individuals.



NOLAN: NO SUPERHERO SCIENCE-FICTION FILM THESE DAYS WHERE I DON'T SEE SNYDER'S INFLUENCE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Filmmaker Christopher Nolan said that Zack Snyder's influence on cinema is so dominant that part of his touch can be felt in any "superhero science-fiction film coming out these days."

Snyder is currently leading the Netflix charts with his space opera 'Rebel Moon: Part One - A Child of Fire'. In a profile published by The Atlantic, Nolan came out to praise Snyder.

Nolan served as a producer on Snyder's 'Man of Steel' (2013), which was based on a story Nolan cracked with his 'Dark Knight' trilogy co-writer David S. Goyer. Nolan and Snyder have remained friends ever since.

"There's no superhero science-fiction film coming out these days where I don't see some influence of Zack," Nolan said. "When you watch a Zack Snyder film, you see and feel his love for the potential of cinema. The potential of it to be fantastical, to be heightened in its reality, but to move you and to excite you."

Nolan has been quite praiseful of Snyder amid the rollout for 'Rebel Moon'. He previously tipped his hat to 'Watchmen', Snyder's divisive 2009 comic book adaptation. Nolan said he's "always believed 'Watchmen' was ahead of its time. The idea of a superhero team, which it so brilliantly subverts, wasn't yet a thing in movies. It would have been fascinating to see it released post-Avengers."

Snyder's career has long been divisive, and that continues with the release of 'Rebel Moon'.



Sara Sampaio



IND v SA 1st Cricket Test Match, Day 2

DEAN ELGAR'S STRONG CENTURY PUTS SOUTH AFRICA IN COMMANDING POSITION

Centurion | Agencies

In his final Test on his home ground, veteran opener Dean Elgar slammed a strong century to take South Africa into a commanding position on day two of first Test against India at SuperSport Park on Wednesday. At tea, South Africa are 194/3 in 49 overs, trailing India by 51 runs.

Despite a double-strike from Jasprit Bumrah, the Indian bowling attack, especially their back-up bowlers Prasidh Krishna and Shardul Thakur being expensive, they were unable to build any pressure and couldn't stop the run flow.

It meant that Elgar brought out gorgeous shots to reach his 14th Test century, the first at his home ground, to be unbeaten on 115 at tea break. He's also given company by a confident debutant David Bedingham, who is 32 not out off 47 balls, as South Africa racked up 145 runs in second session. India opened the second session with Shardul and Prasidh, who produced a few plays and misses. But Elgar feasted on hit-me deliveries from the duo to drive gorgeously with full face of the bat and raised his fifty off 79 balls with a short-arm jab going wide of mid-wicket for four off Thakur. After Thakur and Prasidh conceded 42



runs combined in their eight overs, India brought

on new-ball bowlers and it worked. Jasprit Bumrah had Tony de Zorzi edging to third slip and had Keegan Peterson chopping on to his stumps, as South Africa went from 104/1 to 113/3.

Bedingham, making his Test debut after 86 first-class appearances, showed no debutant nerves with his fine pull over backward square leg for six off Prasidh and played shot of the session through a picture-perfect leaning cover drive for four more. Elgar continued to march forward, on-driving off Ravichandran Ashwin twice, getting an edge running for four and then got his hundred with a fierce pull off Thakur going for a boundary.

Elgar celebrated with a joyful jump, punching and roaring in delight, with the crowd quick to applaud a fine knock in his farewell Test series. He and Bedingham took three more boundaries off Thakur to end a session firmly in South Africa's favour.

Brief scores:

India 245 in 67.4 overs (KL Rahul 101; Kagiso Rabada 5-44) lead South Africa 194/3 in 49 overs (Dean Elgar 115 not out, David Bedingham 32 not out; Jasprit Bumrah 2-35, Mohammed Siraj 1-39) by 51 runs

IOA forms 3-member ad hoc committee to oversee matters of suspended WFI

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Following the suspension of the newly elected administration of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Wednesday constituted a three-member ad hoc committee tasked with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the WFI. As per the reports, the committee will be chaired by Bhupinder Singh Bajwa, who holds the position of president in the Wushu Association of India. The other two members include MM Somaya, an Olympian in hockey, and former international badminton player Manjusha Kanwar.

Sports ministry suspended the Sanjay Singh-led new WFI body three days after the elections over the announcement to hold U15 and U20 nationals

and has asked IOA to establish a temporary panel to oversee the operations of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). On December 21, the day Singh assumed the role of WFI president, he declared that national trials for wrestling in the U-15 and U-20 categories would be conducted in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda before the conclusion of this year. The ministry in its statement, had said: "This announcement is hasty, without giving sufficient notice to wrestlers who are to take part in the said nationals and without following the provisions of the constitution of WFI."



Djokovic aspires to replicate Tom Brady's longevity in Tennis

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Novak Djokovic has emphatically declared retirement is not on his horizon, expressing a strong desire to follow in the footsteps of American football legend Tom Brady by extending his playing career well beyond the age of 40. Brady completed an illustrious career spanning 23 seasons in the National Football League, securing seven Super Bowl victories with both the New England Patriots and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He ultimately decided to hang up his cleats earlier this year at the age of 45.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic, who is in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, gearing up for an exhibition match against Carlos Alcaraz



as part of the prelude to the 2024 season said he has learnt a lot from Brady.

"Tom Brady is a great example of a champion in his sport and someone that has had such a great career and longevity. He has put a lot of hours and a lot of time into self-care, into recovery, into

making sure that in a way every aspect of his body and mind is covered so that he can have a long-lasting, successful career.

The 36-year-old Serbian ended the year with seven titles -- two Masters 1000 titles, three Grand Slams, an ATP 250 title and the season-

Premier League: Bournemouth cruise past Fulham to extend unbeaten run



Bournemouth | Agencies

AFC Bournemouth picked up their sixth win in seven matches and climbed into the top half of the table as they beat Fulham 3-0 at Vitality Stadium. After an even start from both sides, Bournemouth had a great chance to take the lead just after the 30-minute mark as Justin Kluivert's effort from close range was blocked brilliantly by Tosin Adarabioyo at the last second.

But, did Kluivert gave the Cherries a half-time lead ahead just before the break. Alex Scott, making only his fifth Premier League

appearance for Bournemouth due to injury, dribbled past four players before setting up Kluivert, and the winger's strike went underneath Bernd Lenno and into the net.

Fulham dominated possession in the opening stages of the second half but failed to create a goalscoring opportunity, and they were made to pay for their passive play in the 61st minute.

Luis Sinisterra added gloss to the scoreline in stoppage time with a fantastic strike as Bournemouth secured their first ever Boxing Day victory in the Premier League and moved six points outside the top six.

Liverpool move to top as Nunez, Jota strike in 3-2 win at Burnley

Lancashire: Liverpool moved to the top of the Premier League as goals from Darwin Nunez and Diogo Jota earned a 2-0 win over Burnley on Boxing Day.

Nunez struck in the sixth minute, a goal that ended a 12-match goal drought in all competitions, while Jota, who returned from injury, found the net in the 90th minute. Liverpool eventually scored a deserved second goal when Jota, on his return from injury, slotted the ball through Trafford's legs from a tight angle, netting his 50th goal in all competitions for the club. With the latest victory Liverpool has moved on to 42 points after 19 matches while Burnley remain in 19th with 11 points, five behind 18th-placed Everton, who have played a match fewer.

Man United secure epic turnaround 3-2 win over Aston Villa

Manchester: Rasmus Hojlund's first Premier League goal earned Manchester United a turnaround victory as they came back from two goals down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 in front of a buzzing Boxing Day crowd here at Old Trafford.

This was Man Utd's first win in four league matches which took them to sixth in the table. Erik ten Hag's side trailed 2-0 at the interval after the Aston opened the scoring through a John McGinn set-play, that went straight in. United's arrears were doubled by Leander Dendoncker just five minutes later, again from a set-piece, this time a corner. Aston Villa had the chance to move level on points with leaders Liverpool, but instead left empty-handed as they suffered a first defeat in 11 matches across all competitions.

BANGLADESH CLINCH HISTORIC T20 VICTORY OVER NEW ZEALAND IN NAPIER

Napier | Agencies

In a historic encounter on Wednesday, Bangladesh scripted a memorable five-wicket triumph over New Zealand in the opening game of their three-match T20I series.

The victory not only marked Bangladesh's first-ever Twenty20 win over New Zealand soil but also followed closely on the heels of their maiden away one-day international triumph over the Black Caps in the same city just four days prior.

Opting to bowl after winning the toss, Bangladesh's bowlers delivered a stunning performance, restricting New Zealand to a below-par total on a two-paced Napier surface. Shoriful Islam's early exploits saw him finish with impressive figures of 3 for 26, while Mustafizur Rahman's variations earned him 2 for 15 in his four overs. Mahedi Hasan was the star with both bat and ball, initiating New Zealand's batting collapse with a wicket in the first over and later contributing an unbeaten 16-ball 19 with the bat.

Chasing a target of 135, opener Litton Das played a pivotal role, holding his nerve and



anchoring the chase. Despite losing wickets at regular intervals, Litton's composed innings, coupled with valuable contributions from Mahedi Hasan and Towhid Hridoy, ensured Bangladesh reached the target with five wick-

ets in hand. Litton finished unbeaten with a crucial 42 off 36 balls, steering his team to a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

Shoriful Islam was the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers with 3-26, including hav-

ing Finn Allen caught and Glenn Phillips trapped LBW in consecutive balls.

While Adam Milne's early breakthroughs provided New Zealand with hope, Bangladesh's resilience and determination thwarted any potential comeback. Mustafizur's economical spell in the latter stages and Litton's calculated aggression in the final overs sealed the historic win for Bangladesh.

With 11 T20Is scheduled before the show-piece event, including clashes with New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe, along with participation in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), Bangladesh Head coach Chandika Hathurusingha on Wednesday highlighted the dual focus on immediate series and long-term World Cup preparations.

The victory was not only Bangladesh's first T20I win against New Zealand in New Zealand but also their first in three attempts at Napier.

As the series moves to Mount Maunganui for the last two games, Bangladesh will carry the momentum from this historic win, while New Zealand looks to bounce back and level the series on their home turf.

PHIL SALT RISES TO SECOND SPOT IN ICC T20IS RANKINGS

Dubai | Agencies

England opener Phil Salt rose to second spot on T20I batting rankings, and a career high rating of 802 following the high-scoring T20I series against West Indies in the Caribbean.

Salt's scores of 119 and 38 in Trinidad moved him up 18 places, with a career-high rating of 802, 15 rating points clear of Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan in third (787), ICC reported.

Despite Salt's jump, it's daylight behind the rest of the field and Suryakumar Yadav in top spot, with the India batter still well clear on 887.

Salt's teammate Liam Livingstone also enjoyed a batting rankings jump, moving 27 places to 38th after knocks of unbeaten 54 and 28 across the same matches. Livingstone's work also helped in the all-rounder category, moving four spots up to eighth (175). His move meant compatriot Moeen Ali and Shadab Khan of Pakistan share equal-ninth spot (173).

The West Indies secured a 3-2 vic-



tory in the five-match T20I series by winning the final match. Their triumph was primarily attributed to a stellar bowling performance, limiting England to a modest 132 runs. The West Indies then successfully chased down the target in the final over with six wickets in hand.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein,

who took 2/20 from four overs in the victory, moved two spots up to fourth (683), overtaking the Sri Lankan pair of Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana (679 and 677 respectively). Gudakesh Motie jumped 75 spots after claiming 3/24 (4) in the same outing, while Reece Topley on the England side has moved into the top

10 bowlers with a 13-spot jump thanks to five wickets across the two matches across the week.

The ODI series between New Zealand and Bangladesh, along with India's tour to South Africa, has resulted in several minor adjustments. Shoriful Islam's fine performance with ball in hand saw him climb 24 spots to 35th, while young India left-arm Arshdeep Singh moved up 41 spots, though still outside the top 100. On the batting side, Najmul Hossain Shanto (up nine spots to equal-49th) made a move, while South Africa's Tony de Zorzi jumped into the top 100 with a move of 39 spots. Soumya Sarkar's fantastic innings of 169 (151) against the Black Caps helped him climb 52 spots, while Sanju Samson also jumped up 54 spots to a rating of 405.

Sarkar broke Sachin Tendulkar's 13-year record for the highest ODI score by a sub-continent player in New Zealand, beating The Little Master's 163* in Christchurch.

Samson made 108 (114) batting at No.3 in Paarl, as India defended 296 in the third ODI against the Proteas.

Wrestler Pooja Dhanda handed 1-year ban by NADA for whereabouts failures

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Former world and Asian championships medallist Pooja Dhanda has been issued a one-year suspension by India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three whereabouts failures in a year.

NADA recorded two filing failures and one missed test against Pooja in the period of 12 months in 2022. Her one-year ban came into effect on June 15, 2023, Olympics.com reported. She received the initial filing failure letter from NADA in July 2022, followed by a second letter in October of the same year. In December 2022, she was unable to undergo the test. Pooja contended that the missed test resulted from her travel arrangements to Visakhapatnam for the national wrestling championships scheduled from December 21 to 23. NADA's



Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel noted that Pooja had proposed providing her sample in either Rohtak or Delhi on December 21 as an alternative resolution. The panel determined that the level of fault was not severe.

An Athlete in NADA's Registered Testing Pool is required to provide the whereabouts information every quarter which includes: Home address, email address and phone number, an address for overnight accommodations, Competition schedules and locations and a 60-minute time slot for each day where they'll be available and accessible for testing and liable for a potential 'missed turf'.

PKL: UP Yoddhas to kick off their home leg against Bengaluru Bulls on Friday

Noida (U.P.) | Agencies

UP Yoddhas will kick off their home leg against Bengaluru Bulls on Friday at the Noida Indoor Stadium.

In a press conference held on Wednesday UP Yoddhas announced their home leg. The Yoddhas will play four thrilling encounters in front of the home crowd, and will kick off their home leg against Bengaluru Bulls.

Speaking today at the Press Conference, Jasveer Singh, Head Coach, UP Yoddhas, said, "We have had a productive 50-day training session in our two academies of GMR Sports ahead of the tournament. We have had a few challenges in the initial days of the league due to injuries but now the team is absolutely fit and all charged up to give in their best in front of their home crowd. More than 70 percent of the league is still left and we are confident to regain our lead in the days ahead. The GMR group has always been supportive to us and we will leave no stone unturned to keep our fans happy and proud." UP Yoddhas started their campaign on a high, winning two out of their first three matches. Currently, placed on the tenth position in the table with two wins and a tie, the Yoddhas will aim for a turnaround riding on the support of their home crowd. "I'm looking forward to my



first experience as a UP Yoddhas' captain in front of our home crowd and I am confident that we as a team will give in our best to keep our fans cheered up," said Pardeep Narwal, Captain, UP Yoddhas. Surender Gill has been the highlight for the Yoddhas as he sits on the third position in the lists of most successful raids (56) and most raid points (75). He is well supported by dubki-king Pardeep Narwal who has shown some ounces of his greatness and has 43 raid points in the season so far.

The defence of the Yoddhas has been well taken care of by the trio of and Nitesh Kumar, Gurdeep, and Sumit who have 22, 19, and 17 tackle points respectively. The home crowd will hope for an electrifying performance from these players and will hope the Yoddhas return back to winning ways.



There's only one 'Tiger': Bollywood on Salman Khan's 58th birthday

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood celebrities on Wednesday showered love and blessings on the superstar Salman Khan as he turned 58, calling him the "best".

The piper of the box office, Salman's fans celebrated the day by sharing the happiness in their favorite superstar way, by cutting cake with the orphanage children, and by helping the ones in need.

The fans are showing love towards their favorite star by trending

#HappyBirthdaySalmanKhan on social media and several names from the industry are wishing the Superstar a special day.

Joining the celebration, Salman Khan Films shared a special video where in the background some of the biggest stars are praising the 'Saajan' actor.

In the video, Aamir Khan was seen praising the mega stardom of Salman and



said: "When I see Salman Khan walking into a room, it feels like a superstar is coming."

Ranveer Singh said: "I have never seen such euphoria in my life, the reaction that comes on Salman sir flaunting his muscles is phenomenal."

Kareena Kapoor Khan who worked with Salman in 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan' said: "I am a huge fan of Salman Khan", while, Varun Dhawan shared: "Whenever Salman Khan commits he don't even listen to anyone."

In the end of the video, Tiger Shroff was seen saying: "There is only one Tiger in the industry and that's Salman Khan."

Sharing the video, Salman Khan Films wrote: "Dil mein aate hai, samajh mein nahi! Bhai ka birthday aane wala hai, celebration toh banta hai @beingsal mankhan #SalmanKhan."

Sonam Kapoor, who has worked with Salman in the movie 'Prem Ratan Dhan Payo', shared a still from the movie and said: "Happy birthday Salman.. you're the best."

Kajol shared a still from the song 'Saajanji Ghar Aaye' from the movie 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', and wrote: "Wishing the Sultan a very happy birthday."



TODAY WE ARE EXPOSED TO THE POINT OF BEING TROLLED', SHILPA SHETTY ON 30 YRS IN BOLLYWOOD

Team Absolute | Mumbai

On completing 30 years in the showbiz industry, Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty has shared how the audience was different when she started her career, saying that today actors are exposed to the point of being trolled. The actress began her career with the 1993 thriller 'Baazigar' along side Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol.

Known for her diverse roles and impactful performances, Shilpa has a lot to be thankful for as she marks an illustrious three decades in the entertainment industry.

Addressing the challenges of staying relevant, the actress acknowledged the evolving audience and the constant need to 'please' them in today's digital era.

"When I started out, the audience was different because the exposure was much less for us vis-a-vis the audience. Today, we are exposed to the point of being trolled," said the 'Indian' actress.

Reflecting on the highs of her career, Shilpa recalled her journey from a small role in a platinum jubilee hit to becoming a mainstream heroine with 'Dhadkan' (2002).

She reached the pinnacle of her popularity with iconic songs like 'Chura Ke Dil Mera' ('Main Khiladi Tu Anari', 1994) and 'Main Aayi Hoon UP Bihar Lootne' ('Shool', 1999). Her fame soared with films like 'Big Brother', 'Life... In A Metro', and 'Phir Milenge'.

"These have been major milestones in my career so far," said Shilpa, acknowledging the diverse phases that shaped her remarkable journey in the film industry.

Speaking about her latest release -- the comedy drama 'Sukhee' -- Shilpa said: "We make a lot of movies and garner love and fan-following because of the characters. But the kind of appreciation I got for 'Sukhee' was something I'd not received in all these years."

Dia Mirza enjoys family outing at Gir National Park

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Dia Mirza visited the Gir National Park in Gujarat with her son Ayaan Azaad Rekhi and husband Vaibhav Rekhi, and also dropped glimpses from her adventurous trip. Dia and her businessman husband Vaibhav had tied the knot in February 2021.

Taking to Instagram, the former Miss India who enjoys a fanbase of 5.5 million followers, shared a happy video, in which she could be seen enjoying a jungle safari with her son. Dia is wearing an olive green jacket, blue denims, and a round hat, while her son is



donning a cute sweater with a matching cap.

The string of photos also give a glimpse of lions, picturesque locales, while the last photo shows Dia hugging her husband Vaibhav.

She captioned the post: "May be I was waiting for my Simba to arrive so I could finally witness the magic of #GirNationalPark. Completely enraptured by every moment spent in this sanctuary. So much more to explore. Will share more soon. Spending time with @tapansheth @birds_of_india makes it all the more wonderful! #SunsetKeDivane #WildForLife #BornFree #WinterBreak"



'Bigg Boss 17': Ankita, Vicky get intimate on camera, fans get angry

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Couple Ankita Lokhande and Vicky Jain have been making news in 'Bigg Boss 17'. Be it their fights or their game plan, everything has come to notice. However, this time, it's none of that as a video of the two getting intimate in the show has gone viral on social media, leaving many angry.

In a 24x7 live show, the couple were seen getting close under the blanket, which is shared by the gossip X page @BiggBoss_Tak.

The video, which is from the "Dum" room where the couple are located, was captioned: "Ye Vicky bhaiya aur Ankita kya kar rahe hai family show me."

However, this has led to different views in the section. One said: "They've broken the rule. Evict them."

"They are breaking rules," said another. A user demanded to not use personal videos for likes. An angry user said: "Have some shame. Circulating such things for likes is shame. Everyone can see it's just a cuddle. She always sleeps cuddling. She even said in interview once that she never sleeps in her side she always goes and cuddles."

South cinema's veteran stunt master Jolly Bastian passes away at 57

Bengaluru | Agencies

Veteran stunt master Jolly Bastian, who worked in more than 900 Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam films, passed away following a massive heart attack at his residence in Bengaluru on Tuesday night. He was 57. The bigwigs of the southern film industry, especially from the Kannada film industry where he began his career, expressed shock and paid condolences. Born in Alleppey, Kerala, Jolly Bastian was brought up in Bengaluru.

While performing a stunt on a bike,

Jolly Bastian was spotted by renowned filmmaker and hero V. Ravichandran, and he started working as his stunt double. He had worked in most of Ravichandran's movies as stunt master. Originally a bike mechanic, Jolly Bastian went on to become a top stunt master. He made his debut as a director with the movie 'Ninagaagi Kaadiruve' in 2009. Jolly Bastian directed stunts for KGF fame superstar Yash's 'Masterpiece', a Kannada movie. Jolly Bastian also contributed to Kannada star and director Duniya Vijay's yet to be released film 'Bheema'.



RUBINA DILAİK, ABHINAV SHUKLA SHARE FIRST GLANCE OF TWIN DAUGHTERS, REVEAL NAMES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rubina Dilaik and her husband Abhinav Shukla have dropped the first glimpse of their twin daughters, revealing their names, as their little bundle of joys turned one month old on Wednesday.

Best known for her roles in 'Chotti Bahu', 'Saas Bina Sasural' and others, Rubina had announced that they were expecting a baby in September. The couple have named their kids Jeeva and Edhaa.

Taking to Instagram, Rubina and Abhinav shared a picture of themselves holding their daughters in their arms. Rubina is wearing a sky blue coloured salwar suit, while Abhinav is in a white kurta.

Posing against a picturesque backdrop, the couple is flashing their smiles for the lenses. The string of photos also shows a glimpse of pooja ceremony that was held for the twins, and other cute sneak peek of their daughters.

The post was captioned: "Excited and extremely happy to share that our daughters, Jeeva and Edhaa are one month old today Universe blessed us on the auspicious day of Gurpurab! Send in your wishes for our angels."

Singers Vishal Mishra, Neha Kakkar, actor Aly Goni, choreographer Nishant Bhat among others showered love and blessings in the comment section.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Poonam Rajput