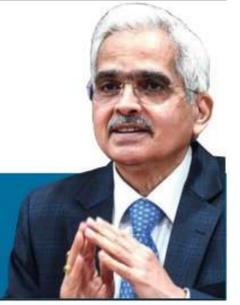




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Union defence minister Rajnath Singh admitted to AIIMS after he complains of back pain. AIIMS officials confirm that his condition is stable now

US is working on a ceasefire deal in Gaza that involves withdrawal of Israeli & Hamas forces, and an 'interim governance' arrangement during which security would be provided by a US-trained force of Arabs, says Washington Post report P 16

Nearly 300 people on board a Saudi Airlines flight from Riyadh to Peshawar had a lucky escape when the plane's landing gear caught fire while landing in Pak

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das indicates that interest rates may remain higher for longer. Citing surveys, he says inflation numbers for June are expected to be close to 5%, so 'it is premature to talk about interest rate cuts' P 15

CAPFs reaffirm 10% quota for ex-Agniveers

Amid the debate over the Agnipath scheme, the chiefs of various central armed police forces (CAPFs) Thursday came forward to reiterate their commitment to implementing 10% quota for ex-Agniveers in all constable-level posts. Days after the Cabinet approved the Agnipath scheme in June 2022, MHA had announced the 10% quota in CAPFs. P 9

2 killed in boiler fall from crane

Two workers at a factory in Saravali MIDC at Bhiwandi died on the spot when a heavy boiler being loaded with the help of a crane slipped and fell down on them on Wednesday, police said on Thursday. P 3

Raj paper leak 'kingpin' held

In the Rajasthan teachers' recruitment paper leak case, ED has arrested Pradeep Parashar, a retired assistant professor appointed district coordinator by the state education board, calling him kingpin behind the leak. P 8

Man goes to kill wife, hacks in-laws

A man in Telangana's Warangal sneaked into his 19-year-old wife's home to kill her for deserting him, but ended up hacking her parents when they tried to intervene. The wife has suffered stab wounds. P 9

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Times Interact | P 6 & 8

Centre, state probe IAS officer's disability, OBC non-creamy certs

DoPT Panel To Submit Report In Two Weeks

Nisha.Nambiar@timesofindia.com

Pune: The Centre and the state will both independently investigate probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar's cornering of the IAS cadre despite a low, sub-800 UPSC rank by submitting OBC non-creamy layer and disability certificates that have since been called into question.

Khedkar's past came tumbling out after her alleged demands for facilities like a separate cabin and beacon car, which she was not entitled to as a probationary IAS officer in the Pune district collectorate, led to her abrupt transfer to Washim on Monday. Her father was also accused of putting pressure on officials to grant his daughter's wishes.

While the Centre constituted a single-member committee chaired by an officer of the rank of additional secretary Thursday to verify her candidature claims and other details concerning the UPSC examinations she appeared for in 2022 and earlier, state OBC welfare minister Atul Save announced a suo motu probe to scrutinise her OBC non-creamy layer claims.



The Audi (under a plastic cover) at Khedkar's bungalow, which is in her mother's name, in Pune. Cops were not allowed in on Thursday

► **KHEDKAR JOINS DUTY IN WASHIM WITHOUT CABIN OR FRILLS, P 2**

The department of personnel and training (DoPT) website has details of the immovable properties for 2023 held by Khedkar in Ahmednagar and Pune. The current value as stated by her is about Rs 17.2 crore, while the annual income from these properties is about Rs 42 lakh, far exceeding the Rs 8 lakh non-creamy layer cap.

An official of the central government said the committee would submit its report in two weeks.

► **'Comprehensive report ready', P 2**

Audi used by IAS officer owned by engg co, has ₹26k challans

The private Audi car which Puja Khedkar was using with a beacon and 'Maharashtra Govt' sticker was issued 21 challans worth Rs 26,000 for traffic rule violation since 2022 and are pending. "The car is registered in the name of Theroverita Engineering Pvt Ltd," said a policeman. Police reached Khedkar's bungalow, registered in the name of her mother, at Baner Road in Pune to inspect it, but no one responded or allowed them in. P 2

Collector asked to take legal steps against officer's father

The general administration department has asked Pune collector Suhas Diwase to initiate 'appropriate legal action' against Dilip Khedkar, a retired state govt officer and Puja's father. Diwase's report about Puja said Dilip had asked officials to ensure an office with an attached restroom for her and reprimanded them. When contacted, Dilip said: "Pune collector has submitted false reports and is trying to misguide the authorities." P 2

Five states still above desired fertility level

Thirty-one out of the 36 states and Union Territories in the country have achieved the replacement level of fertility of 2.1, the average number of children per woman needed to maintain a stable population size. Only five states — Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur — continued to have a higher than desired replacement level of fertility, govt data showed, reports Durgesh Nandan Jha. P 9

Bill to give cops teeth against Naxal fronts in urban areas

Sambhajinagar/Mumbai: Stating that activities of Naxal front organisations need to be controlled, and existing laws are inadequate to tackle their fronts in urban areas, the state govt Thursday tabled the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill 2024 in the assembly.

► **City has 27% of state's TB patients: Health minister, P 3**

The bill, drafted on the lines of laws in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, AP and Odisha, gives the state govt power to declare an organisation as unlawful and

STATE CAN BAN ORGS

- Bill provides for 3 months to 7 yrs jail, fine of ₹3-5 lakh
- Indulging in or propagating acts of violence, creating apprehension & fear in public will attract action
- 'Unlawful activity': Acts or even words — spoken, written or signs

ban it with the approval of an advisory board that will have three members, not less than equivalent to an HC judge, reports Mohammed Akhef.

► **'Urban dens', P 4**

In a first, judge from Manipur named for SC

The Supreme Court collegium has recommended to the Centre to appoint J&K Chief Justice N Kotishwar Singh as a judge of the apex court, reports Dhananjay Mahapatra. Justice Singh will be the first from Manipur to become an SC judge. The collegium also recommended the appointment of Justice Tashi Rabstan of J&K HC as chief justice of Meghalaya HC. He will be the first from Ladakh to become CJ. P 7

Courts shouldn't stay bail order in casual manner: SC

Delhi HC Stayed Bail Order, Case Pending For A Yr

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New Delhi: Supreme Court Thursday said courts should not stay bail order in a "casual" manner as it affects liberty of a person and took exception to the Delhi HC keeping a bail order stayed for over a year during which the accused remained in jail.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih expressed shock that the HC stayed the trial court order granting bail to an accused in a money laundering case and kept the case pending

IN THE COURTS

- 'May affect bilateral ties': Bombay HC relief for acquitted Chinese woman not allowed to leave India, fines govt ₹10L | P 5
- SC sets aside 'illegal migrant' order on Assam man, says govt can't randomly pick and ask a person to prove citizenship | P 11
- CBI shares NEET-UG paper leak probe status report with SC, hearing on July 18 | P 8

- Delhi HC judge recuses self from hearing NIA plea seeking death penalty for J&K separatist Yasin Malik | Flap Opp
- Delhi court to start trial ex-against WFI chief in sex abuse case from July 26 | P 11
- HC asks J&K administration to protect neglected Hindu shrines to save heritage | P 10
- Bombay HC questions govt on why state med body is not in place since Aug '22 | P 4

for a year which forced the accused to approach the SC.

"What is happening? This is shocking. Please answer our question. Can bail be stayed as a matter of course? Unless he is a terrorist, where is the reason to stay? Can you defend? We will set it aside... how HC casually stayed the

bail. Could HC have stayed without a reasoned order? Answer us, what signals are we sending? We are blaming us also," it told ED counsel Zohab Hossain. The bench said such a practice could not be allowed as it was about liberty.

► **'Has ramifications', P 10**

43k degrees of pvt univ in Raj under scanner after fake certificates surface

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Jaipur: Om Parkash Jogennder Singh (OPJS) University in Churu is under the scrutiny of Rajasthan police's special operations group (SOG) for allegedly issuing fake and backdated degrees for courses that the private institution did not have accreditation for. SOG is now examining all 43,409 degrees issued since the university's inception in 2013.

The university issued backdated degrees for BE and BPEd (physical education) programmes before receiving accreditation and awarded MSc agriculture degrees without proper authorisation, according to SOG sources. An investigation began six days after the arrest of

ADMISSIONS PUT ON HOLD LAST MONTH

- Started in 2013, OPJS Univ came under scanner on Apr 8, 2024 after 1,300 applicants for 2022 physical training instructor exam submitted degrees from OPJS
- Varsity's physical education course accredited only in 2016, for just 100 seats. OPJS could not have issued so many genuine degrees, said cops
- Founder-owner of OPJS

University Joginder Singh Dalal arrested on July 5. He was planning to set up more educational institutions

- DIG (SOG) says univ has less than 30 staff in all, 8-9 of them are class-4 employees
- In 2023, UGC declared PhD degrees awarded by the university invalid. On June 24, state higher edu dept issued order to stop admissions

NEET leak case 'kingpin' Rocky arrested in Patna, P 8

the university's founder-owner Joginder Singh Dalal for his alleged role in the scam. SOG's inquiry into paper leaks and malpractices in college entrance and govt exams led it to Dalal.

► **Backdated certs? P 20**

NEET-UG counselling from July 3rd week

NEET-UG counselling will be held in 4 rounds starting July third week. In its SC affidavit, Centre said any student found to have gained from malpractice will be excluded during or even after counselling. P 8



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Pune collector told to take legal action against IAS probationary officer's dad

Nisha.Nambiar @timesofindia.com

Pune: The general administration department (GAD) in a letter on July 8 to Pune district collector Suhas Diwase told him to initiate "appropriate legal action" against controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar's father, Dilip Khedkar, for his "objectionable conduct" at her workplace in the collectorate. Khedkar is a retired state govt officer.

The letter, signed by GAD joint secretary SM Mahadik, referred to Diwase's report on June 24 to the additional chief secretary (services).

It mentioned Puja's seeking of special privileges not allowed to an IAS probatio-

nary officer, and her use of an beacon light with 'Maharashtra Govt' plate on a private car.

The report said Puja's father accompanied her to her workplace on June 12 and 13 after she was appointed assistant collector at the collector's office on June 3.

It said Khedkar told officials at the collectorate that his daughter must be provided an office equipped with an attached restroom and reprimanded them for not adequately preparing her office before her arrival.

The father insisted on the installation of superior electrical fittings and instructed some officials to "not go home" until work was completed. The retired officer also alleged that the officials had

unnecessarily troubled his daughter at the workplace by not complying with her demands, said the report.

The GAD letter noted that the collector's June 24 report mentions Dilip Khedkar's conduct as "objectionable" and "liable for action". "As such, at your level, appropriate legal action be taken and a compliance report be submitted regarding the same," the letter said.

Chief secretary Sujata Saunik said the govt letter to the collector was aimed at securing action on the latter's report vis-a-vis the father's conduct.

A collectorate officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were examining how to proceed with appropriate legal action as

sought by the GAD letter.

Dilip Khedkar said the facts were different from what was coming out in public. "To suppress these facts, Pune collector has submitted false reports and is trying to misguide authorities. I wonder how the collector's report reached the media. He is responsible for it and strict action must be taken against him as it has hampered Puja's public image and that of the state govt," he said.

Puja was transferred on Monday to the district collector's office in Washim, where she took charge on Thursday.

Dilip Khedkar unsuccessfully contested the recent Lok Sabha election on a Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi ticket from Ahmednagar parliamentary seat.

Fancy lights on trees, poles unaesthetic and unsafe: BMC panel in May meeting

Richa.Pinto@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Decorative lights wrapped around trees and streetlight poles are not "aesthetically pleasing" and raise environmental and safety concerns, stated the minutes of the first meeting held by the BMC-appointed committee to regulate digital hoardings in the city in May, days after the fatal Ghatkopar hoarding crash. The committee comprises BMC officials, traffic police and IIT-B experts.

In 2022, decorative lights were put up across the city as part of the Mumbai Beautification Project, CM Ekanth Shinde's pet project. BMC claims to have spent Rs 766 crore on the beautification work, which also includes improving traffic islands, wall murals and cleaning beaches, till Feb 2024. However, the excessive illumination on city roads, including Western Express Highway, traffic islands, trees, sculptures and three-dimensional wall art, has received flak from opposition and activists. And the minutes of the committee's meeting seem to

DRAFTING DIGITAL HOARDING POLICY

- As there is no policy for digital hoardings in Mumbai, in May, BMC set up a 9-member committee to develop comprehensive guidelines that balance the aesthetic, economic and regulatory aspects of outdoor advertising
Among the issues under consideration are need for stringent safety norms, environment impact assessment, potential traffic hazards, pedestrian safety, hoarding colours should not distract motorists, prevention of haphazard and unsafe installations, accessibility, electrical safety, and lighting regulation
The committee comprises BMC officers, traffic police, IIT-Bombay experts and a consultant



have validated the criticism. "The extensive use of decorative lighting on poles, streetlights, trees, and other fixtures for beautification purposes is not aesthetically pleasing and raises concerns about environmental and safety impacts," stated the minutes of the meeting chaired by the BMC commissioner.

Drawing lessons from global cities like New York, where Times Square boasts a proliferation of digital billboards, BMC is developing its own po-

licising advanced technology to monitor and regulate these levels continuously. "The importance of maintaining safe and non-distracting lighting conditions was emphasised. The overall illuminance level of hoardings should not significantly exceed the ambient illumination of traffic signal, signs and intersection lighting," the minutes stated.

Other key points discussed by the committee included the need for standardised planning permissions, zoning regulations and guidelines for advertisement duration, luminance level and colour combinations to minimise driver distraction, reserved time slots for civic messages, use of solar panels, cybersecurity, and centralised control over content. The committee also placed an emphasis on the need for structural stability, the impact on driver and pedestrian safety, and environmental and aesthetic considerations. Integration of multiple technologies for real-time updates and addressing health impacts of high blue light and heat generated due to digitisation were discussed.

Audi used by Khedkar has 21 pending challans: Cops

Assem Shelke & Gitesh Shelke | TNN

Pune: Additional commissioner of police (east region) Manoj Patil said on Thursday that the private Audi car in which the probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar had installed a red-and-blue beacon light and the "Maharashtra Govt" insignia was issued 21 challans for traffic rule violations previously.

The challans worth Rs 26,000, issued for violations like speeding, signal jump and refusal to stop when asked by the police, are pending clearance since 2022. "The traffic police have generated one more challan with a fine of Rs 500 in relation to the use of a beacon light and 'Maharashtra govt' plate on the car," he said.

He said the car used by Khedkar was registered in the name of a company, Thermoverita Engineering Pvt Ltd. Authorities at the Pune regional transport office (RTO) said the car was registered on Jan 27, 2012.

Netas call for strict action

Leader of the opposition in the assembly Vijay Wadetiwar said on Thursday there should be a detailed inquiry into the Puja Khedkar affair as there was doubt over her submitted documents. Kasba Peth MLA Ravindra Dhangekar demanded her suspension. Union minister of state for social justice and empowerment Ramdas Athawale too sought a detailed probe and said, "If found guilty she should be immediately removed from her post." TNN

The Chatushrungi traffic division's senior inspector Shafiq Pathan said, "The notice has been issued in the name of Puja Khedkar because she was using the car. It was confirmed by video evidence we collected from the district collector's office as also videos available on various online news portals. Through the notice, we have told her to bring the car with its registration papers to our traffic division office for a verification and further legal action."

Responding to a query regarding the car, its registration and Puja's association with the company, the probationary IAS officer's father, Dilip Khedkar, said, "It will be not appropriate to comment on this by me. However, the media trial, which is going on, is not based on facts."

Senior inspector Pathan and his team visited Khedkar's bungalow at National housing society on Baner Road around 1pm on Thursday to inspect the Audi car. It was covered with a plastic sheet.

According to the Pune Municipal Corporation records, the bungalow is registered in the name of Puja's mother, Manorama Dilip Khedkar. The police team could not inspect the car as nobody from inside responded to their calls from the bungalow gate.

Pathan and his team made a second attempt to inspect the car around 7.15pm, but found their effort stalled again. "We then posted the notice on the cellphone number linked to the car's registration number because the family members refused to open the gate." (Inputs: Joy Sengupta, Prasad Kulkarni & Shashank Didmishe)

DADDY'S GIRL KEEPS MUM ON JOINING DUTY IN WASHIM, CITES SERVICE RULES OF GOVT

TNN NEWS NETWORK

Yavatmal: After being shunted out of the Pune collectorate following allegations of misuse of power, probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar reported for duty at the Washim collector's office on Thursday to continue her training as an assistant collector.

Mobbed by the media, Khedkar spoke about her joining as a probationary assistant collector, but skirted queries on the controversies surrounding her or her father, a former govt servant who allegedly put pressure on officials in Pune to grant her daughter special privileges. "As per service rules, I am not authorised to speak to the media on this," she said.

Khedkar will now reside in a guesthouse and a govt quarter will be allotted in two or three weeks, said an official. She will get no cabin or car, which were among the alleged demands made by



Puja Khedkar on reporting to work at Washim collector office

her in Pune that led to her transfer.

Washim district collector Bhuvaneshwari S said there was a specified schedule on attaching probationers to departments. This week Khedkar will be learning the ropes at the PWD and irrigation department. Next week she will move to the tribal department.

On Oct 14, she is to leave for Mumbai for an assignment at Mantralaya.

"Khedkar will be back in Washim in November and that's when she is scheduled to get independent charge," Bhuvaneshwari said. "Khedkar will then be in Washim till March. That is when her training period ends."

MANY ANGLES TO STORY: GAADI, BUNGALOW AND FATHER

TRACKING THE CAR DOWN IN PUNE

Car used by Puja Khedkar is registered in the name of Thermoverita Engineering Pvt Ltd. The car was parked in a bungalow in Baner on Thursday (see covered car in pic). Authorities at Pune RTO

say car was registered on Jan 27, 2012

The 21 challans pending against the car are for ₹26,000 and were issued for speeding, signal jump and refusal to stop when asked to by a police officer

COMPLAINT AGAINST FATHER

A report by Pune collector to GAD said Puja Khedkar's father told officials at the collectorate that his daughter must be provided an office equipped with an attached restroom and reprimanded them for not adequately preparing her office before her arrival

He allegedly insisted on the installation of superior electrical fittings and instructed some officials to "not go home" until work was completed

Comprehensive report prepared: Chief secy

Nisha.Nambiar @timesofindia.com

Pune: The state has prepared a comprehensive report regarding probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar and it would be submitted to the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie, chief secretary Sujata Saunik said.

"We have provided all the necessary information regarding the case and await their guidance after they thoroughly review it. The decision now rests with the academy officials to assess the details and determine the appropriate course of action."

An official from LBSNAA, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "We are yet to get the report. Once we get it, a detailed inquiry would be conducted on all fronts."

He did not give a time frame for the inquiry but said they had sought the report after the news surfaced regarding the official. "The report would be based on the district magistrate's letter, followed by the action initiated by the state government and her conduct," he said.

In the state, minister Atul Save said, "The social justice department will take cognisance of the matter and conduct a thorough inquiry to ascertain how Khedkar obtained the non-creamy layer cer-



Police at the bungalow where Khedkar parked the car she used in Pune

tificate," he said.

Khedkar's father, Dilip, is a retired state govt officer who recently ran for LS election and declared assets worth over Rs 40 crore and annual income far exceeding the Rs 8 lakh non-creamy layer cap.

Khedkar was transferred from the Pune collector's office to Washim based on Pune district collector Suhas Diwase's report to the chief secretary on June 24 regarding her conduct of seeking special privileges not allowed to an IAS probationary officer.

Khedkar had allegedly used a beacon light and displayed the 'Maharashtra Govt' insignia on a private car, which were actions deemed inappropriate for her position.

Khedkar came under scrutiny after district collector Diwase sent a report to the GAD. She demanded a separate cabin, car, residential quarters, and a peon, stated his report. She was also accused of removing the nameplate of a senior official at the Pune collector's office when he allowed her to use his ante-chamber as her office.

Contacted for comment, Khedkar's father said, "The OBC certificate has been granted as per rules. The UPSC examination is the toughest and so the selection procedure should not be questioned. Media is requested to not carry wrong trial runs otherwise it will destroy the life of anybody."

Heavy rainfall likely today, 'orange' alert for tomorrow

Richa.Pinto @timesofindia.com

Mumbai: IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar for Saturday (Jul 13), indicating 'heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of infrastructure projects at Nesco, Goregaon, the same evening.

An IMD official said that monsoon conditions are very active and hence a rain alert has been given for the next five days. For Friday, Jul 12, a yellow alert has been issued for Mumbai and Palghar, indicating likelihood of heavy rainfall at isolated places.

"An off-shore trough at mean sea level now (as on Thursday) runs along south Gujarat - north Kerala coasts. There is also a cyclonic circulation over Kutch. Southwest monsoon is strong over west-central and southwest Arabian sea," said an official.

Weather bureau officials pointed out that July being the wettest month of the year, rain activity on most days is common. Last year, July had recorded the highest rainfall for the month at 1771 mm. "Winds are expected to get stronger and we are further expecting an even intense rain spell between Jul 16-18. However, how much rain it is likely to bring to the city is not very clear. We ... will issue a forecast closer to the date," said an official.

BBA has max seats among 3 AICTE courses in Maha

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Mumbai: Of the three courses that were brought under the All-India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) regulations and categorised as "professional", Maharashtra has the highest number of seats in Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), followed by Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) and then Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS).

For the first-ever centralised admission process (CAP) for these professional courses, govt has received registrations from close to 1,000 colleges in the state with an intake capacity of more than one lakh, second only to engineering, which has over 1.5 lakh seats.

Colleges, though, expect an uncertain admission season for these courses.

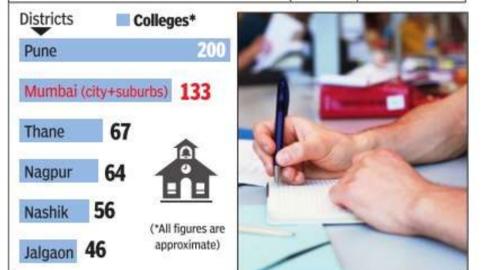
While BMS is a popular course in Mumbai University, it only makes up for 10% of the total intake capacity of these three courses. The number for BMS could be on the lower side as many colleges choose to go in for a change in nomenclature to remain under the university's regulations. A majority of the one lakh seats—approximately 50%—are for BBA courses offered in the state's colleges. BMS has only about 11,000 seats in the overall pool. Of the total 1,000 institutions, around 200 are from Pune, and Mumbai and Thane make up for 200 more, with the rest spread across Maharashtra.

The state's CET cell has already conducted an entrance test on May 29 for these courses, which was taken by 48,125 aspirants. As degree college admissions commenced, many realised that admissions to these popular courses will be

BCA CLOSE 2ND, BMS DISTANT 3RD

Seat distribution in courses*

Table with 3 columns: Courses, Colleges, Intake capacity. Rows: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) 340 colleges, 49,000 seats; Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) 471 colleges, 40,000 seats; Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) 168 colleges, 11,000 seats.



Total students registered for the first CET held on May 29: 56,248 (Appeared 48,135). Total students registered for the additional CET to be held on Aug 4: 49,225.

based on a CET. After requests from multiple stakeholders, the state decided to conduct an additional CET on Aug 4. This time around, too, 49,225 students have registered. Students who have already given the test on May 29, can reappear and the best of their scores will be used for admissions, said a recent circular.

A few colleges affiliated to Mumbai University sought permission to run both BMS and BCom (Management Studies) simultaneously, which was denied. "A few colleges wanted to run one division under the AICTE and the others under the university," said the principal.

Another principal said if the CET is held on Aug 4, the re-

sults will take a minimum of 15 days and the registration for CAP another 10 days, and the CAP rounds will eventually start only in Sept. "We do not know how many students will be interested to join these courses two months after colleges have already begun teaching other courses. We also are not sure if students would want to leave the seats which they have already secured in other colleges for BCom (Management Studies) and come for BMS at that point. Even if we get students, we will have to follow an entirely different academic calendar for these courses," said the principal, adding there could be other teething problems too and uncertainty.

₹4k cr drugs seized in five months and ₹897cr in 2023

Mumbai: The anti-narcotics teams seized drugs of Rs 4,131 crore in five months of 2024 in Maharashtra, a 360 per cent increase over the value of contraband seized in the last calendar year, the govt data shows. The govt also found the involvement of some police officials in drugs trade and they have been dismissed from service, deputy CM Fadnavis said in the state legislative council on Thursday.

He was replying to a query raised by Congress legislator Ashok alias Bhai Jagtap. The anti-narcotics teams carried out 12,648 operations in calendar year 2023 while as of May this year, the teams conducted 6,529 operations, he said. These teams were formed following the Centre's request to all state govt to develop a joint action plan, co-ordinating the efforts of various departments to check the production and trade of banned substances, he said.

HC asks state to set up advisory board under Disabilities Act in 1 mth

Rosy.Sequeira @timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Bombay high court on Thursday directed the state government to constitute the State Advisory Board under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and make it functional within a month.

"We, thus, hope and expect that, within 30 days from today, the Board shall be made functional in all respects. The infrastructure etc. required for making the Board functional shall also be arranged during this period by the state," said Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar.

The direction was passed on a suo motu PIL initiated taking cognisance of a letter by Shivaji Park-resident Karan Shah (25) regarding bollards on Mumbai's footpaths obstructing disabled persons using wheelchairs. On Wed, HC rapped the state govt for its "apathy" in not filling vacancies of the board's non-officio members,

and directed it to inform when the Board would be made functional. State's advocate Abhay Patki submitted a letter by the deputy secretary, Persons With Disabilities Welfare Department, informing that the Board will be constituted within 15 days after the current assembly session gets over.

Amicus curiae advocate Jamsheer Mistry referred to a chart in a July 17, 2023 Supreme Court order, where the Maharashtra govt had informed that the Board was constituted. The judges said while it is true that the board was constituted in Feb 2018, but on account of vacancies of non-officio members, it is non-functional since 2020.

They said as the per SC order, Maharashtra is under obligation to comply with the Act. "However, because of vacancies of non-officio members... the Board is not functional, depriving the disabled in the state, a sizable section of the society of the benefits which they can derive in case the Board starts functioning."

Senior citizen falls victim to deepfake Ambani video

Mumbai: A retired hotel management professional from Andheri (West) lost Rs 62.5k after he fell for a deepfake video of industrialist Mukesh Ambani endorsing a stock market forum and providing investment advice. Amboli police registered the case based on the complaint filed by PS Jerome (77) on July 9. The video was created using advanced artificial voice cloning technology.

This is the third incident since March, where fraudsters have used Ambani's deepfake videos to lure unsuspecting individuals into investing in the stock market. "We have requested details of the Moradabad bank account to which the fraudster coerced Jerome to transfer the funds," said an officer from the Amboli police station. Jerome grew suspicious when the caller refused to refund the money and instead started aggressively pushing him to invest more.—V Narayan

State entitled to reasonable return on land: HC

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Mumbai: The state, Justices B P Colabawalla and Soma-
sekhar Sundareshan of the
Bombay high court ruled in
their verdict in the lease rent
case, is "entitled to reasonable
return on its land." It also
doesn't mean lease rents need
always be affordable to indi-
viduals "irrespective of the
fact that such low rent may
not even subsume the infla-
tion cost, cost of administra-
tion and the escalation im-
pact." A clutch of petitions,
most of them filed in 2014 and
2015, had challenged a Dec
2012 Maharashtra govt
decision to fix a
new method for
lease rents and
renewals, raising
them steeply, and
providing for conversion
of leasehold plots to
freehold (ownership)

LESSEES ENJOYED LANDS 'VIRTUALLY FOR FREE FOR 30 YRS'

The petitions

- ▶ A clutch of petitions, most of them filed in 2014 and 2015, had challenged a Dec 2012 Maharashtra govt decision to fix a new method for lease rents and renewals, raising them steeply, and providing for conversion of leasehold plots to freehold (ownership)
- ▶ In some cases the increase is '400 to 1900' times the existing rent, said the petitioners
- ▶ The state by its 2012 GR was linking renewal of lease and new payable rents to market value of plots and such linkage is arbitrary, they argued

What HC said

- ▶ HC said that since 1951, lessees enjoyed lease lands "virtually for free for 30 years" considering inflation and lack of rent revision. Hence rent increase now can hardly be considered exorbitant or arbitrary
- ▶ "We don't find that by using annual Ready Reckoner to know land value, the state is treating unequals, as equal. Govt is applying Ready Reckoner to all lands of petitioners, which is a



fair and transparent method adopted by govt for valuation of lands owned by it"

- ▶ Even as far as individual plot holders are concerned, they are enjoying huge portions of land in the prime location of Bandra virtually free of cost. If one were to really break down what these individuals are paying now for govt land leased to them, it can hardly be regarded as exorbitant
- ▶ "For example, one petitioner, an individual who is occupying 3914.71 sq m of land in a prime location in the city. Though at first blush the figure that he would have to pay seems rather large, when one benchmarks that with the area he occupies, he would actually be paying merely ₹6.50 per sq ft per month"
- ▶ "To our mind, and especially an individual who is holding such a large parcel of land in a prime

red, but lack of rent fixation led to uncertainty in develop-
ment. The litigation has been
chequered.

The HC also held that in
March 2024, the state permit-
ted that in individual cases,
for special circumstances,
value less than the ready
reckoner can also be consid-
ered. "This to our mind clearly
protects the rights of peti-
tioners," the HC held.

The HC said, "The govern-
ment has not taken into con-
sideration the full value of
the land but has been mindful
of the fact that there are sit-
ting lessees on the said land
and hence decided that the lease
rent would be calculated
only on the basis of 25% of
the value of the land [as per
the Ready Reckoner]. We, there-
fore, have no hesitation in
answering question... in fa-
vour of the government."

The ruling, while boost-
ing the state's revenue, will
dampen the mood of many co-
operative housing societies
where buildings exist on lease-
hold lands as they will have
to pay arrears of lease rent,
said one petitioner's advoca-
te Samit Shukla, adding that
the ruling however ends un-
certainty.

Regarding the conversion
of leasehold lands to free-
hold, the high court clarified
that such application be con-
sidered after computing the
lease rent based on its earlier
ruling for those filed before 7
March 2024, and the state is
free to reject such applica-
tions which are filed after
March 7, 2024.



'Hardik's kin forged sign, altered deal, duped him of ₹3cr'

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Mumbai: Cricketer Hardik
Pandya's stepbrother Vaibhav,
with sole intention to
cheat him, hatched a conspi-
racy with two others, estab-
lished another firm without
Hardik's knowledge, altered
the partnership agreement
with Hardik's forged signa-
tures and duped him of Rs 3
crore, alleged the chargesheet
submitted by Mumbai Po-
lice in court on Thursday.

Hardik and his brother
Krunal had 40% share each
in Pandya Polymer Ltd
(PPL). Vaibhav made a
"supplementary agreement
to LLP agreement" dated June
9, 2022, with Hardik and
Kunal's forged signatures
and brought down their shares
to 33.33% and raised his
own profit share in PPL to
33.34% from 20% and the
same was uploaded on the
registrar of companies site,
the chargesheet stated.

Vaibhav was arrested on
April 10 and is still in judi-
cial custody.

In 2021, Vaibhav, Hardik
and Krunal had jointly set
up PPL and the terms of
partnership were that the
cricketer and his brother in-
fuse 40% of capital each,
while Vaibhav would chip in
with 20% and would handle
daily operations. The profits
were distributed in the same
ratio. Vaibhav kept Hardik



Hardik with stepbrother Vaibhav

loan of Rs 27 lakh citing va-
rious reasons and paid only
Rs 7 lakh to the company. He
transferred huge amounts
into his personal and kin's
accounts, and the loss incur-
red is yet to be estimated,"
said the chargesheet.

Inspector Vijay Chauri
and senior inspector K
D'mello informed the court
that to ascertain the forgery
they have sent Vaibhav's
handwriting samples to ex-
perts for examination and
are awaiting the report.

Three held for woman's rape, murder near Shilphata

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Thane: Shil-Daighar police
have arrested three men, in-
cluding a priest, at a religi-
ous site for allegedly raping
a 30-year-old woman and
pushing her to her death
from a hillock near Shi-
lphata.

One of the accused was a
replacement for a priest
who had gone to Uttar Pra-
desh, said a police officer.

Police said the woman,
who was reportedly sub-
jected to harassment by her in-
laws, frequently visited the
religious site on a hillock
near Shilphata. "Last Sa-
turday, she left her residen-
ce at 6am after some ar-
gument at home. She first vi-
sited a nearby eatery and was
seen heading towards the
stairs of the religious site
on CCTV," said a senior po-
lice officer. The deceased,
who was mother to a todd-
ler, was not seen descending
though, while the three ac-
cused were present at the
spot, said the officer.

Meanwhile, her in-laws
and husband conducted a
frantic search for her but to
no avail, prompting them to
register a missing person's
complaint.

Police started question-
ing the trio, who initially
gave conflicting statements
but later admitted to the
crime. "It is also suspected that
they may have spiked her
hot drink with some sedati-
ves, after which they may
have raped her taking
turns. They then pushed
her to her death. Things
would become clearer once
a thorough probe is done,"
said a police officer.

The accused were pro-
duced in court and reman-
ded to police custody.

2 workers die as boiler falls from crane

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Thane: Two workers at a
factory in Saravali MIDC at
Bhiwandi died when a heavy
boiler being loaded with
the help of a crane slipped
and fell down on them on
Wednesday, the police said
on Thursday.

A senior police officer
informed that those who
died have been identified as
Balaram Chaudhary (55)
and Pandurang Patil (65).

The officer informed
that on Wednesday evening,
a boiler was being lifted
with the help of a crane in
a dying company slipped
and fell on them and the two
died on the spot.

An accidental death re-
port has been registered for
now and a probe is still go-
ing on, the police said.

COASTAL RD'S HAJI ALI-WORLI STRETCH NOW OPEN

Imtiyaz Shaikh



Opened today

On Day 1 of the opening of
the 3.5km Haji Ali-Worli
stretch on Mumbai Coastal Ro-
ad's north-bound carriage-
way, major traffic congestion
was reported on Khan Abdul
Gaffar Khan Road on Thurs-
day. While motorists vented

their ire on social media, Worli
MLA Aaditya Thackeray, in a
post on X, criticised govt for
such 'partial openings'.

Meanwhile, BEST will
run its first bus on the coast-
al road from Friday morn-
ing. The AC bus will operate

from NCPA (Nariman Point)
to Byculla (W) station. The
route will be from NCPA to Ho-
tel Trident and along Marine
Drive before getting on to
coastal road which will take
the bus under the tunnel and
on a freeway route to Breach

Candy exit and then to Parsi
General Hospital junction to
Haji Ali junction - Mahalaxmi
Race Course - Mahalaxmi sta-
tion - Jacob Circle (Saat Rasta)
and end at Byculla station. The
return journey will be along
the same route.

'Mantralaya job': Bizman duped of ₹6L

Navi Mumbai: A Kharghar
businessman, Krupesh Parmar
(42), has lodged a cheat-
ing complaint against one Ji-
mesh Nair for allegedly dup-
ping him of over Rs 56.68 lakh
on the pretext of providing
his wife a job in Mantralaya
help them purchase a Cidco
flat, shop on rent at a Metro
station and a bank auction
car for the couple through
his contacts. An amount of
Rs 6 lakh was paid to the ac-
cused towards the job in
Mantralaya in Nov 2021, ac-
cording to the complaint lod-
ged with Kharghar police.

The money was allegedly
given by the couple to the ac-
cused between Nov 2021 and
July 2023. The complainant's
wife works in an IT company
in Airoli. The couple came in
contact with the accused
while he was staying as a ten-
ant for around 6 years in their
building in sector 36. The ac-
cused has now left the build-
ing. The accused allegedly
took advantage after devel-
oping a family relation-
ship with Parmar, who was
looking for a job for his wife.
—Umesh K Parida

CR raises track to cut flooding effect

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Mumbai: Central Railway
(CR) has raised the level of
tracks at Chumabhatti by 2.4
inches to minimise flooding
impact due to heavy rain.

On July 8, heavy rainfall
resulted in Harbour line ser-
vices being non-operational
between Mankhurd and Wa-
dala from 9.30 am to 1 pm due
to submerged tracks. CR at-
tributed the waterlogging to
the overflowing of the Mithi
river.

Rajnish Goyal, divisional
railway manager for Mum-
bai, said, "The level has been
raised by 2.4 inches on both
up and down lines." The track
elevation covers a distance of
440 meters on the CSMT-bo-
und track and 350 mt on the
Panvel-bound track.

Goyal clarified that despite
the lifting, the track level
remains within the Schedule
of Dimensions (SOD), ensur-
ing that the gap between the
train's footboard and the plat-
form is maintained. The SOD
defines an obstruction-free
zone for the safe movement
of railway coaches, wagons,
and engines.

To further enhance pas-
senger safety and conveni-
ence, Goyal mentioned that
the height of the platforms
would be increased to reduce
the gap with the train's foot-
board, facilitating easier board-
ing and alighting. Due to the
lifting of tracks, CR has im-
posed a speed restriction on
this stretch to prevent derail-
ment. The precautionary move
ensures safe passage of
trains while the track adjusts
to the new height.

City has 27% of state's TB patients: Health minister

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Mumbai: State health min-
ister Tanaji Sawant told the
assembly on Thursday that Mu-
mbai accounted for 27% of the
TB cases and 17% of the state's
population. In 2024, the state
had 1,10,896 TB patients of
which 30,519 were from the city.

Sawant said the state
would set up a committee of
experts under the health direc-
tor to help control the spread
of TB in the city and the state
by going to the root cause of
the ailment. "TB tends to
spread in areas with a high
population which is why the
numbers in Mumbai are high-
er," Sawant said.

He denied any shortage of
TB drugs in the state. "The Cen-
tre had written to the states re-

garding a supply bottleneck in
Feb. We distributed Rs 1.6 crore
to districts for the purchase of
medicines. There is no short-
age," he said. He also said the
state was participating in the
Centre's campaign to vaccinate
those above 18 years.

Meanwhile, leader of Oppo-
sition in the assembly Vijay
Wadetiwar complained that
the state had purchased faulty
deep freezers from a corporate
house which could not store the
drugs effectively. "The freezers
were faulty but the state placed
another order from the same
company instead of issuing a
tender," alleged Wadetiwar.
Sawant said that an inquiry
would be ordered and if there
are irregularities, then the ten-
der process would be stopped.

Meanwhile NCP (SP) leader
Rajesh Tope asked what

steps the govt was taking to
prevent drug-resistant TB and
ensure that migrants to the
city continue with their
course of treatment when they
return to their home-town. "If
the 6-month course is not com-
pleted, then the patient has to
undergo an 18-month treat-
ment," said Tope.

Sawant said that efforts
will be made to follow up with
patients who have left for other
states. He also said that the
state was committed to the
Centre's programme to make
the country TB-free by 2025.
"Will you inform the Centre if
this goal is not being met, since
there are so many cases in
Maharashtra?" asked the Con-
gress' Prithviraj Chavan. Sa-
mant said the state would as-
sess this after receiving the re-
port of the expert committee.

Malad bar staffer who gave Mihir beer cans quizzed

From P 1

Police had on Sunday arrested Mi-
hir's father Rajesh Shah, a former
Shiv Sena functionary, and the fam-
ily driver, Rishiraj Bidawat (30), who
was in the car at the time of the
accident. Mihir was arrested on Tuesday
from a hotel in Virar.

On Wednesday night, police took
Mihir and Bidawat to the crime scene
to find out the exact details of the in-
cident and videographed the procedure.
Police said as Mihir had changed his
appearance by shaving his beard and
cutting his hair at a salon before he
went into hiding, they will take him
there too for investigation. Blood
samples of Mihir and Bidawat have
been sent to the forensic lab for analysis.



The BMW that was involved in the incident

Both have admitted to their crimes, claimed police. Mihir told police that he
fled after the mishap as he was scared.

On Thursday, Bidawat was sent to
judicial custody by a metropolitan ma-

gistrate's court in Sewri. He told police
that he has been employed with the
Shahs for the last 10-12 years, and he
would often drive Mihir around.

A special public prosecutor is likely
to be appointed in the case.

Police said they have recorded the
statement of the waiter at the Malad
bar who had given the beer cans to Mi-
hir in the wee hours of Sunday. They
are now trying to find out where Mihir
disposed of the cans.

Police said after reaching Marine
Drive, on the way back, Mihir took the
wheels of the BMW at Girgaum Chow-
patty. Around 5.30am, he allegedly
knocked down the Nakhwas who were
on a scooter near Atria Mall in Worli.
At the time of the accident, Bidawat
was in the front passenger seat, police

said. Kaveri's sari got stuck in the wheel
and she was dragged for 1.5km. When
the BMW started shaking, Mihir stop-
ped the car near the Worli end of the sea
link. The duo then extricated her from
the wheel, placed her by the street, and
got into the BMW, but now Bidawat sat
in the driver's seat. Bidawat then back-
ed up a bit before revving up and the
BMW ran over the woman lying on the
road, said the police source.

The duo crossed Bandra-Worli sea
link, but the BMW stalled at Kala Na-
gar in Bandra (E). While Mihir fled in
an autorickshaw, Bidawat stood beside
the vehicle. The accused had allegedly
also removed the number plate, said po-
lice. By then Rajesh reached the spot.
Police caught Rajesh and Bidawat from
Kala Nagar.

Scooterist killed in hit-and-run

Navi Mumbai: A scooterist, Omkar Adkar (26), died in a hit-
and-run incident on the old Mumbai-Pune highway near Hal
village in Khalapur on Thursday morning.

Adkar was riding from his Khopoli residence to Karjat,
where he works in a hotel, when an unidentified vehicle ram-
med into his scooter from behind. He died on the spot due to
severe head injuries. Raigad superintendent of police, Som-
nath Garge said, "We will obtain footage from the private
CCTV cameras installed at a few locations near Hal village to
zero in on the accused driver." —George Mendonca

For Palghar and Raigad, MMRDA, not Cidco, is SPA

Mumbai: Four months after it appointed City Industrial Development Corporation (Cidco) as special planning authority (SPA), it has been replaced by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) for 172 villages in Palghar and Raigad-Alibaug area. This will be the eleventh area for which MMRDA is the SPA.

In a notification on Tuesday, state urban development department said MMRDA had requested that it be appointed as SPA for MMR. "After making necessary enquiries... govt is of the opinion that it is necessary to have planned development within the said extended area of MMR as proposed by MMRDA," states the notification. — Clara Lewis

₹1.4cr ayurvedic drugs seized from Vasai units

Mumbai: The state Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) on Wednesday seized Rs 1.4 crore-worth of ayurvedic drugs, raw materials and labels from three locations in Vasai for manufacturing drugs without a proper licence. FDA officials said Gaharwar Pharma Products Pvt Ltd, which has licence to manufacture ayurvedic drugs in Haryana, was manufacturing the drugs in Vasai without obtaining a local licence. "The loan licence obtained in Haryana was surrendered to the Directorate of Ayush on May 14, yet the drugs were getting manufactured at Vasai under the same Haryana licence," said officials. TNN

MMC to give QR code to check on docs

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) will soon provide an QR code to each of the 1.9 lakh doctors registered with it in Maharashtra. MMC administrator Dr Vinky Rughwani said the council has already started working on the QR project, titled 'Recognize Your Doctors' and it should be ready before the year-end. He said doctors would have to put their QR code in their clinics so that people can scan to get information about her/his degree and registration. TNN

'WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU POTHOLES, DON'T CREATE AN ADVENTURE RIDE OUT OF IT'



Pics: KK Choudhary

Motorists on both Mumbai and Pune-bound corridors of Sion-Panvel Highway have been facing a harrowing time owing to potholes and the resultant traffic snarls on the stretch. This has forced many to blame authorities for its lacklustre attitude in fixing the problem. Incidentally, a video of a crater in Shahapur area of Thane district has gone viral, showing traffic being hit for several hours



Work begins on rain-battered Turbhe flyover after a TOI report

Why is state med body not in place since Aug '22: HC

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Mumbai: Bombay high court on Thursday directed the state govt to say why it did not take steps to constitute Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) after the 5-year term of its members ended in Aug 2022.

"This is another example of how the govt functions," said Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar.

The PIL was filed by Satarabased Dr Pravin Rathod who challenged a Feb 24 notification appointing a private doctor and former MMC vice-president, Dr Vinky Rughwani, as administrator till a new council is in place.

Rathod's petition said Indian Medical Association has been writing to State Medical Education & Drugs Department since Sept 2022 to constitute the council. Instead, in Oct 2022 the govt appointed an administrator for a year. In 2023, another administrator was appointed

for a year. His petition earlier said two administrators were doctors in government employment and answerable to the government, but "strangely for no reason" Dr Rughwani, a private doctor "who owes no responsibility to the state govt for his acts of omissions and commissions" was appointed administrator.

Dr Rathod's advocates, Tejas Deshmukh and Akshay Shinde, argued MMC is a regulatory body for medical practitioners. It discharges a quasi-judicial function as authority in complaints against doctors. "Appointment of a private person would endanger independence of the body," said Deshmukh.

The judges asked if MMC is a permanent body as section 4 of MMC Act provides for term of members, not of MMC. "Perhaps the govt treated it as if the Council ceases to exist," the CJ said. Posting the hearing on Aug 14, the judges directed the govt to say what power it exercised to issue the notification.

Shifting Kanjur Marg dumping ground is on cards: Samant

Mumbai: Responding to demands to shift the dumping ground from Kanjur Marg following complaints from local residents, industries minister Uday Samant told the state assembly that govt was acquiring 18 acres of land in Ambernath, and this could be considered once the process is complete.

The stench from the dumping ground was bothering residents of Mulund and Bhandup, legislators argued. They also said the dumping ground posed a health hazard to residents in nearby areas. Samant said 5,800 of the 6,800 metric tonnes of waste generated in Mumbai is taken to the Kanjur Marg dumping ground.

Samant also said the govt was willing to probe BMC's role in granting permission to the dumping ground in this location. This move follows BJP leader Ashish Shelar's allegation that the BMC, which is controlled by Shiv Sena (UBT), had misled the public. — Priyanka Kakodkar

Active fronts offer Naxals 'urban dens' in cities: Bill

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Sambhajinagar/Mumbai: The state govt tabled a special public security bill that says the menace of Naxalism is not only limited to remote areas of the Naxal-affected states, its presence is increasing in the urban areas too through the Naxal frontal organisations.

The bill states that the spread of these active frontal organisations of the Naxal groups gives constant and effective support in terms of logistics 'safe houses' and 'urban dens' of the Maoist network in the cities of the state of Maharashtra.

The activities of Naxal or similar organisations through their united front are creating unrest among common masses to propagate their ideology of armed rebellion against the constitutional mandate and disrupting public order in the state.

The MSPSA bill, which has 18 sections, was tabled by minister Uday Samant. It has been drafted on the lines of public security acts currently in force in the states of Chhattisgarh, Telangana,

Competitive tests bill passed

Mumbai: The upper house of Maharashtra state legislature on Thursday unanimously passed the Maharashtra Competitive Examination Improper Ways Prevention Bill 2024, aimed at curbing malpractices in competitive examinations.

The bill stipulates stringent penalties for individuals involved in examination malpractices, including imprisonment ranging from 3 to 5 years and a substantial fine of up to Rs 10 lakh. Moreover, if the service provider company conducting the exam is found complicit in the malpractices, the bill mandates imprisonment of up to 10 years, a fine of up to Rs 1 crore, and blacklisting of the company for four years. The bill also encompasses further imprisonment in case of default in paying fines, as stated by minister of state for home Shambhuj Desai while introducing the bill. TNN

Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, which have claimed that the new law was proving useful in keeping a check on the

'SIT must probe MSRDC tenders'

Mumbai: Opposition parties on Thursday demanded a special investigation team (SIT) probe into MSRDC tenders worth Rs 90,000 crore allegedly awarded above estimated tendered costs. Shiv Sena's (UBT) Anil Parab, in the state legislative council said MSRDC recently awarded six-lane highway construction works for Virar-Alibaug, Nagpur-Chandrapur, Jalna-Nagpur, and Pune ring road projects 30% to 40% higher than tendered cost.

"It looks like an election fund which will be received in the form of kickbacks soon after releasing the advance to the contractors," alleged Parab. Parab said in the Alibaug-Virar corridor project, the estimated tendered cost was around Rs 20,000 crore, while the actual price at which it was awarded to various contractors was more than Rs 26,000 crore. TNN

Naxal frontal organisations. For Maharashtra, this is another special act to be tabled after it had enacted Ma-

harashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in 1999 which helped it deal with organised crimes ranging from underworld to gangs of dacoits, chain snatchers, goons and sand smugglers.

When contacted, inspector general of police (anti-Naxal operations) Sandeep Patil told TOI: "The laws to counter Naxalism have been in existence in different states of the country for the past three decades. Maharashtra, despite having the highest number of Maoist frontal organisations, did not have any law to tackle this menace. We are hopeful that this Act will be a good tool for tackling the frontal organisations that under the garb of some work, not only spread and propagate Maoist ideology in urban areas but also recruit youths and garner support for left-wing extremism."

The officer said that the checks and balances in the new Act will ensure that it does not get misused, as the powers to initiate any action under this legislation are with officers of the rank of DIG and above.

Unauthorised vehicles: Schoolbus owners send notice to transport dept

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Mumbai: The School Bus Owners' Association (SBOA) has issued a notice through its lawyer to transport commissioner's office, demanding that action be taken against several autorickshaw drivers, private vehicle owners and those who do not have agreement with schools but ferrying students daily in Mumbai in "unauthorised" vehicles. The SBOA has warned in the notice that if no action is taken at the earliest, it will move the high court for contempt proceedings.

It stated that in the past there were court orders directing city RTOs to take action against "unscrupulous" vehicle owners ferrying school children. "But so far, we have not found any major action being taken by the RTO in Mumbai, Thane or the rest of MMR," said SBOA presi-

Auto-taxi fitness: Stay on delay fine

Mumbai: Minister Dada Bhuse told the state assembly on Thursday that the govt has decided to stay the order to impose Rs 50 daily fee for delayed renewal of fitness certificates for all transport vehicles below 15 years old. He said the state had received many complaints regarding the delay fee and was waiving it "until further notice." TNN

dent Anil Garg. When contacted, transport commissioner Vivek Bhimanwar said that his enforcement squads were taking action on a regular basis, and it was against all vehicles in MMR and rest of state for flouting school bus safety rules. He denied allegations by SBOA that 'no action was being taken.'

'Andheri bridges' gap was due to lack of coordination

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Mumbai: Lack of coordination between agencies led to the mismatch between the newly constructed Gokhale Bridge and the CD Barfiwala flyover in Andheri, says the report of the single-member committee set up by civic chief Bhushan Gagrani to look into the matter.

The report was submitted by additional municipal commissioner Amit Saini, who probed what prevented the civic body from ensuring that the arms of the bridge and the flyover matched. Gagrani said an explanation would be sought from officials concerned.

The BMC had drawn flack from citizens when the misalignment was noticed after the first phase of the bridge was inaugurated in February. Civic officials blamed the rail-

ways, saying a policy change resulted in increased height of the reconstructed Gokhale Bridge. "The fact-finding exercise was carried out to ensure that the civic body does not face this kind of a situation in future. It is meant to be a learning exercise and not meant to punish officials," said a BMC official.

After the misalignment came to light, the BMC approached VJTI, which submitted a report stating that the merger of the two bridges was feasible without necessitating Barfiwala flyover's demolition. The assessment was validated by experts from IIT-Bombay. Dhaval Shah of Andheri Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association (LOCA), said, "BMC officials were aware of the height difference from day one. Negligence should be nipped in the bud. Corrective action should be taken."

Akshay soars in this inspirational tale

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Sarfira (Biography, Drama) ★★★★★
Cast: Akshay Kumar, Radhika Madan, Paresh Rawal, Seema Biswas
Direction: Sudha Kongara
Duration: 2 hours 35 minutes
Language: Hindi (U)

■ A remake of the Tamil film *Soorari Pottru* (2020) and an adaptation of G R Gopinath's memoir *Simply Fly: A Deccan Odyssey*, *Sarfira* follows a man's audacious dream of creating a low-cost airline for the masses. But his vision faces headwinds as powerful enemies threaten to ground him before takeoff.



Sarfira's opening scene at an airstrip takes viewers on a high-octane ride, setting the stage for Vir Mhatre's (Akshay Kumar) brave dream of creating a low-cost airline that empowers ordinary people to fly. The narrative weaves in his journey and the challenges he faces in the aviation sector dominated by Paresh Goswami (Paresh Rawal). Glimpses into Vir's personal life reveal unwavering support from his equally spirited wife, Rani (Radhika Madan).

For those seeking a story of resilience and unwavering determination, director Sudha Kongara's movie comes up direct. The film celebrates Vir's ability to overcome every obstacle and relentlessly pursue his dream. But it's also a commentary on patriarchy, class divide, and casteism. While Vir has high-flying

dreams, Rani has no less individuality and ambition of her own—to start a bakery. Time and again, she questions patriarchy in her spunky style without loud dialogues and comments on feminism. Vir believes his mission to start a low-cost airline is also a way to break the caste barrier. While on the other hand, this is what Paresh is against—the rich rubbing shoulders with the not-so-affluent.

The screenplay by Sudha Kongara, Pooja Tolani, and Shalini Ushadevi occasionally stretches the narrative, with the lead character's challenges becoming somewhat repetitive. The dialogues (by Pooja Tolani) try to convey one clear message throughout the film in different situations, which makes it a tad wearisome. The story unfolds across

multiple timelines—Vir and Rani's courtship, his past activism, and the present-day struggle. Frequent flashbacks and shifts can be confusing at times, and the music by GV Prakash Kumar borders on being melodramatic rather than inspirational. The message is genuine, and the lead character's intent is noble. However, it could have been narrated within a much tighter runtime. While the film is enjoyable, it's not always a steady flight.

The movie is an Akshay Kumar showcase from start to finish. The actor delivers a nuanced performance, effortlessly portraying a range of emotions—disappointment, frustration, gratitude, helplessness, and love. He shines in scenes like his heartfelt plea for a loan at the airport and his endearing awkwardness when borrowing money from Rani for his venture. Radhika Madan is equally impressive as a woman who is neither a quiet supporter nor apologetic about her own ambition. Paresh Rawal's character is one-dimensional and creates no real impact. Seema Biswas and Anil Charanjeet lendable support.

While the film's narrative could certainly be crisper and the length tighter, ultimately, it lands safely. It is an inspiring tale elevated by top-notch performances from the lead cast. Buckle up for this flight!

— Dhaval Roy

To review any movie and check show timings visit [etimes.in](https://www.timesofindia.com)

Fly Me to the Moon (Comedy, Romance) ★★★★★

Cast: Scarlett Johansson, Channing Tatum, Woody Harrelson
Direction: Greg Berlanti
Duration: 2 hours 14 minutes
Language: English (UA)

■ When the White House decides the Apollo 11 mission is too critical to risk failure, a marketing expert is tasked with staging a fake moon landing as a backup plan.

Set against the backdrop of the historic 1969 moon landing, the heart of *Fly Me to the Moon* lies in the dynamic between Kelly (Scarlett Johansson) and Cole (Channing Tatum). Kelly's marketing tactics clash with Cole's rigid adherence to truth and transparency, creating a push-and-pull that drives much of the film's drama and comedy. Johansson's Kelly is a master of manipulation, skillfully conning politicians and public figures into supporting the Apollo 11 mission. Her adeptness at adopting various accents and personas to suit her needs showcases Johansson's range and adds a layer of humour to her character.



On the other hand, Tatum's portrayal of Cole Davis is more sombre and reserved. His character is deeply affected by the deaths of the Apollo 11 astronauts, which adds a serious undertone to his dedication to the Apollo 11 mission. Cole's internal struggle and his commitment to honouring the memory of his fallen comrades create poignant moments in the film. Despite his serious demeanour, Tatum injects subtle comedic elements into his performance, particularly in his interactions with Johansson. Woody Harrelson shines as Moe Berkus, the enigmatic operative whose blend of humour and menace makes him a standout character. Harrelson's performance is both entertaining and unsettling, making Moe a believable threat who would stop at nothing to ensure the mission's success. His scenes often serve as a reminder of the darker forces at play behind the seemingly glamorous space race. Greg Berlanti's direction is deft, balancing the film's romantic and comedic elements with its more serious and dramatic moments. The screenplay by Rose Gilroy cleverly weaves historical facts with fiction, creating a fresh and nostalgic narrative.

However, *Fly Me to the Moon* suffers a few pacing issues. The third act feels slightly drawn out as the various subplots vie for resolution. The film's ambition to juggle multiple storylines sometimes leads to a loss of focus, but strong performances from the cast help to keep the audience engaged. *Fly Me to the Moon* is a witty and entertaining romantic comedy that offers a unique take on the Apollo 11 mission. Johansson and Tatum's chemistry, combined with standout performances from Harrelson, make the film a delightful watch. While it may not be entirely historically accurate, its blend of humour, romance, and drama ensures that it is both engaging and thought-provoking. Berlanti and Gilroy have created a film that pays homage to the past while providing a fresh perspective on a well-known historical event.

— Neil Soans

TISS sets up sustainability panel, decides to fill up posts

Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has formed a sustainability committee to draw up plans to improve the institute's financial health.

While TISS administration is yet to officially hear from the Tata Group on whether they will continue to support the programmes they had initiated, the sustainability panel will draw up means to ensure that its schools and programmes are self-sustaining.

Ten days ago, TISS administration and Tata Education Trust (TET) had held a meeting in which it was decided that the interest earned on the TET donations would be currently used to run the programmes supported by it. But with no clarity on the long-term future of these programmes and the people associated with them, the sustainability panel will have to come up with a plan. "We are sympathetic towards the faculty members and non-teaching staff..." a senior TISS official told TOI. To start, it has decided to fill permanent posts and its ad hoc faculty, including those that are a part of some Tata programmes, can be absorbed in the permanent posts if they meet the eligibility criteria and clear the interview process. "Many of these staffers have an advantage over outsiders. They know TISS, its culture, its ways of working and have the expertise and excellence that our programmes demand," said the official. "TISS will continue with the TET-project-based contractual staff, while identifying permanent staffing requirements as per UGC-approved guidelines."

TISS has 183 permanent teaching posts and the other 108 positions are ad hoc, including 55 teaching and 60 non-teaching staff who are a part of the Tata-supported programmes. — Hemali Chhappia

Pawar claims MVA will bag 225 seats in assembly poll

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Mumbai: More than a month after his party tasted much success in the Lok Sabha election, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar said on Thursday that in the assembly polls the MVA would win at least 225 of the 288 seats. "In the 2019 Lok Sabha election the opposition won six seats, while in the June 2024 election the MVA won 31 out of 48 seats. Winds of change are blowing. People saw the Modi administration and have decided to change it. The change was possible owing to people's movement. I am sure the same trend will be reflected in the assembly election too. MVA will win 225 out of 288 seats," he said.

Pawar was speaking after veteran Dalit politician Sudhakar Bhalerao left the BJP and joined the NCP (SP) in the presence of NCP (SP) state unit president Jayant Patil, Supriya Sule and former minister Rajesh Tope.

Bhalerao was elected to the assembly from Udgir reserved seat in 2009 and 2014 on a BJP ticket but was denied nomination in 2019. NCP candidate Sanjay Bansode was elected from Udgir. Currently, Bansode is a cabinet member in the Shinde govt.

There was no scope for Bhalerao to get a nomination from Udgir as the seat had been allotted to the NCP led by Dy CM Ajit Pawar in the Mahayuti, and he decided to quit the BJP.

Besides Bhalerao, two prominent politicians from Marathwada, former union minister Suryakanta Patil and Madhav Kinhalakar, quit the BJP. Patil joined the NCP (SP) while Kinhalakar, who was a cabinet member for more than a decade, is yet to decide on his political future.

Pawar said that from Udgir and Deolali NCP candidates Bansode and Saroj Ahire had won in 2019 but later they joined the rival group. "The elected representatives betrayed their voters and decided to go in a different direction. People do not like this kind of attitude," he said.

'Humiliated' by school staffer, teen ends life

Thane: An office-bearer of an educational institute has been booked for the suicide of a 16-year-old boy, reportedly after feeling humiliated when sent home on grounds of discipline.

According to police, the deceased was a class 11 student at a junior college near Kalyan. On Wednesday morning, he and three other students were sent home over some indiscipline. He died by suicide at his residence in Nilambali village, Kalyan taluka. His family members blamed the school administration for the death. They alleged that the school should have informed them about any misconduct.

The school administration refuted the allegations and claimed that the deceased and his companions were warned about possible suspension due to their actions and were sent home as a disciplinary measure. For assistance, contact the Matra helpline at 022-25385447. —Nishikant Karlikar

Couple belts kids, films act; booked

Mumbai: A woman and her husband were booked under the Juvenile Justice Act following a viral video clip that showed the woman assaulting her two minor children with a belt. The husband had recorded the video. A complaint was lodged on July 1, after a police team tracked down the residence of the couple and took the children's statements. TNN

Cop arrested for abetting suicide

Thane: A constable attached to a police station in Mumbai and his mother have been arrested for abetting suicide of his wife and for demanding dowry. A senior police officer said the woman died by suicide three months after her marriage. A note was found blaming her husband and his mother for demanding Rs 10 lakh for a new property. TNN

Parties guard legislators as fear of cross-voting looms

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Mumbai: It will be a testing time for both chief minister Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti and Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi as there are 12 nominees in fray for 11 seats in the legislative council polls, and chances of cross-voting are high.

Barring Sharad Pawar's NCP, all political parties have put up their legislators in leading five-star hotels.

Late on Thurs, Uddhav addressed a meeting of Congress legislators, while CM and DCM Devendra Fadnis also held separate meeting with their MLAs. All parties have issues a whip for legislators.

For Fadnis, after BJP's humiliating defeat in the Lok Sabha polls, securing victory of all party nominees is critical. From the strength of political parties in the legislative assembly, it appears that barring five nominees of BJP and one Congress nominee, candidates of Shiv Sena, UBT Shiv Sena and NCP will have to mobilise votes as it will be difficult to get their nominees elected on their own. BJP has fielded Pankaja Munde, Yogesh Tilekar, Parinay Fuke, Sadanand Khot and Amit Gorkhe, while Congress has nominated Pradnya Satav. BJP's strength, along with the support of independents, is 114, while Congress has 37

members. Since the quota has been fixed at 23, BJP nominees will be elected on their own, while Congress will have 14 surplus votes. Shiv Sena has 38 surplus votes, and has put up two candidates — Bhavana Gawli and Krupal Tumane — but it will have to mobilise eight additional votes for the victory of these two candidates. Ajit Pawar faction has put up two nominees — Shivajirao Garje and V N Vitekare — and has only 40 votes; NCP will have to mobilise six additional votes.

COUNCIL POLLS

Senas (UBT) has only 15 votes and has nominated Uddhav's trusted aide Milind Narvekar, who will have to mobilise eight additional votes. Congress has assured support to the candidature of Narvekar. Meanwhile, Sharad Pawar-led NCP with 14 votes, has not put up any nominee. It is supporting the candidature of PWP's Jayant Patil, who has banking on the support of Congress and independents, including MIM, BVA, SP and CPM.

At a time when barring BJP and Congress, no other political party has enough strength to get all its members elected, the moot question is how the shortfall of votes will be managed. In 2022 elections to the legislative council, though Congress had adequate strength, official nominee Chandrakant Handore was defeated and Bhai Jagtap was elected. The 2022 polls had marked the beginning of the downfall of MVA govt.

▶ **EDIT: Cross Vote On Mind**

TRAIN BLASTS' SURVIVOR MOVES ON IN LIFE

Sanjay Hadkar



Survivor of 11/7 serial train blasts Mahendra Pitale, shows his robotic hand to police personnel at Mahim railway station on the 18th anniversary of the terror attack. The Mira Road resident, an artist, who visits the blast site every year on this day, said the prosthetic arm made by a Polish company has five-finger movement which allows him to perform a set of 16 daily actions which can be saved in the high-functioning arm

Uday Samant faces breach of privilege motion for 'lying'

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Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) MLC Anil Parab on Thursday moved a breach of privilege motion against Shiv Sena minister Uday Samant for giving false information to the legislative council. Samant had claimed that Roadways Solutions Infra India Limited (RSIL), the company that bagged the south Mumbai road concreting contract worth Rs 1,600 crore, was blacklisted, its contract terminated, and a fine of Rs 64 crore realised. Parab said in the council that Samant was lying as RSIL had not been blacklisted and no fine was recovered as the matter is under arbitration. Parab's breach of privilege motion was backed by seven MVA MLCs.

Samant's claims on RSIL were in reply to a calling attention motion by BJP MLC Prasad Lad. "These are lies. How dare the minister lie before the House? This is nothing but denigrating the sanctity and authority of the House," Parab said in the council. "Since an arbitrator has been appointed, it means

the full fine won't be recovered. So, I'm moving this breach of privilege motion against the minister. Those officials who gave false information must be suspended."

Calling the road concreting contract a scam, Parab said, "It's been two years, but no road has been completed. They listed 300 roads, but none is ready."

Following a Bombay High Court (HC) directive, the BMC gave a fresh hearing to RSIL. In the speaking order passed after the hearing, the BMC terminated RSIL's contract and directed that the company pay a penalty of Rs 64 crore within a period of 30 days. Parab said the company must be blacklisted across all state govt departments and not just in BMC "unless owners are relatives of the govt".

On Wednesday, Samant said in the legislative council, "The road concreting tenders were floated in two phases... The remaining four companies (five firms had won the bids) delayed work and so they have also been penalised. I'm making it clear that the companies' owners are not sons-in-law of the govt."

HC relief for Chinese let off in 2019 case of gold smuggling

Mumbai: Unnecessary victimisation may "reflect in the bilateral relations", Bombay high court said on Thursday, while ordering the authorities to issue exit permit to a Chinese woman who was acquitted in a gold smuggling case yet could not leave India.

Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees life and personal liberty, is applicable to foreign nationals too, Justice Prithviraj Chavan said, while ordering the government to pay her Rs 10 lakh in compensation for agony and trauma she suffered.

Cong Ling, a 38-year-old Chinese national, was arrested at Mumbai airport in 2019 on charges of smuggling gold worth Rs 3 crore into the country. In Oct 2023, she was acquitted by the trial court and was upheld by the sessions court. The court also directed the Immigration Bureau to issue her an exit permit to leave India.

The permit was, however, not issued as Customs said it was in the process of filing an appeal against her acquittal. The high court noted in the order that Customs has not filed an appeal against her acquittal yet. The woman then moved high court for relief. TNN

'Mumbai houses 6 of 10 most valuable realty firms in India'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Six of the 10 most valuable Indian real estate companies are based in Mumbai, which continues to be the country's real estate capital, according to the GROHE-Hurun India Real Estate 100 report released on Thursday.

The cumulative valuation of 33 Mumbai-based real estate companies is over Rs 6.4 lakh crore followed by Bengaluru with 15 companies (Rs 2.1 lakh crore) and New Delhi (14 companies with cumulative valuation of Rs 87,460 crore).

Gurugram-based DLF emerged as the top real estate company with a valuation of Rs 2,02,140 crore, followed by Mumbai's Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group) with a valuation of Rs 1,36,730 crore.

Indian Hotels Company (Taj Group), headquartered in Mumbai, ranks third with a valuation of Rs 79,150 crore.

"Among the top ten companies, 60% are headquartered in Mumbai, while two are based in Bengaluru and one each in Gurugram and Ahmedabad," said the report.

With a valuation of Rs 77,280 crore, Godrej Properties, a subsidiary of Godrej Group, ranks fourth in the 2024 report.

Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty secured the fifth spot with a valuation of Rs 66,200 crore while Prestige Group from Bengaluru was ranked

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Worli leads charge in luxe home market, accounts for 37% sales

Mumbai: The 'Mumbai Luxury Housing HI CY24' report released on Thursday said the significant surge in the sale of luxury homes over Rs 10 crore in value "aligns with an ongoing bullish trend in residential property sales overall".

The primary luxury segment saw sales worth Rs 8,752 crore—the second-best half-yearly sales value in the past five years, just slightly below the high of the first half of 2023.

"The top 10 localities in Mumbai contributed 80% of the total luxury housing sales value, with Worli leading the charge, accounting for 37% of the overall luxury sales value. Goregaon East saw a remarkable 1,444% increase in luxury home sales value," it said.

"The 2,000 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft size segment emerged as the largest contributor—this remains the sweet spot in terms of size preferences for luxury homes priced above Rs 10 crore," said the report. TNN

sixth with a valuation of Rs 63,980 crore.

Adani Realty, part of the Adani Group (Ahmedabad),

ranks seventh with a valuation of Rs 56,500 crore. The Phoenix Mills and K Raheja Corp, both from Mumbai, are

Most Indian pet shops and breeders illegal, not registered with state: PETA

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Mumbai: PETA India is launching an awareness drive to encourage responsible pet ownership and to end the cruel breeding of pet dogs such as pugs that make them have flat snouts, resulting in them struggling to breathe. In Mumbai, a giant billboard will be displayed at Marine Lines.

The organisation's director of veterinary services Dr Mini Aravindan said, "PETA

India urges everyone to turn their nose up at the cruel breeding industry responsible for pugs' misery and adopt a dog in need from an animal shelter instead."

Pugs and other breathing-impaired breeds (BIB), including French and English bulldogs, Pekingese, Boston terriers, boxers, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, and Shih Tzus, suffer from an agonising and sometimes fatal condition called bra-

chycephalic syndrome, which causes them to pant, snort, wheeze, and struggle just to breathe. It can make chasing a ball, running, playing, and even going for a walk — the things that make dogs' lives joyful — difficult. The situation is so serious that a number of countries, including Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, have banned or are currently working on amendments which either ban or restrict

the breeding of some or all BIBs, PETA has said.

PETA India said most pet shops and breeders in the country are illegal as they aren't registered with the relevant state animal welfare boards. Breeders and pet stores typically deprive dogs of proper veterinary care and adequate food, exercise, affection, and opportunities for socialisation — in addition to fuelling the dog overpopulation crisis, it said.

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City girl shares AIR 3 with Navi Mum boy in CA finals

Saachi.Patki@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Mumbai's Kiran Rajendra Singh Manral (22) and Navi Mumbai's Ghilman Saalim Ansari (22) have shared the third position nationally in the chartered accountancy (CA) final exams held in May this year. Both have scored 477 out of 600 marks. Twenty-two-year-old Shivam Mishra and Varsha Arora (25), both from Delhi, have emerged as the first and second rankers in the results announced on Thursday, by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). This was the first attempt for all four rank holders.

Ansari, from Vashi, who completed his BCom from the HR College, will be the first CA in his family. He told TOI he expected to secure a rank,



Both Kiran Manral and Ghilman Ansari scored 477 out of 600

however, not this high. During his preparation, he said, "I went all out, and gave it my 100%". Ansari plans to either work for a firm or start his own practice. A Real Madrid fan, Ansari enjoys watching football to unwind. His father is a company secretary.

Ghatkopar-resident Manral, also a student from HR College, said, "The aim was to work hard and get an All-India Rank, but the third rank was beyond expectation." Manral lives with her mother,

and her older sister, who is also pursuing CA. She completed her industrial training at an investment banking firm. Currently, she is keen on pursuing a career in finance. Manral said, "I love reading books, but due to the exam pressure, there was not much time."

Shivam Mishra, son of a priest who graduated from Delhi University's School of Open Learning, plans to continue working for a couple of years, while simultaneously pursuing UPSC or an MBA.

Of the 35,819 candidates who appeared for both groups in the CA final exam, 19.9% cleared it. The success rate of group-I is 27.35%, and for group-II it is 36.35%. Consequently to the results declared, 20,446 candidates have qualified as CAs.

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Stressed Asset Management, Central Office
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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Union Bank of India invites expression of interest from eligible ARCS/BANKS/NBFCs/ FIs/AIFs for sale of NPAs to them on ongoing basis. Detailed Request For Bid (RFB) with list of accounts can be had from website of our Bank www.unionbankofindia.co.in.
Chief General Manager (SAM)

e-Tender offer for salvage of impact Damage Excavator @ Ambernath, MH

Online eTender is available on www.prosal.in for material of M/s. Shree Construction and Company from interested buyers for disposal of Impact Damaged Excavator (Model No): VOLVO EC 380DL Hydraulic Excavator) on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" lying at Shree Construction and Company, Vadodara-Mumbai Expressway PKG-17, NHA1 Tunnel Project, Vill: Bendshil, P.O. Chamtolli, Tehsil: Ambernath, Dist: Thane, PIN : 421503.
Buyers would be able to bid (multiple times) on last day of eTender. Refer terms & conditions mentioned on www.prosal.in
Salvage can be inspected from 12th July to 18th July 2024 between 10 AM to 5 PM with prior appointment with Mr. Nitin Patil, Mobile: 99229 61090
eTender bidding will be enabled on 12th July 2024 02:00 to 03:00 pm.
Address where DD to be sent: 402, Centre Point, J B Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400 059. Ph. (022) 40503000 (Rohan Ramugade)

I Have Changed My Name From Narendar Singh Kushwah To Narendra Singh Kushwah As Per Document. For All Future Purposes

I Sonal Anil Yadav, daughter of Anil Shymraj Yadav, resident of K-3/701, Happy Home Complex, Shanti Park Mira Road East, Thane, Pin:401107, Maharashtra, India and presently residing at 6712 Opera Glass Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario, L5W1R7, do hereby change my name from Sonal Anil Yadav to Sonal Chirag Patel, with immediate effect.

I Manjula Bai spouse of 6605308 Ex Sep (Late) Mahadev Kadam resident of K-3/701, Happy Ambawade(Partward), PO-Pai Ambawade, Teh-Mahad, Dist- Raigad, State-Maharashtra PIN-402307 have changed my name from Manjula Bai to Manjula Mahadev Kadam and 18 Feb 1949 to 01 Nov 1948 vide a filed a LIT No. 2452041851/28680021336 dated 11 Jul 2024.

I Bharati atmaram gadawde, W/o Vidyannand atmaram sawant R/o Deen building room no. 18, N.M. Joshi marg, Delisle road, Mumbai - 400011 have changed my name to Vibha vidyanand sawant for all future purposes.

tender & notices

NOTICES

MARRIAGE notice No.INDIA/Cons/34/MR/2024 (39) MR. PRATIK HARESH HARDE S/O HARDE HARESH CHAMPAKALAL RESIDENT OF 502 PADMAVATI PALACE, 191 NANDAPATKAR ROAD VILE PARLE EAST, MUMBAI PIN - 400067, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA. PRESENT ADDRESS - 2603 GREEN LAKE TOWER S1, CLUSTER S, JLT, DUBAI UAE. AND MISS SAKSHI RAMCHANDRA SHETTY DAUGHTER OF RAMCHANDRA ISHWAR SHETTY RESIDENT OF - C-302, MILAP COMPLEX, P&T COLONY, GANDHI NAGAR, DOMBIVLI EAST, THANE, PIN 421044, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA. PRESENT ADDRESS - 2603 GREEN LAKE TOWER S1, CLUSTER S, JLT, DUBAI UAE. ABOVE MENTIONED INDIAN NATIONALS ARE PRESENTLY RESIDING IN THE UAE HAVE GIVEN NOTICE OF INTENDED MARRIAGE BETWEEN THEM UNDER THE FOREIGN MARRIAGES ACT, 1969. IF ANYONE HAS ANY OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED MARRIAGE, HE/SHE SHOULD FILE THE SAME WITH UNDERSIGNED ACCORDING TO THE PROCEDURE LAID DOWN UNDER THE ACT/RULES WITHIN THIRTY DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE ON EMAIL cons1.dubai@mea.gov.in. cons3.dubai@mea.gov.in

NOTICE

Trent Limited
Registered Office: Trent House, G Block, Plot No C-60, Beside Citibank, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai 51.

NOTICE is hereby given that the certificates for the undermentioned securities of the Company have been lost/misaid and the holders of the said securities have applied to the Company to release the new certificates. The Company has informed the holders/applicants that the said shares have been transferred to IEPF as per IEPF Rules.
Any person who has a claim in respect of the said securities should lodge such claim with the Company at its Registered Office within 15 days from this date, else the Company will proceed to release the new certificates to the holders/applicants, without further intimation.
Names of holder and joint holder:
Sushma Gupta / Pawan Kumar Gupta
Kind of Securities and face value:
Equity shares of face value Rs. 1 each
No. of securities: 120
Distinctive Numbers: 987191-987310
Place: Mumbai, Maharashtra
Date: 12th July, 2024
Names of holders / Applicants:
Sushma Gupta / Pawan Kumar Gupta

TENDERS

NOTICE: Shri. Babubhai Chotalal Gandhi, a member of the Adityaman Co-operative Housing Society Ltd. having address at Kantinagar, J. B. Nagar, Andheri East, Mumbai - 400058, and holding Flat No 15, in the building of the society, died on 15.11.1992 without making any nomination. Shri. Jignesh Ashok Shah, Shri. Anil Babubhai Gandhi and Shri. Yogesh Babubhai Gandhi, legal heirs of deceased member have made an application for membership to the society. The society hereby invites claims or objections from the heir or heirs or other claimants/ objectors to the transfer of the said shares and interest of the deceased member within a period of 15 days from the publication of this notice, with copies of such documents and other proofs in support of his/her / their claims / objections for transfer of shares and interest of the deceased member in such manner as is provided under the by-laws of the society. Place: Mumbai Date: 02.07.2024 For and on behalf of Adityaman Co-op. Housing Society Ltd. Sd/- Hon. Secretary

INDIRA GANDHI INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

(Deemed to be University)
Gen. A.K. Vaidya Marg, Film City Road, Mumbai-400005

Notice

Inviting Tender

Tender bids are invited from qualified vendors for the below-mentioned services at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.
Name of Service:
(1) Extension of the last date for Group Term Insurance Policy for Employees of the IGIDR.
Last Date: 22.07.24 EOD
(2) Annual contract for providing services for monitoring of CCTV cameras at IGIDR.
Last Date: 01.08.24 EOD

For further details & download the tender document, visit our website at: www.igidr.ac.in/tenders/. IGIDR reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals without assigning any reasons therefor.
Sd/- Registrar

S.L. RAHEJA HOSPITAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is given under section 20-A of the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) regulation 2002 that the clinical records of patients from January 2016 to December 2016 and the histopathology slides and blocks along with the relevant test requisition forms and other papers for the cases reported between January 2013 to December 2013 at S.L. Raheja Hospital - A Fortis Associate will be discarded as per protocol.
Patient, relatives, or others desiring a copy of the clinical records should contact the Medical Records Department of the hospital on 022-6652 9999, ext. 9630 between 10.00 a.m. and 04.00 p.m. and for histopathology slides & blocks should contact the Histopath department on Ext. 9693 between 10.00 a.m. and 04.00 p.m. The Patient relatives can give a written request on or before August 16, 2024, after which no medical records, slides, and blocks referred to above shall be made available.
Place: Mumbai
Date: 12th July 2024

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the certificates for the undermentioned securities of the Company have been lost/misaid and the holders of the said securities have applied to the Company to release the new certificates. The Company has informed the holders/applicants that the said shares have been transferred to IEPF as per IEPF Rules.
Any person who has a claim in respect of the said securities should lodge such claim with the Company at its Registered Office within 15 days from this date, else the Company will proceed to release the new certificates to the holders/applicants, without further intimation.
Names of holder and joint holder:
Sushma Gupta / Pawan Kumar Gupta
Kind of Securities and face value:
Equity shares of face value Rs. 1 each
No. of securities: 120
Distinctive Numbers: 987191-987310
Place: Mumbai, Maharashtra
Date: 12th July, 2024
Names of holders / Applicants:
Sushma Gupta / Pawan Kumar Gupta

NOTICE

All that piece or parcel of land or ground bearing C.T.S. No. 68 (part) admeasuring 2200 sq. meters or thereabouts of Village Majas, Taluka Andheri, Mumbai Suburban District in the Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban, situated at Francis Wadi, Jogeshwari (East), Mumbai 400060 together with all the structures and dwellings standing thereon and bounded as follows:
On or towards the East: Western Express Highway;
On or towards the West: C.T.S. No. 68 (part);
On or towards the North: C.T.S. No. 68 (part); and
On or towards the South: C.T.S. No. 68 (part).
Sd/-
JANU V. GULATI,
Advocate and Solicitor,
Mobile No. (+91) 9619435557
Place: Mumbai
Date: 12/07/2024

NOTICE

All that piece or parcel of land or ground bearing C.T.S. No. 68 (part) admeasuring 1721.40 sq. meters or thereabouts of Village Majas, Taluka Andheri, Mumbai Suburban District in the Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban, situated at Francis Wadi, Jogeshwari (East), Mumbai 400060 together with all the structures and dwellings standing thereon and bounded as follows:
On or towards the East: Western Express Highway;
On or towards the West: Nala;
On or towards the North: C.T.S. No. 49 (Bandrekarwadi); and
On or towards the South: C.T.S. No. 54, 58, 59, 60 etc.
Sd/-
JANU V. GULATI,
Advocate and Solicitor,
Mobile No. (+91) 9619435557
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Date: 12/07/2024

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On or towards the South: C.T.S. No. 54, 58, 59, 60 etc.
Sd/-
JANU V. GULATI,
Advocate and Solicitor,
Mobile No. (+91) 9619435557
Place: Mumbai
Date: 12/07/2024

PUBLIC INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SALE OF THE MAJORITY STAKES IN HYDRO POWER PROJECT

Invitation is hereby given to the Public by AJR INFRA AND TOLLING LIMITED (AJRITL) for sale of its majority stakes in company which is undertaking construction and implementation of "Hydro Power Project" having generation capacity above 60 MW on BOOT basis. The transfer of stakes shall be as a going concern on "as is where is, as is what is, whatever there is and without recourse basis". Interested parties may submit their expression of interest by email or letter latest by 20.07.2024.
For all Enquiries and Information, Contact:
SRINIVASU CHAGANTI
Office:- IIIrd Floor, Plot No. 3/8, Hamilton House, J.N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400038.
Tel No. 022 67487241/9676446786
Email: srinivasu.chaganti@ajrinfra.in
AJRITL reserves its right to amend the deadlines from the Public Invitation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given on behalf of my client that I am investigating the title of **M/s. Evergreen Infrastructures**, having their place of business at Shop No. 12, Minar Tower, Off. S. V. Road, Jogeshwari (West), Mumbai 400102 (hereinafter referred to as the "Owner") to the property more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder written ("the said Property"). By Deed of Conveyance dated 02/05/2011 (registered with the office of the Sub-Registrar of Assurances at Andheri No. 2 under Regd. No. BDR-4/4345 of 2011), M/s. Sweety Developers have purchased and acquired ownership rights, title and interests in the said Property from M/s. Evergreen Infrastructures. M/s. Sweety Developers have been in possession of the said Property from the date of execution of above Deed of Conveyance. M/s. Sweety Developers have agreed to sell, transfer, convey, assign, assure and assign the Property to my client free from all encumbrances, charges, liens, mortgages, etc.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Any person(s) / entity/ entities including inter alia any individual, hindu undivided family, company, bank(s), financial institution(s), non-banking financial institution(s), limited liability partnership, a firm, an association of persons, trust or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any claim, demand, right, title, share, interest or charge of any nature in respect of the said Property or any part or portion thereof whether by way of inheritance, bequeath, maintenance, succession share, sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, mortgage, encumbrance, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, leave and license, allotment, license, covenant, development rights, trust, lien, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, possession, occupation, pledge, guarantee, easement, right of way, loans, advances, agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, family arrangement/ settlement, lis-pendens, injunction or any attachment, or under any decree, order or award of any Court of Law, Tribunal, Revenue or Statutory Authority or arbitration, right of prescription or pre-emption or reservation or any liability or commitment or demand of any nature whatsoever are hereby required to inform the same in writing to the undersigned having his office at Shop No. 17, Jai Punit Nagar Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., Opp. Indian Oil Petrol Pump, S. V. Road, Borivali (West), Mumbai 400092 within 14 (Fourteen) days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their/it claim, if any, with all supporting original documents evidencing the same, failing which such claim and the claim, if any, of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived, released, relinquished and/or abandoned.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given on behalf of my client that I am investigating the title of **M/s. Evergreen Infrastructures**, having their place of business at Shop No. 12, Minar Tower, Off. S. V. Road, Jogeshwari (West), Mumbai 400102 (hereinafter referred to as the "Owner") to the property more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder written ("the said Property"). By Deed of Conveyance dated 31/12/2007 (regd. under Sr. BDR-4/5312 of 2008) and Deed of Conveyance dated 31/12/2007 (regd. under Sr. BDR-4/5313 of 2008), the Owner has purchased and acquired ownership rights, title and interests in the said Property from the date of execution of the above two deeds of conveyance. The Owner has agreed to sell, transfer, assign, assure and convey the Property to my client free from all encumbrances, charges, liens, mortgages, etc.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Any person(s) / entity/ entities including inter alia any individual, hindu undivided family, company, bank(s), financial institution(s), non-banking financial institution(s), limited liability partnership, a firm, an association of persons, trust or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any claim, demand, right, title, share, interest or charge of any nature in respect of the said Property or any part or portion thereof whether by way of inheritance, bequeath, maintenance, succession share, sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, mortgage, encumbrance, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, leave and license, allotment, license, covenant, development rights, trust, lien, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, possession, occupation, pledge, guarantee, easement, right of way, loans, advances, agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, family arrangement/ settlement, lis-pendens, injunction or any attachment, or under any decree, order or award of any Court of Law, Tribunal, Revenue or Statutory Authority or arbitration, right of prescription or pre-emption or reservation or any liability or commitment or demand of any nature whatsoever are hereby required to inform the same in writing to the undersigned having his office at Shop No. 17, Jai Punit Nagar Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., Opp. Indian Oil Petrol Pump, S. V. Road, Borivali (West), Mumbai 400092 within 14 (Fourteen) days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their/it claim, if any, with all supporting original documents evidencing the same, failing which such claim and the claim, if any, of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived, released, relinquished and/or abandoned.

PUBLIC NOTICE

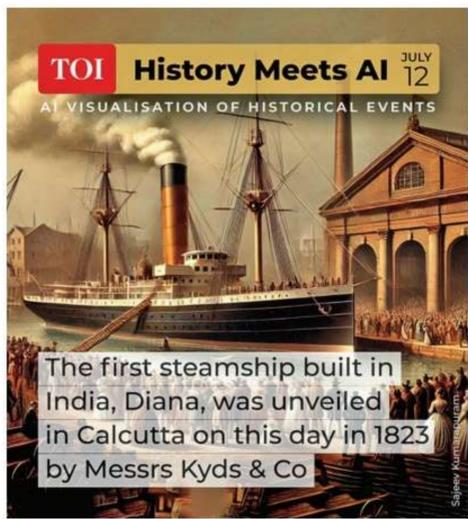
All that piece or parcel of land or ground bearing Survey No. 5, Hissa



SIDDARAMAIAH PLAYS BACKWARD CASTE CARD TO COUNTER MYSURU LAND SCAM CHARGES | 20



EAM CALLS FOR NEW ENERGIES AS BIMSTEC NATIONS DISCUSS TRADE, CONNECTIVITY | 20



TOI History Meets AI JULY 12
AI VISUALISATION OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

The first steamship built in India, Diana, was unveiled in Calcutta on this day in 1823 by Messrs Kyds & Co

Teacher spends 'hrs on phone', suspended

An assistant teacher at a govt school in Sambhal was suspended after a surprise check by the district magistrate Rajendra Pansiya on Wednesday revealed he had been spending "hours on his mobile phone during school time and not checking students' notebooks correctly", reports Sandeep Rai.

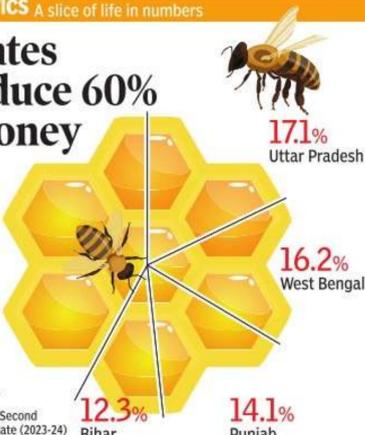
According to the officials, Pansiya found the teacher, Priyam Goel, holding a phone and playing games. Speaking to TOI, the DM said, "I asked if he was regularly using the 'Diksha' and 'Read Along' apps prescribed by govt for ease of learning. When I did not get a satisfactory answer, I asked for the hourly details and found that the teacher was using the phone during school time." He added: "I then began checking the copies of students and found glaring mistakes. The tutor had ticked all the answers right without even correcting the mistakes. This was a gross dereliction of duty." Despite several attempts, Goel could not be reached for comments.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

4 states produce 60% of honey

40.3% Rest of India

By Atul Thakur
Source: NHB's Second Advance Estimate (2023-24)



After PM's Russia trip, US says don't take our ties for granted

No Such Thing As Strategic Autonomy In Times Of Conflict: Envoy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

While India's strategic autonomy was said to have been exemplified by PM Narendra Modi's visit to Russia, US ambassador to India Eric Garcetti has warned against taking the India-US relationship for granted, saying there is no such thing as strategic autonomy in times of conflict.

Garcetti's remarks followed repeated comments by the State Department, even while Modi was in Moscow, expressing concerns about India's ties with Russia.

Speaking at a conference a day after Modi's visit to Russia and Austria concluded, Garcetti said he knew India and he respected that India likes its strategic autonomy, but in times of conflict, there is no such thing as strategic autonomy.

"We will in crisis moments need to know each other. I don't care what title we put to it, but we will need to know that we are trusted friends, brothers and sisters, and colleagues in times of need," said the ambassador.



THE HUG THAT SPARKED AN OUTRAGE

"It's important for us as Americans and as Indians to remember the more we put into this relationship, the more we will get out. The more we insist on a kind of cynical calculation in the place of a trusted relationship, the less we will get... As I also remind my Indian friends, while it is wider and it is deeper than it's ever been, it is not yet deep enough... that if we take it for granted from the Indian side towards America... I'll fight a lot of defence battles trying to help this relation-

ship ahead," added Garcetti. Modi's hug of president Vladimir Putin on Monday, around the time Russia was alleged to have bombed children's hospital in Kyiv, had sparked outrage in the West. While the US expressed concern saying it would closely follow what Modi was going to tell Putin in his public remarks, Ukraine president Zelenskyy launched an attack on PM saying his embrace of "a bloody criminal" was a devastating blow to peace efforts. Modi did seek to address the anger in the West the next

Russia not a good bet, warns Sullivan

USNSA Jake Sullivan on Thursday said, "We've made clear to every country, including India, that a bet on Russia as a long-term, reliable partner is not a good bet." Moscow would side with Beijing over New Delhi in case of a conflict between the two Asian giants, he added. But he acknowledged that countries like India have a historic relationship with Russia and it's not going to change dramatically overnight. PTI

day by publicly telling Putin he found killing of children heartbreaking and that the Ukraine conflict was not going to be resolved on the battlefield. However, what made Modi's 2-day engagement worse for some of the Western countries was that it came close on the heels of India's refusal to endorse a joint declaration at the Switzerland peace summit which said Ukraine's territorial integrity must form the basis for any peace process. India has held that any peace effort must involve both sides.

Manipur could get its first SC judge, Ladakh its 1st HC CJ

Dhananjay Mahapatra @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court collegium on Thursday decided to recommend to the Union govt to appoint J&K and Ladakh HC Chief Justice N Kishwar Singh and Madras HC acting Chief Justice R Mahadevan as SC judges. Justice Singh will be the first from Manipur to become a SC judge.

After a four-hour marathon meeting, the collegium led by CJI D Y Chandrachud and comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy unanimously decided to give Manipur its first representation in the apex court after more than 50 years of its statehood.

Justice Mahadevan belongs to the backward class and the CJI-led collegium has kept its promise to give representation among judges in constitutional courts to competent persons belonging to deprived sections of society.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, the senior-most judge in J&K HC, has been recommended for appointment as CJ of Meghalaya. Justice Rabstan, a Buddhist, would be the first judge from Ladakh to become Chief Justice of a HC. He will fill the post after the retirement of incumbent CJS Vaidyanathan.

In the appointment of CJs to various high courts, Delhi got the lion's share as three of its judges were recommended for the highest judicial posts in the states.

Acting CJ of Delhi high court, Manmohan, is recommended for appointment as regular CJ of the same high court. Justice Rajiv Shukla has been recommended for appointment as CJ of Himachal Pradesh and Justice Suresh Kait, who belongs to the Dalit community, is recommended to head the J&K high court, which post would fall vacant after Justice N K



Deciding to give Manipur its first representation in SC after more than 50 years of its statehood, the collegium picked NK Singh, at present CJ of J&K and Ladakh HC. Delhi HC acting CJ Manmohan was recommended for appointment as regular CJ of the same high court

Singh's appointment as a Supreme Court judge.

The collegium recommended transfer of Justice M S Ramachandra Rao, CJ of Himachal Pradesh high court, as CJ of Jharkhand, the post which will fall vacant after retirement of Justice B R Sarangi on July 19. The vacant post of Himachal CJ would be filled by Justice Shukla from Delhi high court.

The senior-most judge in Punjab and Haryana high court, Justice G S Sandhwal, has been recommended to head Madhya Pradesh high court. His father Justice S S Sandhwal had retired as CJ of Patna on July 27, 1987.

The collegium also recommended appointment of Justices Nitin Jandhar and K R Shriram, both from Bombay high court, as chief justices of Kerala high court and Madras high court respectively.

17-yr-old abducted for Bihar shotgun wedding

Faryal Rumi @timesofindia.com

Patna: A 17-year-old who had passed his class XII exams this year and recently started college was allegedly abducted near his home in Patna's Barh and forced to marry a minor girl at gunpoint late Wednesday.

It was only after sacred mantras of the marriage were over that police could locate the teen from Athmalgola's Phulepur village

around midnight. All accused involved in the unlawful marriage are absconding, including one who had been jailed earlier for murder. According to police, preliminary investigations suggest the girl's parents passed away in her childhood and those looking after her got her married to rid themselves of their responsibility.

Barh SHO Manish Kumar cited a complaint from the victim's mother, Usha Devi, say-

ing three-four suspects dragged her son into an SUV and took him away while he was out for a stroll around 6.30pm on Wednesday.

"Eyewitnesses informed the family members. Instead of alerting the police immediately, his family started searches on their own. When they failed to trace him, they informed the police around 10pm. The teen was rescued by us within hours. He told us that he was taken away by

unknown people and driven to a house where he was wedded by force," Kumar said.

The teen's statement was recorded Thursday before a magistrate. An FIR was registered against three named accused and some unidentified people. SHO Kumar said one of the accused, Arun Yadav, was earlier convicted in murder cases. "He had also gone to jail. We are conducting raids but no arrests have been made yet," Kumar added.

CB350

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Flat rate of interest will transform to reducing rate of interest 11.49%. Applicable for customers with previous loan track and in urban operating locations only. Loan amount and tenure are at sole discretion of bank. Rate of interest calculated based on flat rate for a tenure of 72 months. *Special price in select states only. **Terms and Conditions are applicable. Bonus valid on Ex-showroom (including Taxes). Limited Period Offer. Creative visualisation, actual product may vary from the image shown. All features and colours may not be a part of all variants. Accessories shown in the picture are not part of standard equipment. **The offer is valid on first come first serve basis. Warranty coverage is applicable on policy period and kms, whichever is earlier. Offer valid for limited period and can be withdrawn at anytime by the company.

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TIMES *interact*

tender & notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of our client Shri. Bhavin Mahendra Turakhia owner of flat no. A-23 of "A" wing, 6th Floor of Maharashtra Surajmal CHS Ltd standing in the name of SHRI. BHAVIN MAHENDRA TURAKHIA bearing Share Certificate No. 55 ordinary shares bearing Distinctive no. 271 to 275 (both inclusive) dated 30.08.1988, has been reported lost/stolen and that an application for issue of Duplicate Certificate in respect thereof has been made to the society at Maharashtra Surajmal CHS Ltd, Andheri (West), Mumbai-400 053. Any person having claims/objections, against issuance of such Duplicate Share Certificate should claim within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice shall report to the below mentioned address or to the Chairman/Secretary of the said society. Share certificate is not mortgaged nor any loan taken against the flat.

M/s. Solicis Lex Advisory

Adv. Digisha Modh
+91-8369064850
Email-digisha@solicislex.comOffice Address: 'A' Wing,
6th Floor, Knox Plaza,
MindSPACE, Behind Inorbit Mall,
Off Link Road, Malad West,
Mumbai 400064
Date: 12th July 2024
Place: Mumbai

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that our Clients are negotiating with Mr. Santosh Vyankatesh Shinde and Mr. Sandeep Neelekanth Sawant for purchasing and acquiring the land described in the Schedule hereunder written with rights of development thereof and hence the present Notice is being published for investigation of the ownership rights, possession etc. of the said Land. If anyone has any claims, demands, rights, interest etc. with respect to the Scheduled Land, the same be informed in writing with supporting authenticated documents within 14 days of publication of this Notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims, demands, rights, interest etc. with respect to the Scheduled Land and Title to the same is clear and marketable and free from any encumbrances.

SCHEDULE OF THE LAND

All that piece or parcel of land bearing C.T.S No. 421 & 374/2B (pt) & F.P. No. 470 of T.P.S. III of Borivali admeasuring 2941.82 sq. mtrs. in the revenue Village-Borivali-TPO3, Taluka-Borivali situated at Near MTNL Shimpoli, Kastur Park Extn., Borivali (West), Mumbai-400092 in Mumbai Suburban District within Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban.

On or towards the East:
By C.T.S. No. 374B/4(pt)
On or towards the West:
By D.P. Road
On or towards the North:
By D.P. Road
On or towards the South:
By F.P. No. 469 T.P.S. III of Borivali.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that My Client who is a Developer (hereinafter referred to as "our client") has entered into negotiations with M/s. Shantidevi Lalchand Chhaganal Foundation (Trust) represented through its Trustee namely Mr. Shrenik Jain, an adult Indian inhabitant (herein after referred to as the "Owner") for the conveyance and subsequently development of the landed property (herein after referred to as the "said property"), owned by the "Owner", being and lying at Borivali in the Mumbai Suburban District and more particularly described in the "Schedule of property" written hereunder and the said negotiations have reached the final stage of culmination.

In view of the above, our client hereby gives a notice to the public at large and calls upon all or any persons who have any right, title, interest in the "said property" prejudicial to the interest of the "Owner" and who have already filed any suit, claim, appeal, petition or for other like proceedings or obtained any decree, award or other order concerning the subject matter of the "said property" or who intend to file any such proceedings as described above for enforcing their right in the "said property" to submit all their objections and claims in writing along with supportive documentary proofs thereof, to the undersigned within a period of fifteen days of the date of publications of this notice, failing which "our client" will presume that no adverse claims or objections concerning the "said property" exist or if they do exist, they stand waived hereinafter; and in such event "my client" will proceed to complete the Conveyance and Development transaction envisaged by both the parties. So please do note.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that piece or parcel of land bearing C.T.S No. 421 & 374/2B (pt) & F.P. No. 470 of T.P.S. III of Borivali admeasuring 2941.82 sq. mtrs. in the revenue Village-Borivali-TPO3, Taluka-Borivali situated at Near MTNL Shimpoli, Kastur Park Extn., Borivali (West), Mumbai-400092 in Mumbai Suburban District within Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban.

On or towards the East:
By C.T.S. No. 374B/4(pt)
On or towards the West:
By D.P. Road
On or towards the North:
By D.P. Road
On or towards the South:
By F.P. No. 469 T.P.S. III of Borivali.Sd/-
TARUN S. SHARMA
Advocate High Court
16, Shaurya Residency,
Kanakia Road, Beverly Park,
Mira Road (E), Thane, 401107,
Mobile: 9797312179
Place: Mumbai
Date: 12/07/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT at the instructions of our Clients, we are investigating title of MR. SANJEEV RAMAKANT DESHPANDE ("the Owner") to the immovable property described in the schedule hereunder written ("said Property").

The Owner has represented to our Clients that the Owner is absolutely entitled to the ownership rights of the said Property.

ALL persons including any banks and/or private financing companies, claiming to have any share, title, interest, benefit, claim or demand in respect of said Property and/or any part thereof by way of sale, transfer, assignment, mortgage, possession, exchange, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, trust, gift, charge, easement, lien, inheritance, maintenance, family arrangement, share, covenant, demise, bequest, encumbrances, construction rights, settlement or through any allotment, agreement, deed or document of any nature or through any contracts, agreements of development or joint development, agreement for FSI or TDR consumption or any partnership or project management agreements or through any decree or order of any court of law or otherwise howsoever, are hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the document(s) supporting such claim to the undersigned at their address mentioned herein below within 14 days from the date of publication hereof AND in the event of non-receipt of such claims it will be considered that no such claims exist or they have been waived and abandoned.

SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY ABOVE REFERRED TO

ALL that piece or parcel of land being Final Plot No. 366 of TPS IV of Mahim division admeasuring 580.00 square yards equal to 484.95 square meters or thereabouts and registered in the Books of the Collector of Municipal Rates and Taxes under G Ward No. G-3185(10), G-3185(9), G-3185(8), G-3185 (10A) and G-3185 (11) together with structure/buildings standing thereon, known as "Laxmi Bhuvan" situated at K.W Chitale Path, Kumbharwada, Dadar, Mumbai - 400028 and bounded as follows:

On or towards North by: a small lane leading to Rao Bahadur S.K. Bole Road

On or towards East by: a small lane, and beyond that Kangukar Chawl, bearing Final Plot No. 365 under TPS Bombay IV (Mahim)

On or towards South by: K.W. Chitale Marg and beyond that Portuguese Church

On or towards West by: Compound wall and beyond that Final Plot No. 367 under TPS Bombay IV (Mahim).

Dated this 12th day of July, 2024.

Sd/-
Rohit Kadam
Advocate
+91 99202 10377
rohitkadam@gmail.comTIMES TRIBUTE
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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

M. M. MISKITA
SOLICITOR
1933 - 2024Husband of Tulsi Miskita
Father of Viren Miskita

It is with great sadness that we announce the demise of Mani Morgan Miskita.

He passed peacefully on 10th July 2024.

A loving husband, father and grandfather.

A man of unshakable faith, he now resides in Our Lord's Heavenly Abode.

Fondly Remembered

By:
Tulsi Miskita,
Viren Miskita,
Niyati Miskita,
Aditya Miskita,
Malvika Miskita.

No Condolences Please.

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCES

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

DEVANG BASAK
12/7/2003-16/11/2023Most obedient, sincere, altruistic, hard working, Xth-95%, XII-97.4%, school topper in 3 subjects, coaching centre topper, scholarships in all 3 sems, college research cell head, purs. B.Sc Eco his fav subject
His thesis on Macro Policies of Third World Countries was ready. The world has lost a most wonderful person.Cherished, missed, loved by
Ma, baba,
didi, dida, dadu,
mama, mami, masi
thammil, jetha, kaka,
pishi, cousins
& friendsTO PLACE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THIS SECTION CALL: JAI SANSAR 9867505472
<https://ads.timesgroup.com>

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

K G NAIR
CMD Plastochem
Fabrication (India) Pvt. Ltd.

DATE OF DEATH 12/07/2022

"We miss you every moment of our lives, your presence continues to surround us. You still live in the hearts & mind of your family"

Deeply Mourned by Family members, Relatives & Staff

MONTH'S MIND

In Loving Memory of PETER MISQUITA



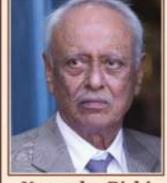
Peter passed away on June 9, 2024 and rests with his late wife Christina Misquita.

MONTH'S MIND MASS WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JULY 13 | 6.15 PM AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BANDRA (W)

He is deeply missed by his children Radhika & Jayant, Ashita & Warren, Karan & Saumya, grandchildren Tanaya, Nitara, Reyhan, Irvati and siblings and in-laws, late Ralph & Thelma, late Lenny & Carmen, Marina & Mark, Glenda & Sirote, Ignatius & Elizabeth, Wilfred & Astrid, Denis & Audrey, Bernadette, Herman & Vinita

SAD DEMISE

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Narendra Rishi
20.10.1943 - 10.07.2024

Your life was a blessing... your memory a treasure... you are loved beyond words, and missed Beyond measure...

Please join us for Antim Ardas Kirtan Saturday, 13 July 2024 04:00pm - 05:00pm Gurudwara Dhan Pothahar Nagar Near DP Road, end of 17th Road Santacruz West

In grief: Rishi & Kamruga family

Jude Rosemeyer
Left for his heavenly abode on 10-07-2024 (age: 54 years)Son of Norma & Late George Rosemeyer
Father of Kieara & Zoe
Brother of Russell Rosemeyer
Uncle of Khrya Jade & Russel Jr
Brother-in-law of Didi

Final Goodbye at St. Joseph's Church, Juhu on 12 July 2024 Viewing at 4:00pm Funeral Mass at 4:30pm Followed by Burial at Oshiwara Cemetery May his soul rest in peace.

CELEBRATING THE MEMORY OF

VALSALA PILLAI
11 Nov 1944 to 9 Jul 2024

A matriarch of the extended family, who ruled our hearts through kindness and sacrifice. She had the incredible gift to be truly joyful about our successes and feel pain and stress about our smallest challenges. Her legacy, for her children, grandchildren, sisters and brothers, is of the power of giving, of unconditional love and always being empathetic. She left us with the responsibility to be better humans.

Renuka Anoop Kaveri Aparna Satish Trisha Radhika Meghna
satish.k.pillai@gmail.com

Counselling for NEET-UG to begin in July 3rd week

Govt Files Affidavit In Supreme Court

Durgesh Nandan Jha & Manash P Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: NEET-UG counselling for undergraduate medical seats will be conducted in four rounds, starting in third week of July, the govt has said.

In its affidavit submitted to Supreme Court, which is hearing a bunch of petitions, including those seeking cancellation of the NEET-UG exam over an alleged paper leak, govt has stated that the candidature of any student found to be beneficiary of any malpractice will be cancelled at any stage during the counselling process or even afterward.

NEET-UG counselling is the process for allotment of seats to successful candidates based on their exam's score. For all-India quota seats, counselling is conducted by the Medical Counselling Committee constituted under the health ministry.

For state quota seats, counselling is conducted by the state counselling committee.

A candidate has to fill out his or her preferred choices of medical colleges; seats are allocated based on their score. Govt has stated in its affidavit that for the first and second round of the counselling, candidates are allowed to change seats as per options exercised by them. "So, if cancellation is done before the beginning of the third round, it will not have any impact on the overall counselling process and allocation of seats," the affidavit says.

The affidavit adds that the third round is expected to start in Sept second week. "If one's candidature is cancelled after the third round, vacant seats can still be offered in subsequent rounds. However, candidates who have already been allocated seats in earlier rounds will not be able to participate in subsequent rounds," the govt has said. There are approximately 1.20 lakh undergraduate medical seats in govt and private medical colleges across the country. This year, more than 23 lakh students appeared for the exam.



The SC is hearing a bunch of petitions over an alleged NEET paper leak. There are approximately 1.20 lakh undergraduate medical seats in govt and private medical colleges. This year, more than 23 lakh students appeared for the NEET-UG

Medical aspirants reach Pradhan's residence, he assures them of all help

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing NEET-UG row, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan came face to face with a bunch of aspirants who had gathered in front of his residence on Thursday. Pradhan assured them that their interests would be taken care of.

According to a source, Pradhan asked his office to allow the students in and spent around 45 minutes hearing their concerns. "These students are not a part of any students' organisation and were not there to protest but were seeking an audience to share their experience. The minister heard them and appreciated them of the govt's efforts and status of the case in Supreme Court," the source said.

It is learnt that the minister advised the students not to get demotivated and assured them that their career was of paramount importance and govt would do everything to safeguard their interests. The source said students raised concerns over uncertainty, delay in counselling and possible delay in academic calendar. Another student said majority of them did not want a retest and demanded that counselling be held immediately. The minister informed them that SC decision was awaited, while assuring steps to avoid delay in academic session.

CBI shares leak probe status report with SC, hearing on Thursday

S hearing on petitions seeking re-test of NEET-UG was deferred to July 18. As directed by SC, Centre and NTA filed their responses late evening on Wednesday, saying IIT-Madras's analysis of results of top 1.4 lakh rank holders (around 23 lakh students appeared for examination) showed no abnormality and that alleged video of question paper on Telegram was posted after timestamp was manipulated to create the impression of a leak. CBI, which took over investigations from Bihar and Gujarat police, also filed a probe status report with the court without providing a copy to petitioners.

A three-judge bench led by CJJ D Y Chandrachud was ready to post all 45 petitions, majority of which seek retest, for hearing on Friday. However, several counsel for petitioners said they have not been able to study response affidavits of Centre and NTA due to paucity of time and requested adjournment of hearing to Monday. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta requested the court to adjourn hearing to Thursday as he and attorney general R Venkataramani are going out of station on Monday and Tuesday. TNN

ED arrests 'kingpin' of Raj teachers' hiring paper leak

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In the Rajasthan teachers' recruitment paper leak case, ED has arrested Pradeep Parashar, a retired assistant professor who was appointed district coordinator by the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education to conduct REET (Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teachers).

The agency has accused Parashar of being the kingpin behind the paper leak and having acquired huge proceeds of crime. He was arrested on Wednesday and produced before a special court in Jaipur which remanded him to ED custody for three days.

Parashar was appointed district coordinator to conduct REET 2021 which was scheduled at various places in the state on Sep 26, 2021. "Parashar appointed an assistant, Ram Kripal Meena, without any valid order, who was given unauthorised access to the strong room of Siksha Sankul, Jaipur, where the question paper of REET 2021 was stored," the agency said.

The probe found that Meena, in

NEET case kingpin Rocky held in Patna

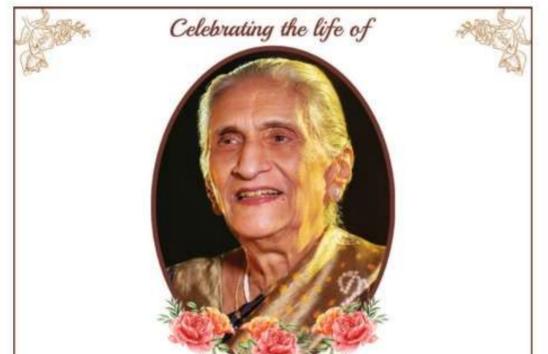
The CBI arrested Rakesh Ranjan, alias Rocky, an alleged kingpin in the NEET paper leak case, from Kanti Factory Road in Patna late Wednesday night, reports Kshitiz. On Thursday he was produced before a special CBI court which remanded him in the probe agency's custody for 10 days. The arrest is seen by the CBI as a significant breakthrough. Rocky, a resident of Nalanda district, is accused of obtaining the leaked NEET question paper, solving it, and circulating the answers to MBBS aspirants. He allegedly arranged for solvers, including MBBS students from Patna and Ranchi, to assist in the cheating racket. The CBI had been tracking Rocky's movements for several days. TNN

convivance with Parashar, stole the question paper on the night of Sep 24, two days before the exam, from Siksha Sankul and circulated it to other accused in return for huge amounts of money.

25th Death Anniversary

SMT. KARTHYAYINI KRISHNAN KUTTY
W/o Late Shri. P. P. Krishnan Kutty
P. P. KRISHNAN KUTTY & SONS

4th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Mohan G. Nair
15th January 1960 - 12th July 2020
Your presence is still felt in every moment of our lives. We all remember you for the courage, warmth & self belief that you gave us.FONDLY REMEMBERED BY
Wife : Sujatha Nair
Sons : Deepak Nair, Sumod Nair
Daughters-in-Law : Indu, Sulakshna
Grand Sons & Daughter : Devarsh, Shreyansh, Shreenika and Kwalaty Pariwar
KWALITY AIR-TECH ENGG. PVT. LTD. www.kwalityairtech.comMIRA KRISHNADAS SAMPAT
30th Sept 1934 - 9th July 2024

Her legacy is not just in the memories we hold dear, but in the strength, she instilled in us to face life's challenges with courage and grace. She was a loving mother, a dotting grandmother and a proud great grandmother, the matriarch who was progressive in her thoughts and generous with her acts of kindness.

Join us as we cherish her journey on
Sat July 13 Jalaram Hall - N S Rd 6, JVPD, Vile Parle(W) 5 pm - 6.30 pm
Mother of (Late) Anil, Sunil, and Rajesh Sampat.
Mother-in-law of Kaumudi, Trupti, and Vyjanti
Grandmother of Minutti & Rijhav, Pooja & Karan, Karan & Karishma, Dhananjay & Pari, Mihika, Saumya
Great Grandmother to Sawaivir, Mihaan, Dhruv, and AllaeyaTO BOOK AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THIS SECTION CALL: JAI SANSAR 9867505472 <https://ads.timesgroup.com>

TIMES Personal

THANKSGIVING

THANK you St Jude for listening to my prayer and helping me.

I, Arnold Vincente would like to thank St. Jude Thaddeus for his intercession through which I cleared Group II of My CA Final Exams. Thank you

THANKYOU St. Jude for answering my prayers and taking care of me always. Sangeetha

I, Sebastian Vincente would like to thank St. Jude, St. Rita, St. Anthony of Padua and the Holy Trinity for Blessing my son in clearing Group II of his CA Final exams. Thank you.

3 UP men beat up, force Dalit boy (15) to drink urine, held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Three youths were arrested on Thursday for forcing a Dalit minor to drink urine two days ago in UP's Shravasti district.

The victim, who is barely 15 years old, works as a technician, setting sound mixers and audio systems at social and cultural events. He was on his way home after work on Tuesday night when he was accosted by the trio—Kishan Tiwari, Dilip Mishra and Satyam Tiwari—who were allegedly in an inebriated state.

According to police, Dilip Mishra urinated in a liquor bottle, while Satyam and Kishan pinned the boy down and forced the bottle into his mouth.

The accused were allegedly peeved over the boy's family charging them extra for an audio system they had installed for a function at their house, police said.

The accused also misbehaved with the minor and thrashed him, and one of them shot a video of the entire incident, said Gailaulla police station SHO Mahimanath Upadhyay.

Humiliated and feeling ashamed, the boy reached home and narrated the ordeal to his elder brother. Next day, his parents and brother lodged a police complaint.

Police conducted a preliminary probe and arrested the accused based on eyewitness accounts and the video circulating on social media.

According to police sources, the accused claimed the boy and his family ran a DJ in the village, and charged a hefty amount. During a function, the victim had stopped the DJ citing lack of fuel in the generator, which had further fuelled the animosity between them, the sources said.

UP man gets life term for shooting inspector in 2021

Agra: The Agra district and sessions court sentenced a man to life imprisonment for shooting an on-duty sub-inspector Prashant Yadav (35), who was responding to a dispute between two brothers in 2021 in Agra, reports Deepak Lavania.

"District judge Vivek Sangal found the accused, Vishwanath Singh, guilty of murder and violations under the Arms Act. He also imposed a fine of Rs 17,000 on him," said district government counsel (DGC) Basant Kumar Gupta.

The brother who reported the incident retracted his statement, but the court convicted Vishwanath, DGC added.

According to officials, the incident took place on March 24, 2021 in Naharra village. Vijay Singh's sons, Shivnath and Vishwanath, were arguing over potato distribution. During the harvest, Vishwanath arrived with a pistol and threatened labourers. Later, SI Prashant Yadav and constable Chandra Sen arrived at the scene based on Shivnath's complaint.

Yadav tried to apprehend Vishwanath, who opened fire at him. The bullet struck Yadav's neck, resulting in his death.

Vendor kills self as cops make girl he catcalled slap him

Varanasi: A 22-year-old vegetable vendor killed himself by jumping into the Ganga soon after some cops made a school-girl slap him thrice in public for allegedly passing lewd remarks at her in Varanasi's Lanka area on Wednesday.

The father of the deceased, Vishal Sonkar, is a home guard deployed at Lanka police station. Vishal's death sparked protests till early Thursday by his family and functionaries of UP's governing BJP and opposition SP in front of the police station, leading to the suspension of the sub-inspector and constable allegedly embroiled in the episode as well as an inquiry against the SHO.

Kashi zone DCP Suryakant Tripathi ordered the action against the cops, after which the protests were called off. TNN

31 of 36 states/UTs have met goal to stabilise population

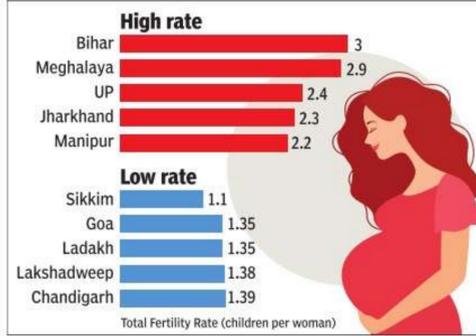
'Replacement Level Of Fertility Of 2.1 Achieved'

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Thirty-one out of 36 states and Union Territories in the country have achieved the replacement level of fertility of 2.1, the average number of children per woman needed to maintain a stable population size. Only 5 states—Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur—still have a higher than desired replacement level of fertility, govt data showed.

On World Population Day on Thursday, health minister J P Nadda and junior minister for health Anupriya Patel said targeted steps would be taken in states with high Total Fertility Rate (TFR), or children per woman. "The goal of Viksit Bharat (developed India) can only be achieved when health of India's

WHERE STATES STAND



families is maintained which can be achieved by smaller families," Nadda said.

Patel said more than 65% of India's population was in the reproductive age group which made it pertinent to ensure they were provided with choices and not burdened with unplanned family growth. Highlighting the expansion of family planning

programme, she said, "While earlier it used to be a two-phase programme, it has now been expanded to three phases: preparatory phase, community participation and service delivery."

Patel said seven decades of family programme activities had shown results where 31 of 36 states/UTs had reached replacement level of TFR. She encoura-

ged UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur to take up concerted activities to bring down TFR. "It is also encouraging to note that acceptance of modern contraceptives in the country has increased to over 56%," she said.

In 1950, India had a TFR of 6.18 which reduced to 4.6 in 1980. In 2021, TFR reduced further to 1.91 which is below the replacement level needed to maintain a stable population size. Recently, a study claimed that by 2050, India's TFR will reduce to 1.29.

Poonam Mutreja, executive director of Population Foundation of India, said as countries develop economically, cost of raising children increases, leading families to have fewer children. "Increased education and empowerment of women result in greater career aspirations and delayed marriages and childbirth, further contributing to a decline in TFR. Other reasons include urbanisation, improved access to family planning, and a shift in social norms," she said.

CAPF chiefs reaffirm 10% quota for former Agniveers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid the debate over the Agnipath scheme, heads of various central armed police forces (CAPFs) on Thursday came forward to reiterate their commitment to implementing 10% quota for former Agniveers in all constable-level posts, stating that the forces will benefit by getting trained and disciplined manpower.

FOR CONSTABLE-LEVEL POSTS

Days after the Union cabinet approved the Agnipath scheme in June 2022, the home ministry had announced 10% job quota in CAPFs for ex-Agniveers who have completed four years of their stint in the armed forces.

A series of videos showing the director-generals of CRPF, BSF, CISF, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) underline that arrangements have been made to provide 10% quota in CAPFs to ex-Agniveers, were posted on X on Thursday. The DGs in these videos mention the relaxations already incorporated for ex-Agniveers by amending the recruitment rules for

each of the CAPFs. These include their exemption from the mandatory physical efficiency test as well as age relaxation of five years for the first batch of ex-Agniveers and three years for the subsequent batches.

"All arrangements to recruit ex-Agniveers in CRPF have been made. Agniveers will prove to be an asset as they have gained discipline while being in the Army. From day one we will have trained & disciplined personnel," said CRPF DG Anish Dayal Singh.

BSF DG Nitin Agrawal said, "We are getting ready soldiers, nothing can be better than that. All forces will benefit from it. Ex-Agniveers will get 10% reservation in the recruitment."

"Union home ministry has taken a big step of recruiting ex-Agniveers in the central armed police forces. In this regard, CISF has also made all arrangements," said CISF DG Nina Singh.

SSB DG Daljit Singh said the first batch of SSB too has reserved 10% of constable vacancies for ex-Agniveers.

"RPF is very excited to welcome Ex Agniveers. It will give new strength, energy and boost the morale of the force," said the force's DG Manoj Yadava.

T'gana man goes to murder wife, kills her parents

Hyderabad: A man who sneaked into his wife's home to kill her for deserting him ended up murdering her parents who tried to stop him in a village in Telengana's Warangal late on Wednesday night. His wife, Deepika (19), received stab wounds in the hands, and her brother suffered a minor slash on his neck.

Police nabbed the accused, Mekkala Nagaraju, an auto driver, on Thursday.

Nagaraju and Deepika had eloped and married in Nov last year after her parents objected to their inter-community union. Nagaraju belongs to an SC community and Deepika a tribal.

After the marriage they shifted to Hyderabad, but within two months Deepika had a change of heart and left Nagaraju for her parents' home. Nagaraju, upset since then, had arrived at his in-laws' house with a knife to kill Deepika on Wednesday. TNN

Explosion near LoC triggers infiltration fears, search op on

Sanjay Khajuria | TNN

Jammu: Jammu region of J&K continued to grapple with terrorism-related activities as an explosion was reported near the LoC in Rajouri district late Wednesday night, while search operations in the dense forests and upper reaches of Kathua-Udhampur-Doda stretch persisted into their fourth day on Thursday, targeting the terrorists responsible for Monday's fatal ambush on a two-truck military patrol in Machedi of Kathua district.

Regarding the Rajouri blast, an official source said: "The blast occurred close to the zero line, and a suspicious movement was spotted. A search operation has been launched in the area to rule out any infiltration attempt."

Additional troops were deployed to assist the search operations across Kathua, Udhampur, and Doda districts following the ambush that claimed the lives of five soldiers. Since June 9, Doda has seen three terrorist-linked gunfights, while Kathua and Udhampur have each experienced two until July 10.

"Special Forces and sniffer dog units of the Army are also part of the search teams," the source said. However, no terrorists involved in the ambush have been captured or killed yet.

Senior BSF and police officers convened at a high-level interstate security review meeting in Kathua Thursday.

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Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is promoting energy efficiency initiatives in the country under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, including promotion of energy conservation measures in existing facilities through ESCO model. ESCO is an organization engaged in a performance-based contract with a client firm to implement measures which reduce energy consumption and costs in a technically viable manner. BEE intends to prepare and maintain a list of empaneled Energy Service Companies with validity of two years.

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The advertisement and contact details of SEBI accredited agencies and process for empanelment can be downloaded from www.beeindia.gov.in. The application form for the grading process can be obtained from respective grading agencies. **The last date for receipt of complete application forms to the above-mentioned grading agencies is within 30 days from the date of publication of this advertisement.** Incomplete applications and those received after due date would be rejected.

CBC 34106/12/0006/2425 Secretary

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Government of India
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Office of the Regional Director, Western Region, Mumbai
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Regional Director, Western Region, Mumbai, Ministry of Corporate Affairs invites applications for engagement of Young Professionals (YPs) purely on contractual basis.

2. The guidelines for engagement of Young Professionals in this Ministry containing the details regarding eligibility criteria, selection procedure, etc. is available on the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs i.e. <https://www.mca.gov.in/bin/dms/getdocument?mids=0afQ6T4vyrUjAsrb2moHA%253D%253D&type=open> or <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11zltplZJbEwz3yAOLR2o1fLpJ906bB?usp=sharing>. The candidates are advised to go through these guidelines before submitting their applications.

3. The general requirements and other terms and conditions for the engagement are as under :

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6. Education Qualification	CA/CS/CWA
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5. How to Apply:

- Interested eligible candidates may submit their duly filled applications in the format prescribed by the Ministry as Annexure - I to the below mentioned Address.
- Applications should reach the undersigned by post or by email (rd.west@mca.gov.in) or through Drop Box of the office installed at the reception on or before 26.07.2024 from the date of issue of this Notice. Applications received after due date will not be considered.

Office of Regional Director, Western Region, MCA, Mumbai,
5th Floor, "Everest" Building,
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Marg, Marine Drive,
Mumbai 400 002.
E-mail Id: rd.west@mca.gov.in

Sd/-
(Santosh Kumar)
O/o. Regional Director
Western Region
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Mumbai

Take your cue from this mason's son who turned the tables on life's challenges to become state champion

Ridhima Gupta
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Just three years ago, Sanju Ahriwar did not even know what snooker or billiards was. He hadn't even watched the game on TV. Now, winning the Delhi state junior title for the cue sports feels like a "dream that he hadn't ever seen".

Ahriwar's parents moved from Madhya Pradesh to the city decades ago and took up odd jobs to make ends meet. The father, a mason, and the mother, a domestic worker, had a difficult time raising the 20-year-old and his two siblings, because of which Ahriwar dropped out from school in the middle of primary school.

The lad discovered the

sport for the first time when he got a job as a caretaker at a billiards academy a few years ago. "I had already done some odd jobs and was okay with any work. It was then that I learnt that Baba Billiard Academy was looking for a caretaker for their night shift and I took up the job." Sitting on a chair, with folded hands and a low voice, a shy Ahriwar said, "On my job, I saw for the first time people using a long stick to hit a ball and moving around a big table to do so. I was enchanted by it all. I began paying attention to how they held the cue, how they positioned their body and learned the rules of the game."

During his shift from 8:30pm to 8:30am at Nirman Vihar Academy in east Delhi, the youngster sometimes got

a chance to play at the "expensive" tables. "Some people told me I was good at the sport and began giving me advice. I heeded what they said and started applying them whenever I got a chance to play." The sport took over and it was all he could think about. "I made Pankaj Advani my virtual mentor and watched all his matches on my mobile phone," said Ahriwar.

TIMES Special

Last year, for the first time, Sanju decided that he also wanted to play for the state's junior championship, appeared for it, and after the initial rounds, was left out of the championship. "I saw others at the championship and rea-

lised that there are better players than me and I had to work more on myself and apply for the next championship," he said.

In the past few months, the youngster started training himself informally for this year's state junior championship. He requested the academy if he could practice there after his shift and the officials agreed. "After finishing my shift, I would play at the academy for a couple of hours, then go to another club in Vasundhara and practise there for a few hours. I went home only to sleep for a couple of hours before returning for my shift at Baba Billiards Academy," Ahriwar said.

His dedication and perseverance paid off when last week at the 47th Delhi State

Billiards and Snooker Championship. He won the junior titles in both the disciplines.

It was only after his dual triumph that Ahriwar told his parents about what he was doing. "I reached home with a box of gulab jamun, explained to my parents what the game was about, and told them that I had won two titles. I told them I wanted to focus now on the sport," he said. He recalled his parents, who live in a rented house in Vasundhara, listened to his extraordinary tale and called their relatives to tell them about their son's accomplishments.

Ahriwar now has his eyes on the national billiards and snooker championship.

"I have bigger dreams now. I hope to play the national and the world champions-

hips. Maybe one day I will have my own academy where I can teach youngsters from unprivileged backgrounds like me for free."

The youth also hopes to resume his education. "I see other players and people around me able to read and speak English fluently. In some tournaments, I felt embarrassed at being unable to read English on the board. But as they say, it's never too late, so I want to be able to learn to read and write English one day."

Ravi Tandon, secretary of the Delhi Billiards and Snooker Association, one of Ahriwar's encouragers, said, "It is nice to see young talent like Sanju getting a platform to show his talent. We will also encourage others like him in the future."



FROM CARETAKER TO CHAMP: Sanju Ahriwar dropped out in the middle of primary school because of financial compulsions

Disturbance and disruption have replaced debate in House, says VP

Mumbai: All is not well with Parliament and legislatures, said Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar while urging elected representatives to go for dialogue rather than confrontation. He made the remark during an address to the state legislature on the occasion of centennial celebrations of the legislative council.

Dhankar is on a two-day visit to Mumbai. Governor Ramesh Bais was present along with chief minister Eknath Shinde, speaker Rahul Narwar, deputy chairperson of the legislative council Neelam Gorhe, deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, opposition leaders of both Houses and elected representatives.

"Debate, discussion, deliberation has been replaced with disturbances and disruption. The kind of conduct being seen calls for introspection... Dialogue is missing. There has to be collaborative dialogue in the House," he said.

Dhankar said it is deeply concerning that the speaker and the chairman have been made punching bags. "Respect for the chair must always be there and senior leaders must show the way," he added.

He said when he first became an MP in 1989 there was wit, humour, satire and sarcasm. "What we have is an adversarial approach and confrontation. How can a political party give command for disruption, to troop in the well of the House?" he asked.

Issue Kunbi certs or will march to Mumbai: Jarange

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday demanded that govt start process to validate Kunbi certificates issued to Maratha community members on priority. He threatened a march to Mumbai if state didn't pay heed to his demands.

Addressing a rally in Beed, Jarange came down heavily on state govt for not initiating the process of validating Kunbi certificates issued to Marathas. "Caste certificate validity process should be started without further delay. If govt fails to meet list of demands, including Maratha reservation within OBC quota, Maratha community members and I will again march to Mumbai to press for our rights," activist said at rally.

Union minister bats for strict population law

Patna: Union textiles minister Giriraj Singh on Thursday advocated for a tough law to tackle India's population boom. "The law must have provision that violators will have their voting rights seized and will also be deprived of the benefits of all govt schemes," he told reporters in Lakhisarai, Bihar, adding there were 147 districts across the country that were witnessing a rapid population growth.

"The fertility rate among Muslim women is 1.25% more than that of Hindu women," the minister said. He stressed the moral imperative of population control, calling for responsible family planning, and improved education and healthcare services to reduce pressure on resources.

Mamata in Mumbai, likely to meet Uddhav & Pawar today

Says Likely To Meet SP Chief Akhilesh Too

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata/Mumbai: Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who arrived in city on Thursday for the wedding of industrialist Mukesh Ambani's son Anant Ambani, is expected to meet Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar in two separate meetings on Friday. This would be Banerjee's first meeting with Thackeray since Lok Sabha poll results. She is likely to meet SP chief Akhilesh Yadav as well.

"I'm going to Mumbai as you all know that Mukeshji's son is getting married. They have extended the invitation multiple times and Mukeshji has himself at-



Mamata Banerjee is in city to attend Anant Ambani's wedding

tended Biswa Bangla (Bengal business summit) multiple times upon Bengal's invitation. I probably wouldn't have gone but since Mukeshji, his son and Nitaji repeatedly urged me to go, I decided to attend the event. I have made an appointment with Uddhav tomorrow for political talks since we haven't met since the elections. I will also go to Sharadji's place and have made an appointment to

meet him as well. Akhilesh is also reaching tomorrow and I might meet him as well," Banerjee told reporters in Kolkata before flying to Mumbai.

On June 4, when Lok Sabha poll results were announced, Thackeray had spoken to Mamata and said INDIA bloc must stake claim to form govt at Centre. In fact, Thackeray told the media that he had spoken to Banerjee and she was on board. Last year, Banerjee visited Matoshree and tied a rakhi on Thackeray when she was in the city for an INDIA bloc meeting. In June, Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee met Thackeray. Abhishek had spoken to Thackeray about the way forward for the opposition bloc.

Speaking to reporters, she also slammed BJP, its IT cell and a section of media for maligning Bengal over recent mob assault at Ariadaha in North 24 Parganas.

Banerjee claimed that a two-year-old incident — a video clip of which has now gone viral — took place when Arjun Singh was BJP MP from Barrackpore LS constituency. Attacking BJP's IT cell, she said, "This doesn't align with Bengal's values. They showed news about an incident in 2021 continuously for 72 hours just to damage the elections (the Wednesday bypolls at four assembly constituencies) by showing one-sided news. The accused were arrested and are still in jail... Even today, an incident went viral where someone died in Ranibandh. It was a family matter and result of personal enmity. There was nothing political. Taking action is the police's duty and they are doing so."

The CM said she would request everyone to verify news before airing them. "If requests do not work," Banerjee said she might "need to take legal recourse."

Mungantiwar denies claims that Shivaji wagh nakh not genuine

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Mumbai: A few days after historian Indrajit Sawant raised questions on the veracity of Shivaji's wagh nakh (tiger claw) which the state govt is sourcing from London's Victoria and Albert Museum, state cultural affairs minister Sudhir Mungantiwar dismissed the claims in the state assembly.

Mungantiwar has been at the forefront of the effort to bring the artefact to India, saying this was used by Shivaji to kill the Bijapur Sultanate's general Afzal Khan.

When asked about Sawant's statement in the assembly, Mungantiwar said the museum referred to the artefact as, "the wagh nakh used by Shivaji to kill the Muslim general". He said the artefact had been displayed earlier by the family that gifted them to the museum in which the same information had been displayed. News-



Cultural affairs minister Mungantiwar said govt spent over Rs 14L to get the wagh nakh to India

relations only to this one. The question is inappropriate. No one has made the claim that the other wagh nakhs were used by Shivaji."

Mungantiwar said govt had spent over Rs 14 lakh to get the wagh nakh to India. It has been loaned to Maharashtra for 3 years. "People are saying we have spent crores as rent on this. We have not spent any money to rent it. We have spent Rs 14 lakh. Less than the cost of one day of the legislature session," he said.

He also said there was a misconception that the govt was spending Rs 7 crore to display the artefact. "The sum has been spent on the display of the wagh nakh, a weapons gallery of Shivaji's arms in four museums and also the renovation of the museum," said Mungantiwar.

He said that the wagh nakh would be displayed from July 19 at the govt museum in Satara, and that Shivaji's descendants were called for the inauguration.

Breach in Munak canal floods Delhi's Bawana, hits water supply

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New Delhi: A significant breach in Munak Canal, which transports untreated water from Haryana to several water treatment plants in Delhi, caused extensive flooding in Bawana area on Thursday.

The breach at midnight, spanning nearly 40 feet, was caused by erosion of inner lining of embankment, officials suspect as of now. "Work on repairing broken embankment at Bawana entry point of the canal in Delhi is going on at a fast pace," said water minister Atishi Marlena, who visited the site. A few blocks of a JJ colony in the area, which has both pucca constructions and shanties, have been affected quite badly with water entering roads and houses. Repairs are being carried out by Haryana irrigation department and Delhi Jal Board (DJB) with officials hopeful that the breach in carrier line channel (CLC), one of the two lines



The breach, spanning nearly 40 feet, was caused by erosion of the inner lining of the embankment. Munak Canal transports untreated water from Haryana to several water treatment plants in Delhi

which carry water to Delhi, will be fully repaired by Friday evening. The incident is expected to impact production at major water treatment plants, including Haiderpur, Bawana, Nangloi and Dwarka. DJB receives water from the canal, which is owned by Haryana irrigation department. Delhi govt pays around Rs 60 lakh to Rs 65 lakh per month for water with exception of July, August and Sept, when water is free.

On Thursday, earth excavators were busy dumping

soil near the breach to stop flow of water after which an embankment of sandbags will be created followed by a concrete layer to seal the breach. PWD and DDA also joined the efforts. A DDA official said "field staff of DDA had rushed to the site to take remedial measures and water is being drained by temporarily puncturing existing stormwater drain. JCB, dewatering pump, drinking water tanker and mobile toilet have been deployed," said official.

"The breach has affected Haiderpur plant. Instead of two water channels, only one is supplying to the plant for now," said a DJB official. "So, it will have an impact on water supply. Currently, the embankment is being strengthened with soil and this work will be completed by night. Thereafter, concretisation will be carried out. Water will not be released in this line till morning at least."

Minister Atishi held out hope, saying "water production will be restored at Haiderpur, Bawana and Nangloi" by evening. "However, Dwarka water treatment plant gets water from CLC and hence it will be affected till flow is resumed," she said. The other of the two lines, Delhi sub-branch, has not been affected. A DJB officer said currently there is no soap to deal with such situations. Atishi said once the crisis is over, an inquiry will be conducted by Delhi govt, in collaboration with Haryana, to determine the cause of the breach.

Stampede-like scene at Guj job site triggers Cong-BJP fight

Surat: A two-day-old viral video showing a stampede-like situation at a walk-in job interview in Ankleshwar town of Gujarat's Bharuch district has sparked a verbal duel between Congress and BJP.

Congress said the massive turnout of jobless youths at the interview venue had exposed "Gujarat model", while BJP accused the opposition party of trying to defame the state. In a social media post on Thursday, leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, said the "disease of unemployment" had taken the form of an "epidemic" in India, and BJP ruled states had become the "epicentre of this disease".

His remarks came after the viral video showed a stampede-like situation when over 1,000 people turned up for walk-in interviews for 40 vacancies on July 9 by a company, Thermax Chemicals. The video showed job seekers pushing and shoving one another while trying to reach the hotel entrance.

'Order has ramifications in other cases': ED seeks time

From P 1

The HC passed the order in a very casual manner. It stayed the bail order and the case was thereafter heard after one year. The court did not bother to look into the case during the period and he kept languishing in jail," it said. The bench reserved its order but Hossain urged the court to grant him at least 10 minutes on Friday to argue the case on behalf of ED as any order passed by the SC would have ramifications in other cases too. He said the prosecution was not at fault for the delay.

"We are worried about the liberty aspect. A person has to languish for one year in jail after bail was granted," the bench said, allowing Hossain to place case laws before the bench on the issue.

The court was hearing a plea filed by one Parvinder Singh Khurana who was granted bail by the trial court in a PMLA case on June 17 last year but the HC stayed the order.

Dy CM rules out Pune top cop's transfer over Porsche hit-&-run case

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Mumbai: Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis on Thursday refused opposition's demand to transfer Pune commissioner of police Amitesh Kumar over his handling of Porsche case while assuring legislative council that govt will take corrective steps in appointments and administration of Pune's Sassoon hospital.

Backing Kumar, Fadnis said he worked proactively and Pune police did a good job. Pune hit-and-run case was raised by Shiv Sena MLC and leader of opposition Amitesh Kumar's transfer along with changes to appointments' system at Sassoon hospital.

Backlog Kumar, Fadnis said he worked proactively and Pune police did a good job. Pune hit-and-run case was raised by Shiv Sena MLC and leader of opposition Amitesh Kumar's transfer along with changes to appointments' system at Sassoon hospital. Fadnis also said govt will restrict third party access to CCTV footage to curb misuse.

"In Pune accident, accused teen has already been charged with IPC section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder). The same application was made in juvenile court. A demand was also made to prosecute the accused on becoming an adult. When the juvenile co-



The Pune hit-and-run case was raised by Shiv Sena MLC and leader of opposition Ambadas Danve. The opposition demanded Pune commissioner of police Amitesh Kumar's transfer along with changes to appointments' system at Sassoon hospital

urt rejected the application, an immediate appeal was made. The police acted promptly. Action was taken against errant officials and doctors who indulged in malpractices," he said.

Fadnis also told the council that though the inspector concerned was delayed in conducting medical test, Pune police carried out DNA profiling of accused, due to which mismatch of blood samples could be proved.

New ministers in Modi's cabinet vie for prime bungalows in Lutyens' Delhi

Dipak Dash
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New Delhi: With a fresh cohort of ministers in the new govt at Centre, a few addresses in Lutyens' Delhi have become highly sought-after. At least four senior ministers, including a former chief minister and a key ally partner of NDA, have pitched for allotment of a bungalow on Akbar Road that was allotted to a minister, who is not part of the Modi cabinet this time.

Another such bungalow is on Safdarjung Road that was allotted to a former minister who lost the general election. The address is quite high profile.

Some of the members in the new council of ministers, including an alliance



At least four senior ministers have pitched for allotment of a bungalow on Akbar Road

partner in Bihar, have requested for allotment of bungalows on Sunehri Bagh, which have been vacated by two former ministers.

Some ministers have also visited the bungalows before putting their request to the housing and urban affairs ministry.

Sprawling bungalows and the ones with better interiors are in high demand. All cabinet ministers are eligible for the top category of bungalows known as Type-VIII. The housing and urban affairs ministry, which manages accommodations under 'General Pool' category, allocates accommodation to all ministers in the Lutyens' Bungalow Zone (LBZ).

Sources said the requests of ministers for allocation of bungalows will be taken soon after assessing the likely vacation of accommodation by the former ministers. The requests were referred to Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday, who heads the Cabinet Committee of Accommodation.

So far, only a few former

ministers have vacated their official accommodation and others are likely to follow suit in the next few days, a source said.

Last month, the housing ministry had written to around 50 former Union ministers and MPs to vacate their official accommodation. As per rules, former ministers and MPs are required to move out of govt accommodations within a month after they lose ministerial berth or membership of either House of Parliament.

Central govt resorts to issuing eviction notices if the allottees do not move out within the deadline.

Sources said so far no one has officially sought any extension to keep their official accommodation.

HC asks J&K to protect neglected Hindu shrines

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Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir high court on Thursday ordered the UT administration to protect Hindu temples left unattended after the community's exodus from Kashmir valley in the 1990s, in order to help preserve their cultural heritage.

Hearing a plea by a group of Kashmiri Pandits, who expressed concern about the neglected state of Hindu shrines, the HC emphasised the state's responsibility to safeguard these historical sites.

The high court mandated Ganderbal district magistrate to take immediate action to secure and maintain two par-

ticular sites, Asthapan Devraj Bharav and Vidhushe temples, citing the J&K Migrant Immovable Property Act which empowers the DM in this regard.

The petitioners, besides mentioning the condition of three shrines in other districts, including one at Sonwar in Srinagar, also brought up the issue of encroachment on Ganderbal district's sole Hindu cremation ground.

The HC acknowledged the urgency of addressing the matter, and directed the removal of encroachments within eight weeks. It also addressed a disputed lease on one of the shrine properties, declaring it expired and barring any extension.

3 from Titwala dead as car hits stationary truck

Nashik: Three members of a family, who were accompanying an ambulance carrying the body of a deceased relative to Malegaon, died on the spot when their car rammied a stationary truck near Malegaon in the early hours of Thursday. The fourth occupant of the car was severely injured and is currently under treatment.

Inspector Rahul Khatal, of Malegaon police, said the car crashed into the truck, which was parked off the road in the Wake area at 4.30 am. "The car, carrying four occupants, was travelling from Titwala to Malegaon when it rammied the truck. Vikas Sawant (45), his wife Sunanda Sawant (40), and sister-in-law Minakshi Hiray (50) died on the spot," stated Khatal. The fourth passenger, Vaibhavi Jadhav (17), sustained severe injuries and was transported to Nashik for advanced medical treatment. **TNN**

Govt can't randomly pick a person & ask to prove citizenship, says SC

Sets Aside Order Declaring Man 'Illegal Migrant'

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New Delhi: Noting that while Section 9 of the Foreigners Act puts the burden on an individual to prove he/she is not a foreigner, the Supreme Court, in an important ruling, has held that this does not mean govt can pick a person at random, knock on their door, and demand they prove their citizenship. There must be some material against the person before proceedings under the law can be initiated, it stressed.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Ahsanuddin Amanullah



SC also said that minor spelling mistakes in names could not be the sole reason to deny document's authenticity

held that "in the absence of the basic/primary material, it cannot be left to the untrammelled or arbitrary discretion of the authorities to initiate proceedings", which have life-altering and very serious consequences for the person. It said that Section 9 could not be

invoked on the basis of hearsay or bald and vague allegation(s).

"...the question is that does Section 9 of the Act empower the executive to pick a person at random, knock at his/her/their door, tell him/her/they/them 'We suspect you of being a foreigner'?... Obviously, the State cannot proceed in such a manner.

Neither can we as a court countenance such an approach," the bench observed while setting aside the order of the Foreigners Tribunal and Gauhati high court declaring a person from Assam an illegal Bangladeshi migrant.

The bench accepted the submission of advocate Kaushik Choudhury who, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that Section 9 could not be used arbitrarily and settled principles of natural justice could not be given a go-by. "It needs no reiteration that a

person charged or accused would generally not be able to prove to the negative, if he/she is not aware of the evidence/material against him/her which leads to the person being labelled suspect. Ipso facto just an allegation/accusation cannot lead to shifting of the burden to the accused, unless he/she is confronted with the allegation as well as the material backing such allegation," the court said.

The court said that there was no material in possession of authority which could raise suspicion on his nationality. After fighting a legal battle for two decades, SC came to the petitioner's rescue and declared him Indian as all his relatives were also declared Indian citizens.

The court also said that minor spelling mistakes in names on official documents could not be the sole reason to deny authenticity as had happened in the case.

2 held for Nashik cop's death while chasing liquor mafia

Abhilash.Botekar@timesofindia.com

Nashik: Nashik police have arrested one suspect, while another turned himself in, in connection with the death of an excise department cop during a chase of liquor smugglers a few days ago. Both the suspects have been remanded in police custody until July 18. An SUV that was illegally transporting Indian Made Foreign Liquor to Gujarat via Nashik rammied the excise department's vehicle, which was about to intercept it after a nearly 100-km chase on Sunday night. The govt vehicle overturned, resulting in the death of Kailas Kasbe (52).

"Using technical intelligence, police have identified six vehicles used for liquor smuggling. The SUV driver who hit the govt vehicle — Devish Kantilal Patel (37), surrendered at Chandwad court," said SP Vikram Deshmane.



Kailas Kasbe's official vehicle toppled after being hit by the smugglers' SUV

Based on Patel's interrogation, police arrested Ashpak Mohammed Shaikh (22), a resident of Gujarat, and seized the SUV from Nani-Daman, the SP added.

Deshmane said the department was now pursuing the warehouses and locations from where the illegal alcohol originated, the individuals who were supposed to purchase the goods, and the transporters, all of whom would face criminal charges.

TIMES ascent

Catapult your career



PUBLIC NOTICE Public Notice regarding advertisement of Assistant Engineer (Civil)

CIDCO has published an advertisement for recruitment to the post of Assistant Engineer (Civil) on 18.01.2024.

In exercise of the powers vested in the Corporation as mentioned in clause No.7(2) and in view of Government Resolution dated 27.02.2024, the Corporation has amended the number of posts against reservation Categories.

Through this Public Notice it is informed to the candidates that, to change your category from OPEN/OBC/EWS to SEBC, kindly visit <https://ibpsonline.ibps.in/cidcoapr23/>.

For more details, read the Public Notice published on CIDCO website www.cidco.maharashtra.gov.in, under career section.

Manager (Personnel)

CIN - U99999 MH 1970 SGC-014574
www.cidco.maharashtra.gov.in CIDCO/PR/516(E)/2024-25

MAHARAJA BIR BIKRAM UNIVERSITY
AGARTALA, TRIPURA-799004

No.F.63(1)/MBBU/Appointment of VC/2019/2366 July 09, 2024
ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF VICE-CHANCELLOR, MBB UNIVERSITY

Advertisement No. : MBBU/VC-05 Date: 09/07/2024

Maharaja Bir Bikram University invites applications/nominations from eligible candidates for appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Bir Bikram University, Agartala, Tripura for a term of five years with 65 years as the upper age limit. The candidate should be a visionary with proven leadership qualities, administrative capabilities as well as recognized teaching and research credentials having outstanding academic record throughout and a minimum of 10 years' experience as Professor in a University system or in equivalent positions in a reputed research and/or academic administrative organization. For prescribed proforma and other details, visit the MBB University Website: <https://mbbuniversity.ac.in/>. The applications/nominations can be submitted by Registered post/ Speed post to the office of the Registrar, MBB University, Agartala, Tripura, India, PIN-799004 on or before August 20, 2024. Sd/- Dr. Sumanta Chakrabarti Registrar, MBBU

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान मिज़ोरम
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MIZORAM
CHALLTLANG, AIZAWL : MIZORAM - 796012

(Advt. No. NITMZ/R-2-16/TF/2024/1241 Dt. 10.07.2024)

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited by NIT Mizoram from eligible candidates of Indian Nationals for engagement of **Temporary Faculty - 1 no. in Department of Electronics & Communication Engineering (ECE) and 1 no. in Department of Electrical Engineering (EE)**.

Detailed Advertisement can be downloaded from the NIT Mizoram website: www.nitmz.ac.in

The duly filled in Application Form in prescribed format along with necessary documents shall be submitted through online to recruitmentfaculty@nitmz.ac.in on or before 26.07.2024. Sd/- (Prof. AJMAL KOYA PULIKKAL) Registrar In-Charge NIT Mizoram

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
"Khanji Bhavan", 10-3-311/A, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028
CIN: L13100TG1958GOI001674

Employment Notification No.05/2024 Dated: 05.07.2024

NMDC Limited, a Navaratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel, Government of India and a multi locational, multi product and consistently profit making Mining & Mineral Exploration Organization with large turnover. NMDC Ltd is in the process of massive expansion and diversification both in India and abroad. Further, NMDC Limited has set up a Steel Plant of 3 MTPA at Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh. The above Steel Plant has now been demerged and became a separate Company i.e., NMDC Steel Limited under Administrative control of Ministry of Steel, Government of India. The Steel Plant has been commissioned in August, 2023. Executives of NMDC are posted at NSL for managing Operation and Maintenance of Steel Plant.

NMDC is now inviting applications from eligible & willing candidates for the following post:

Sl. No	Grade	Post	No. of Posts
1	M-11	Executive Director	1

For detailed notification regarding age, qualification, experience, scale of pay and other conditions etc, interested candidates may visit "Careers" page on NMDC website, www.nmdc.co.in. DGM (Personnel)

IDBI BANK
CIN: L65190MH2004GOI148838

Regd. Office: IDBI Tower, WTC Complex, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005 - Tel. 6655 3555

IDBI Bank Ltd.
Advertisement No. 06 / 2024-25

Advertisement for Bank Medical Officer (On Contract)

IDBI Bank Ltd. invites applications for appointment of Bank Medical Officer (on contract) at its Offices, located at various locations in India.

For eligibility criteria (age, work experience, job profile etc.), mode of application and other details, please visit the 'Careers' section of the Bank's website www.idbibank.in

Applications received on or before July 24, 2024 only will be considered.

NOTE: IDBI Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any/all application(s) without assigning any reason(s) thereof.

Place - Mumbai General Manager-HR

NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
(CIN : L74899DL1974GOI007417)

A-11, SECTOR-24, NOIDA DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, U.P. -201301
PHONE: 0120-2412294, 2412445, FAX: 0120-2412397

Advertisement No.: (04) NFL/ 2024 Dated: 12/07/2024

RECRUITMENT OF OFFICER (COMPANY SECRETARIAT) IN NFL-2024

Online applications are invited from energetic, young & qualified Indian Nationals for recruitment to following positions in NFL:

Sl. No.	Post Name	Total Vacancies	Category Wise Vacancies							
			UR	SC	ST	OBC (NCL)	EWS	PwBD	ExSM	
1	Officer (Company Secretariat)	01	01	-	-	-	-	-	01 (Cat. C) Backlog	-

Detailed advertisement shall be available on NFL website: www.nationalfertilizers.com → Careers → Recruitment in NFL → Recruitment of Officer (Company Secretariat) in NFL-2024 from 12/07/2024 Online application portal shall be available from 12/07/2024 to 01/08/2024. Last date of submission of Online Application will be 01/08/2024. Any corrigendum/addendum/errata/update for this recruitment shall be published only on the NFL's Website. GM (HR-Pers.)

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान भुवनेश्वर
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BHUBANESWAR

Advertisement No. IITBBS/FAC/Rolling-Advt/2024

Rolling Advertisement for Openings of Faculty Positions

IIT Bhubaneswar invites applications from qualified Indian nationals including Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) with an established record of independent, high-quality research and commitment to teaching and research for regular faculty positions at the level of Assistant Professor (Grade-I/II), Associate Professor and Professor in the following disciplines throughout the year:

Computer Science & Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics & Communication Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Minerals, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Geology & Geophysics, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences (i.e., Climate Sciences), Economics.

For further details and online submission of application for such regular faculty positions, please visit: <https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/index.php/faculty-rolling-advertisement-2024> Sd/- Registrar

एसजेवीएन लिमिटेड SJVN Limited
(भारत सरकार एवं विनायक प्रदेव सरकार का संयुक्त उद्यम)
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of H.P.)
CIN No. L40101HP1988GOI008409

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS (Advertisement No. 112/2023, 113/2023 & 115/2023)

- Advt No. 112/2023 : Notice - SJVN Limited, vide Advertisement No. 112/2023, had invited applications for the posts of Field Officer/ Engineer, totalling 153 posts in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis.**
It is informed that the entire recruitment process for above mentioned posts in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis, including the Computer Based Test (CBT) held on 08/02/2024 & 23/01/2024, is hereby cancelled and withdrawn due to administrative reasons.
- Advt No. 113/2023 : Notice - SJVN Limited, vide Advertisement No. 113/2023, had invited applications for the posts of Jr. Field Officer/ Engineer, totalling 155 posts in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis.**
It is informed that the entire recruitment process for above mentioned posts vide advertisement no. 113/2023 in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.
- Advt No. 115/2023 : Notice - SJVN Limited, vide Advertisement No. 115/2023, had invited applications for the posts of Field Officer/ Engineer/ Jr. Field Engineer, totalling 16 posts in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis.**
It is informed that the entire recruitment process for above mentioned posts in various disciplines on Fixed Tenure Appointment Basis, including the Computer Based Test (CBT) held on 08/02/2024, is hereby cancelled and withdrawn due to administrative reasons.

HR Recruitment, SJVN Limited
SHARED VISION: 25000 MW by 2030 and 50000 MW by 2040

Court to start trial against Brij Bhushan on July 26

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Thursday summoned two prosecution witnesses to record their statements before court in alleged sexual harassment case filed by women wrestlers against former WPI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The court of additional chief judicial magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot directed two police witnesses to appear and record statements on July 26, reports Vineet Upadhyay.

Seven women wrestlers had accused Singh, a former BJP MP of sexual harassment. The court will begin trial from July 26.

Four of family killed in MP truck-auto crash, 1 critical

Bhopal: Four members of a family, including a seven-year-old girl, were killed after a truck rammied into their autorickshaw on the outskirts of Gwalior on Thursday morning.

Police identified the dead as Naresh Balmiki, 52, his wife Usha Devi 48, their son Rahul Balmiki, 22, and Naresh's niece, Anika 7. Auto driver Ajay - Naresh's brother - was critically injured.

According to police, accident happened when family was returning to their home in Banmore, Morena, after attending a wedding in Malanpur in Bhind district. Ajay was heading towards a petrol pump near Susera Kothi to refuel when a speeding truck crashed into the three-wheeler. **TNN**

K'taka man kills lover's 3-yr-old son, arrested

Bengaluru: A three-year-old boy was recently killed by his mother's 30-year-old lover, who felt the child was a hurdle in having some intimate moments with the woman, police said.

Police arrested the accused, one Micheal Raj. Raj assaulted the child, Ashwin, twice on July 6 - in the evening and at midnight - and the boy died while undergoing treatment at a hospital on July 8, police said.

According to a complaint filed by Ashwin's mother, Ramya Kumari, she fell in love with her elder sister's husband Satish and married him six years ago. They have two children, a five-year-old daughter and Ashwin. However, due to differences, she separated from Satish.

Ramya told police that Raj banged Ashwin's head against a wall resulting in severe head injury. Police filed a case against Raj under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. **TNN**

Three killed in shootout over land row in MP

Bhopal: Two families pulled out guns to settle a three-decade old land dispute in MP's Morena district on Thursday.

In minutes, three men lay dead. Police identified those killed as Amrish Sharma and Abhishek Sharma from one family, and Shyamababu Sharma from the other.

The two sides were wrangling over a one-big-ha plot of govt land Ghila Pura village near Ambah town, say police. Ramavtar Sharma's family owns 35 bighas bordering the disputed land, while Shyamababu's family holds 40 bighas nearby. Both sides wanted control of the vacant govt plot. On Thursday, Amrish and Abhishek drove in with a tractor to plough the land. The opposing party allegedly fired the first shots, triggering a gunfight. Amrish and Abhishek were killed on the spot, while Shyamababu died later. **TNN**

HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Maharatna Company)
Regd. Office: Petroleum House, 17, Jamshedji Tata Road, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020
CIN: L23201MH1952GOI008858 Tel.: 022-22863900 Extn. 3201/3204
Email ID: hpcinvestors@mail.hpcpl.co.in Website: www.hindustanpetroleum.com

NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS
TRANSFER OF EQUITY SHARES TO INVESTOR EDUCATION & PROTECTION FUND

Notice is given pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("the Rules") as notified and amended by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, New Delhi. The Rules, inter alia, provide for transfer of all shares in respect of which dividend has remained undivided by the shareholders for seven consecutive years or more, to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) set up by the Central Government. Accordingly, individual communication(s) were sent to the latest available address of those shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF Authority under the said Rules as they have not claimed the dividend(s) for the year 2016-17 (Final), and all other dividends declared by the Company for seven consecutive years thereafter. The company has uploaded the details of all unclaimed dividends including the dividend(s) of 2016-17 (Final) due for transfer to IEPF Authority on its website - <https://www.hindustanpetroleum.com/pages/Unclaimed-Dividend>

View above, shareholders are requested to verify and claim the unpaid dividend for the year 2016-17 (Final) (which is due for IEPF transfer in the month of October 2024) immediately, but not later than September 27, 2024 before the same is transferred to the IEPF Authority along with the underlying shares. Shareholders are also requested to update their KYC details and claim all the unclaimed dividends of other years in their respective folio(s). It may please be noted that if no claim/application is received by the Company or the Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTA) by September 27, 2024, the Company shall with a view to complying with the requirements set out in the Rules, dematerialise and transfer the underlying shares to the IEPF Authority by following the due process as enumerated in the said Rules which is briefly as under:

- In case of shares held in physical form - by issuance of duplicate share certificate and transfer the same to IEPF Authority. Upon such transfer, the original share certificate(s) lying with the shareholder will stand automatically cancelled and deemed non-negotiable.
- In case of shares held in demat mode - by issuance of instruction to member's DP to transfer the shares directly to IEPF Authority.

Kindly note that all future benefits, dividends arising on such shares would also be transferred to IEPF Authority. It may also be noted that as per the present rules, the shares transferred to IEPF Authority, including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, can be claimed back from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed under the said Rules.

Shareholders are therefore requested to note the aforesaid provisions and submit the claim for unpaid dividends to Company's RTA, M/s. Link Intime India Pvt. Ltd. Unit: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. C-01, 247 Park, L.B.S Marg, Vikhroli (W), Mumbai - 400083, Tel No. 022-49186270, E-mail: rti.helpdesk@linkintime.com

Since, SEBI has made updation of KYC details (Email/Address/PAN/Mobile/Bank/Signature etc.) mandatory, we appeal to the shareholders to update the same, if not already done, through the Depository Participants (Demat shares) / RTA (Physical shares). Updation of Email address will facilitate receipt of all future communications relating to Annual Reports, Dividend etc.

Place : Mumbai Date : July 12, 2024

For Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited V. Murali Company Secretary

Saraswat Bank
Saraswat Co-operative Bank Ltd.
(Scheduled Bank)
Registered Office: Ekanath Thakur Bhavan, 953, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025.

NOTICE: 106th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 106th Annual General Meeting of the Bank will be held on Saturday, 27th July 2024 at 4.00 p.m. at Pracharya B. N. Vaidya Sabhaghar, Raja Shivaji Vidyasankul, Hindu Colony, Dadar (East), Mumbai - 400 014 to transact the following business concerning the Bank:-

AGENDA

- To consider and approve the Annual Accounts which consist of the Report of the Board of Directors, the Report of the Statutory Auditors, the Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31st March, 2024.
- To appropriate Net Profit and declare Dividend on Equity Shares and Dividend on Perpetual Non Cumulative Preference Shares (PNCPS) as recommended by the Board of Directors for the year ended 31st March, 2024.
- To approve
 - Amendments to Bank's Bye-law Nos. 4, 55A, 58, 61, 64A
 - Addition of New Bye-law Nos. 6(E)(i), 24A, 75
- To appoint Statutory Auditors for the Financial Year 2024-25 and to authorize the Board of Directors to fix their remuneration. The Board of Directors recommends M/s Gokhale & Sathe, Chartered Accountants, 304/308/309, Udyog Mandir No. 1, 7-C, Bhagoji Keer Marg, Mahim, Mumbai - 400 016 & M/s P. G. Bhagwat LLP, Chartered Accountants, Suite 102, Orchard, Dr. Pai Marg, Baner, Pune - 411 045, for appointment as Statutory Auditors.
- To grant Leave of Absence to the members of the Bank who have not attended this 106th Annual General Meeting.

By Order of the Board of Directors.
sd/-
Arti Patil
Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer

Mumbai, June 28, 2024

Note: If there is no quorum for the Meeting at the appointed time, in terms of Bye-law No. 48, the Meeting shall stand adjourned to 5.00 p.m. on the same day and the Agenda of the Meeting shall be transacted at the same venue irrespective of the Rule of Quorum.

P.S.: The Annual Report is available on Bank's website www.saraswatbank.com. Members, desirous of having a printed copy, are requested to collect the same from the nearest branch / Zonal Office or from the Registered Office of the Bank.

Members are requested to bring valid photo identity proof at the time of attending Annual General Meeting for security purpose.



CONTRAPUNTO

Love is grand. Divorce is a hundred grand.

-SHINICHI SUZUKI

Cross Vote On Mind

Today's MLC election in Maharashtra is a trailer to the potboiler that the state's assembly polls will be

It's match time again in Maharashtra. If the Lok Sabha election was considered a semifinal to Oct's high-stakes assembly poll, the vote today to elect 11 legislative council members is no less significant. Maharashtra, one of six states with a legislative council, has 78 members, 30 of whom are elected by MLAs. All eyes are on the 274 MLAs expected to cast their vote today to elect these 11 members from 12 candidates.

Cross currents | If all goes to plan – and safe to say no one expects it to – Mahayuti is set to win 9. BJP has 5 nominees, Shinde Sena 2 and Ajit Pawar 2. MVA has fielded 3, though it can win two, given its numbers in the lower house. Then there's Uddhav Thackeray's swag, "We wouldn't have fielded a third nominee had we not been confident." It's crunch time.

Simply cross | Flashback to June 2022's MLC election has parties jittery. Matters started unravelling for then CM Uddhav's MVA govt, with cross-voting in that MLC election. MVA legislators cross-voted, resulting in Congress losing one of its two allotted seats, which came as a shock right after a Rajya Sabha loss. At the time, Fadnavis had explained the cross-vote as fallout of a "lot of anger in MVA". It was soon followed by Eknath Shinde's claim on the party and walkout with MLAs.

Fingers crossed | With 29 of 48 LS seats now in its kitty, MVA is banking on cross-votes mostly from Shinde Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP. That's why Mahayuti and UBT Sena corralled their MLAs into luxury safe-houses, Mumbai's five-star hotels.

An MLC winner needs 23 first-preference votes. BJP has 103 MLAs, Shinde Sena 38, Ajit Pawar NCP 42, Congress 37, UBT Sena 15 and Sharad Pawar NCP 10. Prakash Ambedkar's BVA has 3 and he has fallen out with MVA. SP has 2, AIMIM 2, PJP 2 and 7 parties have 1 each. There are 13 independent MLAs. There's plenty on to ensure MLAs stay in place, and to snag the 'non-aligned' MLA votes.

Lines crossed | In a right-earnest fight are the two Senas and two NCPs. It is here that loyalty lines blur. Ajit Pawar, especially, finds himself putting out videos in self-praise even as uncle Sharad Pawar says his arms, and doors, are open to MLAs who followed the nephew to Mahayuti. Mahayuti is also hawk-eyed on UBT's surprise nominee, Milind Narvekar – with cross-party influence and camaraderie. It's jitters all around.

In Poor Test

That UGC-NET may have been cancelled over a false alarm shows how broken the system is

If more proof were needed of the way the exam system is run in this country, we have it through news reports about UGC-NET being cancelled on the basis of non-credible evidence. CBI, investigating the UGC-NET 'paper leak', has apparently found that a screenshot of question paper on Telegram on the day of exam was posted AFTER it was conducted.

From one extreme to other | Talk of a knee-jerk reaction. It beats credibility that authorities made a momentous decision impacting more than 9L students without a thorough investigation. This must be contrasted with the extreme reluctance shown by NTA to acknowledge irregularities in NEET-UG held earlier, for which there was good evidence. The latest revelation is also bound to raise questions if there was sufficient reason to postpone the safer CBT-based CSIR-NET. There is more to this year's UGC-NET that is baffling. It was held in pen-and-paper mode after years of offline computer exams. UGC was behind the switch and it went ahead without a full-strength commission being in place and minus any committee's recommendations. Clearly, no questions were asked.

Acting in haste | What these events highlight is that ad hocism, rather than due deliberation, is behind such decisions. And saving face when things go wrong overrides the objective of fixing the exam system. This is more than evident in the official stance before SC in NEET-UG case. To SC's queries over a retest, education ministry & NTA continue to insist, despite evidence to the contrary, that the leak was localised and the overall exam was not compromised. Such an approach might bail them out this time, but there is no guarantee we won't face the same situation in the future – unless the high-powered committee looking into exam reforms goes for a thorough overhaul of the system.

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Fed up with London

The capital city of Britain serves up the whole wide world on a plate

Jug Suraiya

Over the past few weeks, Bunny and I have eaten in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Türkiye, Jamaica, Argentina and Brazil. And we've been to all these places, food-wise, without moving out of Central London. When we first came to London in 1972, Britain was the butt of much snarky humour because of its wet, gloomy weather and its stodgy food.

In the years since then, there's been a sea-change in Britain, and in London in particular, which has become a multicultural and multi-culinary society, thanks to successive waves of immigration from far-flung corners of the globe.

While the weather by and large remains as determinedly damp and downcast as ever, contemporary London serves up a smorgasbord of international cuisine to rival that of NYC, famed for its gastronomic cosmopolitanism.

During our first week in London's Camden Town we had steaks a la Argentina, which transported us to distant Buenos Aires. City of Beautiful Breezes, magically relocated to a diner a 15-minute stroll from our apartment.

The next day we strolled another 15 minutes to Vietnam to savour pho, a delicately flavoured noodle soup that the country is justly famed for.

A short bus and Tube ride gets us to Brazil, transplanted to Brixton Market via our friend Lee whose café specialises in savoury crepes with a South American flair imparted by the biquinhos, small red peppers, that give a tang of tropical sun to London's leaden skies.

Pedro and his Mum, Elisabeta, welcome us to Lisbon in their Camden restaurant, which does several tempting takes on bacalhau, the mainstay of Portuguese menus.

Chef Roger's kitchen, two minutes from us, carries us to the Caribbean with its curry goat and plantain fritters, Andy's always-crowded taverna opens a gateway to Greece, with its kleftiko, and in an eatery named after a Mamak (Uncle) named Don, we visit Malaysia through an irresistible Nasi Goreng.

London, which serves up the planet on a plate, has us, as the saying goes, totally fed up and fulfilled.



jugularvein

Alimony & Ghost Of Shah Bano

Muslim women cannot be left destitute by misinterpreting the 1986 law, SC has said. What this also implies is that every Indian is free to live their life under secular law if they choose

Mihira Sood



This week saw 80s revivalism from an unlikely quarter – the Supreme Court once again ruled that a Muslim woman is entitled to seek maintenance under secular law, and her rights are not restricted to the provisions of Muslim personal law alone. The impact of its similar ruling nearly 40 years ago can hardly be overstated.

Shah Bano case | In 1978, a woman named Shah Bano sought maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code for herself and their five children. They had been married for 43 years when he remarried and threw her out of the house.

The MP high court ordered a monthly payment of ₹179, against which Shah Bano's husband, a lawyer, filed an appeal in SC arguing that as per Muslim law, he was only required to pay her during the *iddat* period – the three months after divorce during which she is not permitted to remarry.

It was then Chief Justice of India YV Chandrachud who headed the bench in 1985 that accepted her plea. The court recognised her circumstances, and held that limiting the rights of a woman in this manner would be unjust, and that secular law applies to all, irrespective of religion.

1986 Act | The political fallout of this decision drove the Rajiv Gandhi govt to pass the Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Divorce Act, 1986, effectively nullifying the Shah Bano ruling by establishing itself as a comprehensive code on alimony for Muslim women. It provided for a "reasonable and fair" maintenance within the *iddat* period for a wife, and for children up to the age of 2 years.

If she was unable to maintain herself or her children after this period, responsibility would fall not on her ex-husband, but any relatives who stood to inherit from her, failing which the Waqf Board would have to

provide for her. Under secular law, maintenance may be payable for life or until the woman remarries, and for children till the age of majority.

Subsequent cases | A slew of petitions was filed challenging the constitutionality of the 1986 law, notably by Danial Latifi, who had been Shah Bano's lawyer. He argued that the provision for maintenance by relatives was illusory and demeaning, and not extending secular law to Muslims was discriminatory. The court held that if a Muslim woman was placed in

The present case | This was the reasoning adopted in the present case of Mohd Abdul Samad vs State of Telangana as well. If a husband opposes a claim being made under Section 125, it can only be if he has already made adequate payments and the wife is capable of maintaining herself. Personal law was not in derogation of secular law, but in addition to it.

The ruling also relied on the principle that laws should not be interpreted to achieve an absurd outcome, and deliberately leaving a woman destitute would be the kind of absurdity that could not have been Parliament's intent.

Importantly, the judgment recognised the social reality that women, regardless of their economic class or education level, tend to shoulder the responsibility of managing the home, looking after children and family elders, leaving them financially unequal to, and dependent on, men. Homemakers who have sacrificed career opportunities for the sake of the family are equally entitled to the standard of living that they enjoyed previously. Maintenance is therefore not a question of charity or unfairly favouring women, but a necessary part of furthering gender equality and ensuring that women can live with dignity.

What the court did not say, but is a welcome outcome of the ruling, is the recognition that a person can belong to a particular community and still choose to live their life under secular law. Communities are not monoliths, and their leaders do not always speak for the smallest minorities within them – individuals, and especially women.

That is why the idea of a Uniform Civil Code that was raised in Shah Bano case as well, was supported by many liberals and feminists till the political journey of the 80s and early 90s (impacted in no small measure by the fallout of the Shah Bano ruling) lent it a communal colour. Today, that project has started, and one can only hope it is guided by ideals of secularism and gender equality as envisaged by the courts, and not religious majoritarianism.

The writer is a lawyer and scholar in the field of women's rights



an inferior situation under personal law than under Section 125, the law would be unconstitutional. However, if the law were interpreted to avoid such an outcome, it would be saved.

Thus, the Act was upheld, but only by interpreting it such that "reasonable and fair maintenance" requires the husband to contemplate her future needs and make preparatory arrangements in advance to meet those needs within the *iddat* period. However, the actual payment need not be limited to that period alone and could extend to her lifetime, unless she remarries. With this interpretation, the Act did not nullify, but rather codified the ruling in Shah Bano. In subsequent cases too, personal law has been applied but within the overarching parameters of Section 125.

Whistle Of Felix, Foot Of Kane & Hand Of God

Bad refereeing has crucial impact on sport. Penalty awarded to England in Euro semis is latest example. It also shows using tech in sport isn't foolproof. But English can stop cribbing about Maradona & 1986

Siddharth Saxena@timesofindia.com



Each year on June 22, devotees of the Church of Maradona pay homage to that one act of the man which they believe was his greatest miracle. This year, the 38th anniversary of the Hand of God goal fell during the Euros and Copa America football tournaments, giving it a newer meaning. Nothing like current-day top-drawer football to whip up trauma of an old robbery.

In his retirement days, notoriously wild ones, Maradona wine and dined with the Tunisian referee Ali Bannaceur, who famously turned a blind eye to what is arguably the most polarising moment in world football – if you belonged to the North and Europe, this was the greatest act of cheating, if you came from the Global South, he was revered as God. Maradona would later obliquely admit that he did cheat, saying some years ago that the goal would never have happened had video technology been available then. "I would have been arrested," the Argentinian cheekily declared.

Lucky break | In Munich at the Euros the other evening, England, who had been at the receiving end of Maradona's sleight of hand in 1986, this time found technology coming to their aid. It was in the semifinals against the Netherlands, and it came in such a way, perhaps, that it was a gift that kept on giving.

The last German left in their home competition – referee Felix Zwayer, who was once banned for six months in 2006 for match-fixing in the Bundesliga –

awarded England a penalty midway through the first half, which Harry Kane duly converted in near-perfect fashion, 'the impossible save' as penalty spotters would exclaim. The equaliser would completely change the balance of the high-stakes semifinals in the world's second-most watched football tournament, shifting the momentum favourably towards England and pushing on to the backfoot, the Dutch who had taken an early lead thanks to a terrific strike by their prodigious Xavi Simons.

Unlucky tech | What happened really? This modern-day Foot of Kane has immediately caused so much turmoil among fans the world over, debating the invasion of technology to arbitrate in sport, the rigid interpretations of the rules and crucially, whether the human element is slowly being made to leave the scene.

Ominous review | Zwayer initially seemed to think nothing of the Kane attempt that ballooned over the Dutch goal and the immediate writhing on the floor clutching his right foot that followed, after Dutch defender Denzel Dumfries' extended foot caught the England captain's in mid-flight. Ball back in play, the referee blew for a Dutch goal-kick to resume hostilities till he got a call on his earpiece summoning him to the side-line TV – a visit to the in-stadium ATM, as the harmless old joke goes, but in this case, given that the German

referee had once been on the take, it assumed ominous overtones.

Cold VAR bosses | TV replays showed that Dumfries' was a reaction attempt to block the shot, as any defender's job description is, and was in no way a tackle on Kane. But the call from the VAR room probably meant to invoke cold letter of the law, rather than personal interpretation. VAR bosses deemed Dumfries' intent as carrying enough injury threat, even if contact was made after Kane had got his shot. Perhaps, the enormity of the situation got to the German referee, somewhere seeking to correct his previously tarnished image, and this was perhaps a perfect opportunity to make amends.

Football's not cricket | In cricket, the advent of technology to decide leg-before appeals, caught behinds and run-outs – even WT20 final deciding catches, as happened on the Bridgetown ropes the other day – has kind of saved the on-field umpire from crucial decision making, and thus, you could argue, relieving him of any moral

dilemma and responsibility in case of an error. But the one thing that they have retained so far is the umpire's call, which gives the man at the stumps the onus to change or stick to his original decision.

In football, with the stakes riding so high, a visit to the TV usually means a reversal of the referee's original decision, almost as a moral obligation. Yet, in the Spain-Germany quarterfinal, England referee Anthony Taylor – who gave out 15 yellow and one red cards – was firm in his interpretation of Spanish defender Marc Cucurella's handball as being not deliberate.

Foggy French | Another counter to last night's penalty goal, could be the recent French Open tennis final between Alexander Zverev and Carlos Alcaraz. On a crucial point in the deciding fifth set, a disputed line call went in favour of the Spaniard. Replays later clearly showed it was out, but at the traditionalist Open, where calls are decided by the ball marking on the clay, the chair umpire insisted that it was in. The German Zverev lost the final, and later rued the absence of electronic line calling at the clay court Major. The French Open will introduce the technology from next year onwards, but for the record, Zverev would have been deprived of a great chance. "It is what it is," he would philosophically say later.

Burying the ghost | "It is what it is," is probably what the Dutch would be telling themselves as they head home, and also, what Kane and Co would be beginning to understand. That finally, after years of injustice, and years of feeling robbed by Maradona in 1986, the shoe is on the other foot – the Foot of Kane.

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace

Do something because you really want to do it. If you're doing it just for the goal and don't enjoy the path, then I think you're cheating yourself.

Kalpana Chawla

The Yogi Identifies And Accepts His Distractions

Soham Bhaduri

In seeking the sought, the seeker denies that the sought is already there and acknowledges that what is already there isn't what is sought. The Raj Yogi follows an elaborate regimen to steer clear of bodily and mental distractions before he can expect to attain his goal of union with the absolute, the Brahmn. The stage is set through the practice of the five yamas and niyamas. Specific asanas help achieve a posture that is neither cosy nor unbearable. Breathing techniques help slow and harmonise breathing so the rushing air doesn't constitute a distraction. The senses are closed, and concentration is locked on an object to restrain the ever-tossing and turning mind. Only when these are met can the yogi experience the pure, undifferentiated Brahmn. But

what about the multitudes who falter along the difficult road? What about those who fail to distil the undifferentiated Brahmn from the differential maya?

We naturally tend to resist and oppose thoughts, feelings, and occurrences that we detest. This resistance often leads to frustration, making things worse. Opposing and resisting intrusive thoughts and feelings only makes them stronger. What is the way out? It goes by a simple mantra: "Control what you do, accept what you feel."

Anxious thoughts have just one goal: perpetuating anxiety and making you even more anxious. Negative thoughts aim to instil disquietude and pessimism. Acceptance defangs them, leaving them no choice but to starve and succumb. The accepting mind lets

thoughts and feelings come as they do and lets them be.

Acceptance is the most powerful arrow in the faltering yogi's quiver. How do we practice acceptance? By recognising and clinging to the thread of consciousness that binds everything, to the omnipresent beingness that straddles all that is and isn't. The yogi must never be tricked into believing, in true sense, that their distractions are alien to Brahmn. That maya, being limited, is antithetical to Brahmn. Or that Brahmn is reached by distilling off the differential maya. For what becomes of Brahmn if there's anything apart from Brahmn? What is Brahmn but consciousness, the ultimate reality, and what becomes of the ultimate reality if there's anything other than itself? What

limits the limited is nothing but Brahmn, as is what lies beyond the limited, and the limited itself. Brahmn is as much what is distilled off as the distillate itself, as much what the yogi rejects as what he seeks.

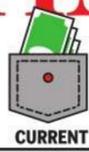
Brahmn isn't 'not this, not that' but 'this, as well as that'. Brahmn is both the differential and the undifferentiated. What the yogi seeks is no different from what is already there, including that which he avoids. By clinging to the thread of all-pervading consciousness, the yogi identifies and accepts his distractions as nothing but forms of the same Brahmn that he seeks. In them, the yogi sees nothing but Brahmn, out and out, and stops resisting them. And thus, the yogi, unperturbed by his distractions, disempowers them and carves a smooth and single-minded path to his goal.

The writer is a physician

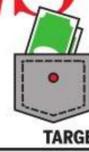


THE SPEAKING TREE

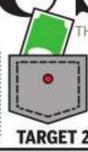
In Total Health Spending (%)
As India aims to be a developed nation by 2047, where will the country be placed in terms of quality of care compared to peers



50%
CURRENT

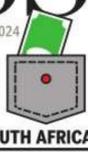


15%
TARGET 2030



8%
TARGET 2047

GLOBAL BENCHMARK
US, FRANCE, SOUTH AFRICA

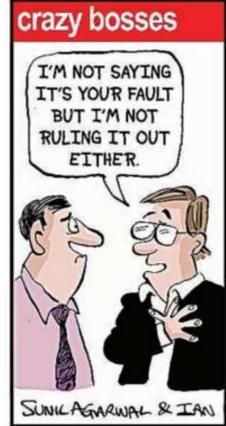


8.1%
Source: Ministries



UAE bank, Japan groups eye \$5bn stake in Yes Bank

First Abu Dhabi Bank is among potential suitors for a roughly \$5-billion stake in Yes Bank, people with knowledge of the matter said. The UAE lender is weighing a bid for as much as a 51% stake in Yes Bank, the people said, asking not to be identified as the deliberations are private. The stake sale has also drawn preliminary interest from Japan, including Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group. BLOOMBERG



HDFC Bank, Axis plan outage this weekend

Mumbai: HDFC Bank and Axis Bank have announced scheduled downtime of their systems for some services over the weekend. HDFC Bank's downtime will be in the early hours of July 13, while Axis's outage will stretch through July 13 and July 14. TNN

RIL's unit plans over \$500mn offshore loan

A unit of Reliance Industries is planning to borrow at least \$500 million to refinance debt. It's in talks with a group of foreign banks for a loan of 12-15 years, people familiar with the matter said. BLOOMBERG

Factory jobs to boost India's growth: IMF

India can boost its economic growth rate by as much as 0.5 percentage points by driving more workers from agriculture to manufacturing, according to researchers from the IMF. BLOOMBERG

NPCI arm, QNB to roll out UPI in Qatar

Mumbai: NPCI International Payments has entered into an agreement with Qatar National Bank to enable UPI payment acceptance through the QNB merchant network in Qatar. TNN

Auto parts cos to invest ₹25k cr: ICRA

Chennai: The auto component industry will invest around Rs 20,000-25,000 crore as capex in FY25, rating agency ICRA said. The industry's capex will be 8-10% of its operating income over the medium term. TNN



RBI gov hints interest rates may stay higher for longer

With Inflation At 5%, It's Premature To Talk About Rate Cuts: Das

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday indicated that interest rates may remain higher for longer. With a 4.75% rise in retail inflation in May, Das said that inflation numbers for June — which will be announced on Friday — are expected to be close to 5%, according to surveys. "When we are at 5% and our target is 4%, I think it is premature to talk about interest rate cuts," Das said in an interview with CNBC. The governor also said that rate cuts would adversely affect 'silent depositors'. Typically, there is a clamour for rate cuts from borrowers.

Das emphasised on the cautious approach, saying that while some central banks provide guidance on when a rate cut is likely, the issue globally and in India is the prevailing uncertainty. He expressed his reluctance to give any forward guidance that might mislead market players, and said, "I would rather not give any forward guidance which would lead market players to board the wrong train." The approach intends to provide stability and reassurance to the market. The adverse impact of a rate cut on depositors is a new issue confronting RBI. The central bank had expressed concerns over bank advances outpacing deposit growth, which remained sluggish. Business figures reported by banks in the first quarter indicate that deposit growth has not picked up much. Besides inflation and the

'Our Target For Inflation Is 4%

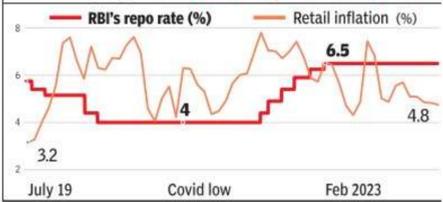
On Rate Cut: When we are at 5% and our target is 4%, I think it is premature to talk about interest rate cuts...

On Outlook: I would rather not give any forward guidance which would lead market players to board the wrong train

Shaktikanta Das | RBI GOV



At 6.5%, Repo Rate Unchanged Since 16 Mths



adverse impact on deposits, the third factor that might prevent RBI from cutting rates is the high growth rate. Das said that the high growth momentum of Q4 FY24 had continued and was maintained in the first quarter. On the steady exchange rate, Das attributed the rupee's resilience to its macroeconomic fundamentals, which have been much stronger than

they were a few years ago. "It has more to do with our stable fundamentals than anything else. RBI only manages volatility," said Das. He also added that it is the strong fundamentals that justify a ratings upgrade by international rating agencies. "It should have happened earlier... While rating does play a role, many large investors do their own analysis and markets are ahead of rating agencies," said Das. Economists attribute a significant portion of the rise in CPI to unstable commodities, especially food items. Although food price inflation is not caused by demand-related factors, RBI can only address this by increasing interest rates to prevent widespread inflationary expectations. In this quarter, besides food prices, a rise in telecom tariffs could also add to price pressures.

After hiking interest rates in Feb 2023, RBI has left rates unchanged for 16 months now. Many expect it to cut rates by Dec this year to maintain the spread between US and Indian rates. However, if RBI does not cut rates this year, it would be its longest pause since MPC started setting rates in 2016.

PM meets economists, takes up ideas to boost growth

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Ahead of the Union Budget, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday interacted with economists to discuss the state of the economy and ideas to push growth. "Earlier today, interacted with eminent economists and heard their insightful views on issues pertaining to furthering growth," PM Modi said on microblogging site X.

The Budget will be unveiled by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23 and it will be her seventh consecutive Budget, a record eclipsing Morarji

Desai's six in a row. This will be the first Budget of the new coalition gov, which assumed office in June. PM Modi was sworn-in for his third term.

Last month, President Droupadi Murmu in her address to Parliament said the Budget will have several historic steps and the pace of reforms would be accelerated. The Budget is being presented against the backdrop of global challenges and geopolitical tensions. It is expected to spell out the steps for gov's Viksit Bharat strategy and ensure that India emerges as a developed country by 2047. The economy is in a sweet spot and is expected to continue to grow around the 7% range for the next few years, led by robust domestic demand.

Sitharaman, Niti Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery and his team of advisors and B V R Subrahmanyam attended the meeting. Noted economists such as Ashok Gulati, Surjit Bhalla also expressed their views. Eminent banker and financial market expert K V Kamath and chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran also participated in the meeting. FM has held several rounds of discussions with various stakeholders in the lead up to the Budget and the views will serve as crucial inputs.

Govt to meet telcos' chiefs next week on sector growth

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid concerns over quality of mobile services in the country at a time when 5G networks continue to expand pan-India, the country's top telecom honchos, including Reliance Jio chairman Akash Ambani, Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Mittal, Aditya Birla group's Kumar Mangalam Birla, and Tata group chairman N Chandrasekaran are likely to visit the national capital next week to hold a meeting with officials from the department of telecom. Sources said that chiefs — who are part of the stakeholder advisory committee on telecom services — are set to meet telecom secretary Neeraj Mittal and new communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to discuss the growth of the sector, including on matters related to spectrum, quality of services, and financial health of the industry. "The honchos have been invited as part of the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee for Telecom Service Providers," a source said, adding that the discussions at the meeting are likely to be followed up with more face-to-face interactions. "The chairman of public sector BSNL has also been invited."

Part of the top bosses, DoT has also invited executive management personnel of the companies to the meeting. These include Airtel MD & CEO Gopal Vittal, Jio MD Pankaj Pawar, and Vodafone Idea CEO Akshya Moondhra. Sources said the ministry wants to take stock of the mood of the industry, as well as any concerns that companies may have. "There has been a new minister who has taken charge, and this would also help him understand the issues first-hand."

However, gov is also likely to raise certain matters with the telecom bosses, especially around the quality of consumer services. "There have been serious concerns around the matter of pesky calls, and this may figure in the discussions. Also, call drops and patchy network quality will also be discussed."

"Possibilities around 6G, and how to indigenise networks, is something that may be part of the discussions. Govt strongly believes that telecom is the backbone of the Indian economy and wants to ensure that networks remain robust and viable."

Among the verticals, manufacturing, energy, and utilities continued to have strong growth. But its mainstay businesses — banking, financial services, consumer tech, and communication — continued to have negative growth on a year-on-year basis. Krithivasan said TCS is currently executing about 270 GenAI projects and its AI & GenAI pipeline has doubled to \$1.5 billion in the June quarter. TCS's operating margin dropped 130 basis points quarter-on-quarter to 24.7% on account of a wage hike but compared to the year-ago period, it expanded 1.5%.

Deposits grow faster than loans in June qtr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The banking sector's outstanding loans rose 4.8% in the first quarter — from Rs 168.7 lakh crore as of end-March 2024 to Rs 176.8 lakh crore on June 28. During the same period, deposits grew 5.3% to Rs 220.6 lakh crore from Rs 209.3 lakh crore. In the past year, the growth of loans continued to exceed that of deposits, with the loan portfolio expanding by 19.6% by the end of June 2023. However, this was largely due to the impact of the HDFC-HDFC Bank merger. If we exclude the effects of the merger, the year-on-year growth would have been around 16.2%, still higher than the 12% growth in deposits. The accretion to the deposit book has been around Rs 11.3 lakh crore during the first quarter, while the addition to the loan book has been Rs 8 lakh crore.

According to a Macquarie report, of the banks that have reported their business figures so far, the average quarter-on-quarter increase has been 1.5% for public sector banks and 0.2% for private banks. In deposits, the average quarter-on-quarter growth is 0.3% for PSBs and 0.6% for private banks.

Sensex ends lower on profit-taking

Mumbai: The sensex and Nifty closed marginally down in a rangebound session on Thursday as investors booked profits in heavyweights ahead of the announcement of key financial results for the June quarter. Retreating from early highs, the sensex closed 27 points lower at 79,897. Half of the sensex shares closed with gains while the rest declined. AGENCIES

IT hiring slump means training takes backseat

Infy's Avg Training Hrs Per Employee Fall To 75 From 130 A Yr Ago Due To Fewer Freshers

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Bengaluru: At a time when companies are focusing on upskilling their workforce, Indian IT firms like Infosys, Wipro and Tech Mahindra have experienced a drop in the average training hours per employee for FY24 compared to the year-ago period. While Infosys' average training hours per employee fell from 130 in FY23 to 74.6 in FY24, Tech Mahindra saw average hours decline from 56 to 49 over the same time. Wipro's total training hours also fell to 12.9 million in FY24 from 16 million in the year-ago period. Industry analysts attribute this reduction in learning hours to a reduced intake of freshers and a shift towards just-in-time hiring. Due to sluggish demand and clients pulling back on discretionary spending, Indian IT firms are gradually onboarding freshers who were offered letters in the last fiscal and have made only modest additions to their headcount. Freshers typically undergo extensive training when

they join any IT firm, and when calculating training hours, companies consider both online and offline modules completed by employees. For instance, TCS — which hired 40,000 fresh graduates — more than doubled its training hours to 87 hours per employee in FY24, up from 40 in the year-ago period. on boarded by employers — the highest addition in a single year. However, only two years later in FY24, the combined headcount of Infosys, Wipro, and TCS dropped by nearly 64,000. Richard Lobo, chief people officer at Tech Mahindra, said that this decline is temporary and that the company expects an increase in em-

ployee upskilling as it focuses on cost optimisation. "Overall training hours are down as project loads are light and staff levels remain tight. This has led to a focus on billable hours and revenue in the short run, versus training in the long run," said Ray Wang, founder of IT advisory Constellation Research. Wang said that TCS is the only company focusing on a long-term strategy rather than pursuing short-term benefits.

UPSKILLING HOURS DOWN

Year	TCS*	Infosys*	TechM*	Wipro**
FY24	87	74	49	12.9 mn hours
FY23	40	130	56	16 mn hours

*Average learning hours/employee | **Total training hours | Source: Regulatory filings

An email sent to TCS, Infosys, Wipro and HCL didn't elicit a response till the time of going to press as they are in a quiet period. Even during 2021, which was marred by a pandemic-related sharp decline in growth, the Indian tech sector added 1.3 lakh employees, taking the total base to 4.4 million. The net addition of 60,000 comes nowhere close to the hiring frenzy in FY22, when 4.5 lakh freshers were

'GeM set to be world's biggest public procurement platform'

Saurabh.Sinha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India's Governmente-Marketplace (GeM) is all set to become the world's biggest public procurement platform this fiscal. Korea ON-line E-Procurement System (KONEPS) was the biggest platform with a turnover of \$85 billion last fiscal, of which almost 75% came from works contracts. "GeM's turnover of goods and services alone (the Indian platform does not currently provide for works contracts) was \$50 billion. In current FY2024-25, we will overtake KONEPS to become the world's biggest public procurement platform," said P K Singh, GeM CEO. The platform currently has over 3.7 lakh buyers and over 21 lakh sellers for nearly

12,000 products and over 320 service categories. While computers and phones are the biggest items to be transacted through it, but in value terms, service contracts top the charts. It closed last financial year with Rs 4 lakh crore in gross merchandise value (GMV), double of FY23, with procurement of services surging by 205%. The Union commerce ministry's GeM has enabled small domestic entrepreneurs to participate in gov tenders from anywhere at any time, breaking the "cartel" of established service providers. "We are using artificial intelligence in a big way and have become the first gov agency to have a generative AI-based chatbox to resolve any query. In a bid to improve the ease of doing business,

we have slashed transaction charges. Now orders between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 crore will see a transaction charge of 0.3% of order value. And orders above Rs 10 crore will see a flat fee of Rs 3 lakh," Singh said. While vendor assessment process has been rationalised with reduction in chargeable fees from sellers by up to 69% for manufacturers & 92% for traders, caution money deposit has been reduced from Rs 5,000 to Rs 2,000 (60% drop) for new sellers with turnover up to Rs 1 crore. GeM on Thursday launched its Aadhaar collection platform which is "vocal for local." It is planning to start a training platform for sahayaks (helpers) who will help resolve small sellers' queries and guide them through the marketplace.

TCS reports 4.4% revenue growth in June qtr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: TCS's year-on-year revenue grew by 4.4% in constant currency in the June quarter compared to the year-ago period. Quarter-on-quarter, it grew 2.2% in constant currency. But even as India's largest IT firm achieved all-round growth, it is treading cautiously in determining whether it's too early to declare sustained growth momentum as market conditions haven't significantly changed since the previous quarter. "We are quite happy that the overall growth across all verticals

DROP IN ORDER BOOK, BFSI SLIDES

Revenue	Deals Won
Total Revenue: \$7.5bn	Q1 FY25: \$8.3bn
YoY Growth: 4.4%*	Q4 FY24: \$13.2bn
Revenue Growth (QoQ): 2.2%*	Workforce
Operating Margin: Dropped QoQ to 24.7% from 26% in Q4 FY24	Total Employees: 606,998
	Net Addition in Q1 FY25: 5,452
	Attrition Rate: 12.1% (LTM IT Services)

*Constant Currency

and markets. It's too early to call whether the growth momentum is sustainable because market conditions continue to remain the same as they were in the last quarter. So, there is nothing new to add in terms of market sentiments. But we believe FY25 will be better than FY24," TCS CEO K Krithivasan said in the earnings call on Thursday.

The UK recorded robust growth of 6%, while continental Europe saw a modest increase of 0.9%. In contrast, North America faced a decline of 1.1%. Emerging markets, including India, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East & Africa, and Latin America, maintained their growth trajectory, reinforcing the company's diversification strategy. Among these, India has emerged as the bright spot, with revenue surging by an impressive 61.8% compared to the previous year, led by the mammoth Rs 15,000-crore BSNL deal it won last year for deploying 4G networks across India.

Soch kar
Samajh kar
Invest kar

Promising guaranteed returns in the stock market is illegal.

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HUMA ABEDIN, EX-AIDE TO HILLARY CLINTON, GETS ENGAGED TO ALEX SOROS, SON OF BILLIONAIRE LIBERAL DONOR GEORGE SOROS



JOHN MULANEY & OLIVIA MUNN TIE THE KNOT IN AN INTIMATE CEREMONY IN NY, WITH ONLY THEIR 2-YR-OLD SON AND A WITNESS IN ATTENDANCE

For first time, Nato calls China a 'decisive enabler' of Russia's war against Ukraine

Demands Beijing Halt Shipments Of 'Weapons Components', & Threatens That Support For Moscow Will Come At A Cost

Washington: After decades of viewing China as a distant threat, Nato on Wednesday accused Beijing of becoming "a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine," and demanded that it halt shipments of "weapons components" and other technology critical to the rebuilding of the Russian military. The statement is contained in a declaration approved by the 32 leaders of the alliance.

It is a major departure for Nato, which until 2019 never officially mentioned China as a concern. Now, for the first time, the alliance has joined in Washington's denunciations of China's military support for Russia. But the declaration contains an implicit threat that China's growing support for Russia will come at a cost.

China "cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation," the declaration said, particularly calling out "its large-scale support for Russia's defence industrial base."

Even a year ago, European leaders were hesitant to challenge Beijing, especially nations like Germany that view China as a critical market for high-end cars and luxury goods. Many European leaders initially dismissed the agreement reached in early 2022, just before the Beijing Olympics, for a "partnership without limits" signed by Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi. But 29 months after the



Biden told Ukraine Prez Zelenskyy on Thursday that he would be announcing a new security package for Kyiv. 'We will stay with you, period,' he told Zelenskyy ahead of a bilateral meeting amid the Nato summit in Washington

China tells Nato not to create chaos in Asia, rejects label of 'enabler' of Ukraine war

China accused Nato on Thursday of seeking security at the expense of others and told the alliance not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia. "Nato hyping up China's responsibility on the Ukraine issue is unreasonable and has sinister motives," foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a daily briefing. He maintained that China has a fair and objective stance on the Ukraine issue. Lin said that China's trade with Russia is legitimate and reasonable and based on World Trade Organization rules. China has also expressed concern about Nato's budding relationships with countries in the region. Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea sent their leaders or deputies to the Nato summit this week. "China urges Nato to... stop interfering in China's internal politics and smearing China's image and not create chaos in the Asia-Pacific after creating turmoil in Europe," Lin said. AP

invasion of Ukraine, that view has changed. While China has heeded warnings not to supply Russia with full weapons systems, it has done everything short of that, providing computer chips, advanced software and the components needed for Russia to rebuild a defence industrial base that churned out faulty and outdated equipment. The intelligence evidence

was provided to Nato countries by the Biden administration, in an effort to win over skeptics who argued that China was not a central player in the war. That succeeded, but only after the US published the names, in a treasury department economic sanctions order, of Chinese front companies and manufacturers that were funneling the technology to Russia. NYT

Washington hopes Delhi will persuade Moscow to end war

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Amid publicly expressed concerns from the state department over PM Narendra Modi's meetings with Russia's Prez Putin, Pentagon on Wednesday said the US "will continue to view India as a strategic partner... will continue to have a robust dialogue with them", while hoping New Delhi will play a role in persuading Moscow to end its war on Ukraine. Pentagon's remarks come even as Nato appears to see the emergence of a Russia-China axis.

"India and Russia have had a relationship for a very long time. From a US perspective, India is a strategic partner with whom we continue to engage in full and frank dialogue to include their relationship with Russia," Pentagon press secretary Major General Pat Ryder told reporters, in the backdrop of the Nato summit in Washington, where the alliance called China a "decisive enabler" of Russia in its war on Ukraine.

Amid critical commentary in the US media that Modi's trip to Moscow showed Putin was not as isolated as claimed by the Biden administration, Ryder suggested the Russian prez may be trying to represent the visit in such a manner but "the fact of the matter is Prez Putin's war of choice has isolated Russia from the rest of the world,

and it has come at great cost". He pointed out that Modi met recently with Ukraine's Prez Zelenskyy and offered his assurances that India will continue to do everything within its means to support a peaceful solution to the war. "I think we trust India will support efforts to realise an enduring and just peace for Ukraine and will convey to Mr Putin the importance of adhering to the UN charter and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity," he added.

The Biden administration's (and Nato's) view of Russia and its invasion of Ukraine is underpinned by the fact that ex-prez Trump takes a more benign view of Moscow, believing that the US "deep state" is unnecessarily stoking wars, in part by extending Nato to Russia's borders. The possibility of Trump's return to the White House has many European leaders expressing apprehension about the future of Nato. Trump has been dismissive about Nato, and on Wednesday he was denigrating it. "I didn't know what the hell Nato was too much before," he said at a rally. "But it didn't take me long to figure it out. The first thing I figured out was they were not paying. We were paying almost fully for Nato. And I said that's unfair." He then went to relate how he told a shocked Nato ally the US would not protect it from Russia if it did not pay its share of the alliance funding.

US finalising Gaza truce deal, troop pullout: Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The US is working on a ceasefire deal in Gaza that involves withdrawal of Israeli and Hamas forces, an "interim governance" arrangement during which security would be provided by a US-trained force of Arabs who support the Palestinian Authority, release of Israeli hostages and a surge in humanitarian aid to civilians, as per a columnist in Washington Post.

The column, by foreign affairs specialist David Ignatius, quotes an unnamed senior US official as saying that "the framework is agreed" and that the parties were now "negotiating details of how it will be implemented." To forge the deal, US Middle East adviser Brett McGurk and CIA director William J Burns have been shuttling among regional capitals since Nov, it said.

The plan is to be implemented in three stages, Ignatius wrote, quoting officials. "First would be a six-week ceasefire, during which Hamas would release 33 Israeli hostages, including all female prisoners, all men over 50 and all who are wounded. Israel would release hundreds of Palestinians from its prisons and withdraw its troops from densely populated areas toward the eastern border of Gaza. Humanitarian aid would flow in, hospitals would be repaired, and crews would begin clearing rubble."

The second phase would begin with an interim governance plan in which neither Hamas nor Israel would rule Gaza, Ignatius wrote. Security



Residents walk through rubble in Gaza City after Israel army's withdrawal

Army failed to protect Israelis on Oct 7, finds 1st military report; probe PM role, says def min

Israeli military published Thursday findings of a probe into its own security failings during the Oct 7 Hamas attack, acknowledging it hadn't protected citizens of one of the worst hit communities, Kibbutz Be'eri. The probe examined the chain of events, fighting and security forces' conduct. It, however, did not find fault in tank fire toward a house where militants were holding 15 hostages, an incident that has drawn criticism. "The team found that the civilians inside were not hurt by the tank shells," it said.

Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant, meanwhile, called for a state inquiry into the failings. He said the probe should investigate Gallant himself and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu has dismissed past calls to form a state inquiry. REUTERS

would be provided by a "force trained by the US and backed by moderate Arab allies, drawn from a core group of about 2,500 supporters of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza who have already been vetted by Israel". As per a US official, Ignatius wrote, Hamas had told mediators it was "prepared to relinquish authority to the interim governance arrangement". The third phase would involve a "multi-year reconstruction plan" along the lines of a UN resolution.

Ignatius said the deal, if it goes through, would be a ringing validation of US President Biden's "patient diplomacy", balancing America's role as peacemaker in the region with strong military support for Israel. "It would also create a potential valedictory moment for the president, affording him a chance to step back honourably from his quest for a second term or, conversely, to double down," he wrote.

The columnist, however, added that US officials were treading with caution because, "although the framework is in place, a final pact probably isn't imminent, and the details are complex and will take time to work through".

US's long-range missiles in Germany a threat: Russia

Moscow: Russia will act to counter the planned US deployment of long-range missiles in Germany, Kremlin said Thursday.



Dmitry Peskov

as it regarded the Nato military alliance's actions as a serious threat to Russia's national security. The US and Germany announced at a Nato summit Wednesday that they would begin deploying long-range fire capabilities in Germany in 2026 to demonstrate their commitment to Nato and European defence at a time when Russia is waging war in Ukraine.

They said the "episodic deployments" were in preparation for longer-term stationing that would include SM-6, Tomahawk cruise missiles and hypersonic weapons with a longer range than current capabilities in Europe. Nato also said that a new US air defence base in northern Poland, designed to detect and intercept ballistic missile attacks as part of a broader Nato missile shield, was mission-ready.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Nato has once again clearly confirmed its essence. It is an alliance created in an era of confrontation with the aim of maintaining confrontation." "Tensions on the European continent are escalating as a result," Peskov added.

"We see the decisions taken in Nato to create separate logistics hubs in Black Sea cities, the opening of additional facilities in Europe, and we see that in fact Nato's military infrastructure is constantly and incrementally moving towards our borders," he also said. REUTERS

Thermonuclear blasts & new species: Inside Musk's plan to colonise Mars

SpaceX Working On Plans For Dome Habitats, Spacesuits, & Researching Whether Humans Can Procreate Off Earth

Kirsten Grind

For over two decades, Elon Musk has focused SpaceX, his rocket company, on his lifelong goal of reaching Mars. Over the last year, he has also ramped up work on what will happen if he gets there.

Musk, 53, has directed SpaceX employees to drill into the design and details of a Martian city, according to people with knowledge of the efforts and documents viewed by NYT. One team is drawing up plans for small dome habitats, including the materials to build them. Another is working on spacesuits to combat Mars' hostile environment, while a medical team is researching whether humans can have children there. Musk has volunteered his sperm to help seed a colony.

The initiatives, which are in their infancy, are a shift toward more concrete planning for life on Mars as Musk's timeline has hastened. While he said in 2016 it would take 40-100 years to have a self-sustaining civilisation on the planet, Musk told SpaceX employees in April he now expects one million people to be living there in about 20 years.

"There's high urgency to making life multi-planetary," he said. "We've got to do it while civilisation is so strong."

Musk has long tried to defy the impossible and has often managed to beat tough odds. But his vision for life on Mars takes his seemingly limitless ambitions to their most extreme — and some might say absurdist — point. No one has ever set foot on the planet. NASA doesn't expect to land humans on Mars until the 2040s. And if people get there, they will be greeted by a barren terrain, icy temperatures, dust storms, and



A SpaceX rendering of the proposed Mars colony includes a giant dome for communal living, with smaller domes scattered around it

air that's impossible to breathe.

Yet Musk is so wedded to the idea of creating a civilisation on Mars — he once said he plans to die there — that it has propelled nearly every business endeavour he has undertaken on Earth. His vision for Mars underlies most of the six companies he leads or owns, each of which could potentially contribute to an extraterrestrial colony, according to the documents and the people.

Musk, worth about \$270 billion, has publicly declared that he only accumulates assets to fund his plans for Mars. While Musk has spoken about Mars for years and SpaceX released two basic drawings of a colony around 2018, many specifics and the company's shift toward civilisation planning haven't previously been reported.

Musk has been fascinated by Mars since reading Isaac Asimov's 1951 novel, "Foundation," when he was 10. In the book, the protagonist builds a colony across a galaxy to save humanity from the fall of an interstellar empire. But people close to Musk said he was just trying to best Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder who envisions humans living in giant space stations across the solar system.

To reach Mars, SpaceX has built Starship, a nearly 400-foot reusable rocket. A future version of Starship may have a living space in its nose. Musk has said he hoped to create his own species on Mars, an idea he has repeated over the years to those close to the company. "I think it's quite likely that we'd want to bioengineer new organisms that are better suited to living on Mars," he said. "Humanity's kind of done that over time, by sort of selective breeding."

He also has a strategy for warmth. He's said he would tackle icy temperatures with a series of thermonuclear explosions that would warm the planet by creating artificial suns. Hundreds of solar panels will help create energy. The industrial design team has been creating renderings for a city, which will centre on a giant dome for communal living, with smaller domes scattered around it.

Musk is particularly concerned with making sure the city looks cool, two people said. In April, Musk told SpaceX employees the Mars colony would be self-sustaining in case something happened to Earth. To achieve that, Musk plans to use Starship as sort of a Noah's Ark, three people said. NYT

56% of Dems want Biden to end candidacy: Poll

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Hours before US Prez Joe Biden's live press conference, scheduled for 4am Friday India time, a Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll revealed 56% of Democrats want Biden to end his candidacy while 42% want him to continue to seek re-election. Overall, 2 in 3 adults say the prez should step aside, including over 7 in 10 independents.

Those numbers reflect the diminishing support for Biden after the debate debacle nearly two weeks ago when he repeatedly stumbled and mumbled, triggering panic and anxiety in the Democratic party. Although he has been more cogent and forceful since then, party activists are now concerned how he will last four years should he carve a path to victory over the next four months.



Vermont Senator Peter Welch has called on Biden to withdraw, the first Senate Democrat to do so

Although the primary subject matter of the press conference at White House will be the just-concluded Nato summit, Americans of all hues and interested parties across the world will be watching every word and gesture to determine if the 81-year-old president retains the cognitive ability to run for a second term. Although the US president has defiantly said he plans to continue his re-election cam-

19% decline in PIO support for prez: Report

There is a 19% decline in Indian Americans supporting incumbent Prez Biden between the 2020 election and the 2024 election cycle, according to a bi-annual Asian American Voter Survey, the longest-running survey of Asian-American voters released Wednesday. The survey reveals 46% of Indian Americans intend to vote for Biden this year against 65% in 2020. The 19% drop is the largest among all Asian-American ethnic communities. The survey was held before the June 27 debate between Biden and Trump. PTI

aign and all talk of quitting should cease, it hasn't.

The scuttlebutt in the capital is many of his supporters and well-wishers are being considerate in waiting for the Nato summit to conclude before easing him out of the party nomination, with the kind of love and affection reserved for an enfeebled grandfather being led out of a raucous party. George Clooney, a big-time Democratic donor, was among those who channelled the "we love you grandpa, but it's time

for bed" theme in a NYT op-ed, writing, "I love Joe Biden... But the one battle he cannot win is the fight against time."

Indeed, barring a few lawmakers and party veterans, there have been very few full-throated endorsements for Biden. Many Democratic senators and representatives fear Biden's diminishing poll numbers will become a down-ballot deadweight that could drag them to defeat, losing the party both the House and Senate along with the White House.

Shelley Duvall, star of 'The Shining', dies at 75

Shelley Duvall, the intrepid, Texas-born movie star whose wide-eyed, winsome presence was a mainstay in the films of Robert Altman and who co-starred in Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining," has died at 75. She died Thursday in her sleep at her home in Blanco, her longtime partner, Dan Gilroy said.

The cause was complications of diabetes, said her publicist Gary Springer. "My dear, sweet, wonderful life, partner, and friend left us last night," Dan Gilroy said. "Too much suffering lately, now she's free. Fly away beautiful Shelley."

Duvall was in college when Altman's crew, preparing to film "Brewster McCLOUD," encountered her as at a party in 1970. They introduced her to the director, who cast

her 'Brewster McCLOUD' and made her his protege. Duvall appeared in several Altman films like "Thieves Like Us," "Nashville," "Popeye," "Three Women," and "McCabe & Ms Miller." Duvall, gaunt and gawky, was no conventional starlet. But she had a beguiling frank manner and exuded a singular naturalism.

At her peak, Duvall was a regular star in some of the defining movies of the 1970s and 1980s. In "The Shining," she played Wendy Torrance. It was Duvall's screaming face that made up half of the film's most iconic image. But Duvall disappeared from movies almost as quickly as she arrived in them. By 1990s, she began retiring from acting. She was last seen in 2002's "Manna From Heaven." AP

AROUND THE WORLD



A 'Zaldiko' (people wearing horse figures) hits revellers with a sponge during San Fermin festival's parade in Pamplona, Spain, on Thursday

Woman swept to sea while swimming at a Japanese beach is rescued 37 hrs later

A Chinese woman in her 20s who was swept out to sea while swimming at a Japanese beach was rescued 37 hours later after drifting in a swimming ring more than 80km in Pacific Ocean, officials said Thursday. The woman was spotted by a cargo ship early Wednesday off the southern tip of Boso Peninsula. Two of its crew jumped into the sea and rescued the woman. She was slightly dehydrated but in good health and walked away after being examined at a hospital.

arrested in Mississippi. The baby had bug bites but appeared to be in good condition. Autopsy reports were pending on the 4-year-old who was found Monday in a lake near the Texas state line. Authorities learned he had last been seen on Saturday with his mother, Aaliyah Jack, 25, and the infant. Jack was arrested on Tuesday in Meridian, Mississippi, over 563km from where her children were found. She was to be extradited to Louisiana, where she faced a charge of failure to report a missing child.

1-year-old in Mississippi survives 48 hours of storm, found crawling on highway
A Louisiana sheriff says a 1-year-old "miracle baby" survived two days of stormy weather before a truck driver spotted him crawling along a roadside the day after his 4-year-old brother was found dead and his mother was

'Rust' trial: Alec Baldwin cast as a flouter of rules
Prosecutors sought to cast Alec Baldwin as someone who flouts rules and has little regard for safety at the first day of his trial in the shooting of a cinematographer. The special prosecutor repeatedly referred to Baldwin playing "make-believe" with a revolver on the set of "Rust," and said it led to very real danger and the death of Halyna Hutchins. The prosecutor said behind-the-scenes video will show Baldwin casually disregarding basic safety.

Covering on spire of a cathedral that Monet painted catches fire

Blaze In Rouen Cathedral A Haunting Reminder Of 2019 Fire At Notre-Dame

A tarp covering the spire of a cathedral in Rouen, France, that inspired the artist Claude Monet caught fire on Thursday, city officials said.

The cathedral, Notre-Dame de Rouen, about 112km northwest of Paris, was evacuated, and emergency services were at the site, local officials said on X. "All of the public resources have been mobilised," the city's mayor, Nicolas Mayer-Rossignol, wrote on X, adding that the fire's cause was unknown.

Caroline Dartate, a Rouen official, said that only a tarp covering the cathedral's spire had caught fire and that the blaze was under control. She said the tarp had been in place around the spire because the cathedral was undergoing renovation work. "There doesn't seem to be too much damage and, above all, no one was injured," Dartate said.

The blaze in Rouen was a haunting reminder of the 2019 fire at Notre-Dame cathedral in



The Rouen cathedral, whose construction began in the 12th century, is considered one of the finest Gothic churches in France. Among its most notable visitors was Monet, who painted the cathedral more than 30 times

Paris, which almost brought the building to the ground and topped its 300-foot spire. The Paris cathedral, which is over 850 years old, is scheduled to reopen in December.

The Rouen cathedral, whose construction began in the 12th century, is considered one of the finest Gothic churches in France. Among its most notable visitors was Monet, who painted the cathedral more than 30 times in the early 1890s, according to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He often captured its facade from different angles and at different times of the day.

The cathedral has suffered significant harm in the past: An earlier building was destroyed by Viking invasions in 841, and the cathedral was severely damaged by Allied bombardments in World War II.

So has the spire, which, at almost 500 feet tall, is the highest in France. It was destroyed by lightning in 1822 and was later rebuilt using cast iron, then a very modern material. Earlier this year a massive fire hit another historic European building, Copenhagen's Old Stock Exchange, toppling its spire. Large parts of the outer walls later collapsed. NYT



IS AI RESHAPING THE WORLD?

AI will create new jobs with different skills

AI is advancing rapidly, transforming our daily lives and enhancing productivity. While AI will automate certain tasks and reinvent traditional work methods, it will also create new jobs requiring different skills. Organisations should work towards leveraging AI to cultivate a future-ready workforce by focusing on integrating AI with human capabilities instead of replacing them. Employers should focus on creating learning opportunities and training employees in relevant AI skills. This can include training programmers to write better AI algorithms, designers to use generative AI, talent acquisition managers to utilise AI-assisted recruitment tools, and upskilling technical workers as prompt engineers, data ethicists, and AI auditors. AI-powered learning systems can personalise the learning experience for each employee. At Infosys, we believe that encouraging employees to use AI to enhance their human capabilities, such as creative thinking and innovation, will help alleviate their concerns and reduce skepticism about AI.

Shaji Mathew | GROUP HEAD, HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, INFOSYS

Friday July 12, 4.30pm to 5.30pm
Event page link: <https://bit.ly/aitechies3>

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TIMES TECHIES WEBINAR
Topic: Problem Solving Skills for Engineers in the Era of AI

TIMES TECHIES WEBINARS

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AI is changing your HR department

AI's productivity gains mean HR professionals need to upskill to stay relevant

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

In the pre-AI era, business services provider Ques Corp's HR department was bogged down with time-consuming tasks like running surveys and conducting hundreds of focus group sessions just to gather basic employee feedback. A single employee feedback conversation would take about 30 minutes, says Ruchi Ahluwalia, group chief human resources officer for Ques Corp. Now, with Nikki -- Ques' AI chatbot that performs sentiment analysis, categorising feedback as positive, negative, or neutral -- that same process takes only five minutes. "The AI handles the initial data collection and analysis, presenting it on a dashboard for quick review."

To put this into perspective, Ruchi says they have about 8,356 conversations with their employees yearly, which without Nikki, would have taken a staggering 1,990 days. "With Nikki, we've cut that down to just 332 days. This efficiency boost has transformed our Human Resource Business Partners (HRBPs) from data collectors into strategic decision-makers. They now focus on actionable insights, innovative initiatives, and creating a more people-centric company culture."

Boosting productivity by significant amounts is the chief reason why AI is taking our world by storm.

Madhav Krishna, CEO and founder of Vahan.co, says a recruiter client, who utilised Vahan's AI tech to hire blue-collar workers, achieved a notable productivity leap. "Previously, their team maxed out at 100 calls per day. However, with the help of Vahan.ai, they were able to make a staggering 500 calls in a single day -- a fivefold increase in output! The benefits extended beyond call volume, hiring outcomes soared as well. Where they once averaged one successful hire per day, AI support empowered them to consistently bring on ten to fifteen recruits daily."

Jayaprakash Nair, senior engineering leader of data science at Altimetrik, says that whetting and filtering resumes with AI has had

"For campus hiring, we use AI-integrated gamified assessments to evaluate candidates more effectively. One of the notable advantages of deploying these tools is their ability to remove the influence of unconscious biases, which can sometimes inadvertently affect human decision-making. Overall, it helps in saving time, enhances the quality of candidates, and fosters an inclusive work culture."

Priyanka Anand | VP & HEAD HR, SOUTHEAST ASIA OCEANIA AND INDIA, ERICSSON

"To stay relevant in the age of AI, HR professionals should focus on developing a combination of technical and soft skills. This includes learning about data analysis, machine learning, and how to interpret AI-generated insights. Secondly, develop skills in managing and implementing AI tools. Although the form of administration is changing as technology and HR automation are harnessed, administrative tasks remain a major part of the HR role. This involves understanding how to integrate AI with existing processes."

Balasarathanan Kumarappan | VP AND HEAD, ANALYTICS, MINDSPRINT

"I believe that much like IT was a CIO's responsibility, and the Internet, with Google and Facebook, became the CMO's game, Generative AI will fall squarely in the CHRO camp. This is because GenAI is primarily a powerful tool to ramp up employee productivity and efficiency. For example, in HR, you can recruit faster, on-board more efficiently with personalised plans, have a better performance management system, reduce bias and increase inclusion for DEI and automate routine HR functions."

Jaspreet Bindra | FOUNDER, TECH WHISPERER

unexpected advantages too. "There have been anecdotes of AI flagging fictitious content in the resumes. This helps surface spurious resumes. Another area where AI has helped, is in surfacing and quantifying employee sentiments. We've heard stories of capable but disgruntled employees being flagged by AI, so that corrective and preventive measures can be adopted prior to the employees actually deciding to leave the company."

How to stay relevant

With such impressive productivity gains with the AI models of today, and with models improving continuously, it stands to reason that companies might not need as many HR professionals in the future as they have historically needed. "As more and more HR tasks become automated, it is possible that some jobs may become obsolete or that employees will be displaced from their current roles.



"Our recent Future of Pay in India Report 2024 revealed that the majority of organisations in India (59%) are considering GenAI for HR processes. In this workplace shift, it is important for HR professionals to embrace AI as a tool, alongside honed data literacy and critical thinking. Those who possess these skills can proficiently interpret reports, comprehend data models and algorithms, and transform findings into actionable strategies."

Srinivas Konidena | CTO & VP, APAC PRODUCTS, ADP

"Gen AI has been a major game changer for HR with its potential to transform workforce productivity, increase new growth opportunities and achieve better employee satisfaction. Its adoption has been rapid, where generative AI not only assists in completing daily mundane tasks in less time, but also supports in better decision making and enhancing employee experiences. With embedded Gen AI, HR teams today can streamline processes, such as hiring, talent management, career development, and service delivery."

Shailesh Singla | SENIOR DIRECTOR, APPLICATIONS, ORACLE INDIA

Those role holders may require reskilling or upskilling programs to help transition to new roles," says Swadesh Behera, chief people officer for Titan Company. To stay relevant, Vinu AV, talent digital transformation and operations leader at EY Global Delivery Services (GDS), says having the ability to understand and interpret data is crucial now. "HR professionals should be able to use data analytics to make informed decisions and to

understand the output of AI tools. It doesn't mean that HR professionals need to become AI experts, but they should understand the capabilities and limitations of AI tools."

HR professionals need to become more business savvy as well, says Vikram Ahuja, co-Founder of ANSR & CEO of Talent500. "Think beyond paperwork. Understand how HR impacts the company's bottom line. Use data from AI tools to identify talent needs and design recruitment strategies that hit the bullseye."

Challenges to deploying AI
Jaspreet Bindra, founder of Tech Whisperer, says that one of the biggest challenges in deploying AI in HR operations relates to inculcating an AI culture within the organisation which is data-driven, has ethical guardrails, but within which employees are allowed to be curious and experimentative with fast-emerging new Gen AI tools. "Only when every employee eagerly experiments and works with this powerful and democratic technology, will it move the needle for an organisation in terms of productivity and efficiency - and that will be HR's responsibility."

There are plenty of other challenges as well, which are more commonly associated with deploying Gen AI platforms at scale - like data privacy, security, bias, cost, and the fact that employees will have to be extensively trained to use these AI tools. None of these are deal breakers though, says Srinivas Konidena, CTO and VP of APAC products for ADP, a US-based provider of human resources management software and services. "We have developed a compliance-by-design process that establishes key guardrails around transparency, bias, and accuracy of our generative AI tools."

Srinivas says they have also banned the use of public AI tools such as ChatGPT within the company. "Instead, we are working with Microsoft to create a separate ChatGPT instance for the company, allowing us to use the technology more actively while maintaining data security."

Kunal, Vignesh use AI to clean data easily



Sheilpa.Phadnis @timesgroup.com

Kunal Bhatia and Vignesh Baskaran founded Hexo in 2022 with the idea of assisting enterprises harness the power of unstructured data through the use of autonomous AI agents. The company leverages AI to unlock valuable insights from previously untapped data sources.

Kunal, an alumnus of BITS Pilani, is a three-time AI entrepreneur, having built startups across edtech and IoT that leveraged AI. Vignesh, Hexo's CTO, brings over 12 years of AI and deep learning experience. Vignesh previously led the machine learning research team at case study platform Darts-IP, where his algorithm contributed to the firm's \$61 million acquisition. He holds a Master's in AI from KU Leuven University in Belgium.

Traditionally, extracting insights from... unstructured data is a manual, labour-intensive ETL (extract-transform-load) process. This process is usually built and managed by expensive data engineers who write custom web scraping and parsing scripts. As a result, over 90% of a data team's time is consumed in building these data pipelines, taking the focus away from the real value creation tasks such as analytics.

Hexo's platform is already being utilised by a diverse set of enterprises, including data vendors, financial asset managers, and BPOs, who rely on it to fetch and extract data from unconventional sources and convert it into actionable insights via API connectors. For investment analysts, Hexo's AI agent scours the internet to gather pertinent data from non-traditional sources. In the BPO sector, Hexo's AI agent autonomously navigates multiple applications and files, significantly reducing the reliance on manual data entry and decision-making tasks performed by BPO workers, ultimately enhancing efficiency and profitability.

Kunal Bhatia | CO-FOUNDER, HEXO

"As GenAI capabilities continue to evolve, we also offer consulting services to help enterprises explore and identify opportunities where GenAI can significantly enhance their operations," says Kunal.

Hexo's AI systems employ

Robots and humans will share autonomy: Expert

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

In a world racing towards artificial intelligence dominance, Sethu Vijayakumar is advocating for a more nuanced approach: shared autonomy between humans and machines.

Vijayakumar, director of robotics and AI at the Alan Turing Institute and a chair professor of robotics at the University of Edinburgh, believes the next frontier in robotics isn't about replacing humans, but enhancing their capabilities.

TECH TRENDS

"We're trying to get robots that can make decisions on their own, start making decisions that are potentially beyond the realms of human intelligence," Vijayakumar said during a presentation at the first day of the International Gen AI conclave held in Kochi, Kerala on Thursday. "But in the next five to 10 years, what we're going to see is not solutions that are fully autonomous, but solutions that are somewhere in between."

This vision of shared autonomy could revolutionise industries ranging from manufacturing to healthcare. In one example, Vijayakumar showcased how a "tele-barista" robot in Tokyo is able to prepare coffee while being partially controlled by remote operators -- includ-

"We're trying to get robots to start making informed decisions that are potentially beyond the realms of human intelligence. In the next five to 10 years, what we're going to see is not solutions that are fully autonomous, we're going to see observations that are somewhere in between, where we have humans still in control of many of the high-level goals, but the robot will take a lot of decisions on their own. And this is what we call shared autonomy."

Sethu Vijayakumar | DIRECTOR, ROBOTICS AND AI, ALAN TURING INSTITUTE



ing individuals with disabilities who might otherwise be unable to join the workforce.

The applications extend far beyond coffee shops. Vijayakumar's lab is working with NASA

on robots that could maintain assets on Mars, and with Honda on collaborative robots for assembly lines. In healthcare, they're developing smart prosthetics and rehabilitation robots for patients with neurodegenerative diseases.

However, Vijayakumar cautions against unrealistic expectations. "We tend to overestimate technology in the short term," he said. "People go with the hype. And they think that generally VR, or robotics, or AI, or machine learning in general, is the next best thing to sliced bread, and it can solve all your problems."

Instead, he advocates for a measured approach that acknowledges both the potential and limitations of current technology while preparing for future advancements. This is particularly relevant for countries like India, which Vijayakumar believes should leapfrog to high-value AI applications rather than simply catching up in areas already dominated by other nations.

As robotics and AI continue to evolve, Vijayakumar emphasises the need to address underlying challenges, including safety, security, and ethical considerations. "Our responsibility is not just to say this is a wonderful piece of technology," he said. "It's trying to get the public to understand where it works, where it does not, what are the vulnerabilities."

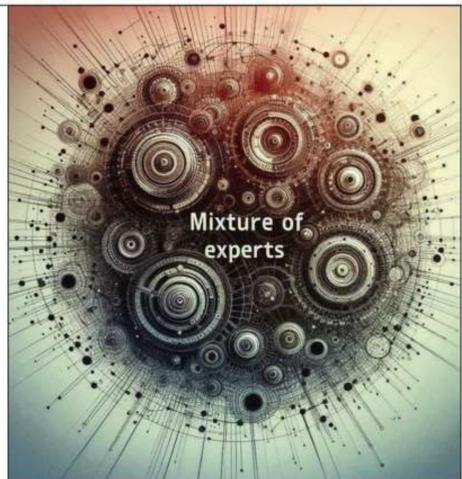
THE RISE OF MIXTURE OF EXPERTS

Mixture of Experts (MoE) architecture has emerged as a powerful approach to improving the performance and efficiency of large AI models, particularly in natural language processing and other complex tasks. This architecture has helped push the boundaries of what's possible with AI, enabling more sophisticated and capable models while managing computational resources more effectively.

At its core, the MoE architecture is based on the principle of divide-and-conquer. Instead of having a single, massive neural network tackle all aspects of a task, MoE divides the problem into subtasks and employs multiple "expert" networks, each specialising in different aspects of the overall task. A gating network then decides which experts to activate for any given input, effectively routing the data to the most appropriate specialists.

This approach offers several key advantages:

- 1. Increased Model Capacity** | MoE allows for dramatically larger models without a proportional increase in computational cost. By activating only a subset of experts for each input, the model can have a vast number of parameters while keeping the active computation relatively small.
- 2. Specialisation and Efficiency** | Different experts can specialise in handling different types of inputs or subtasks. This specialization leads to more efficient processing and often better performance on specific types of data.
- 3. Improved Scalability** | MoE architectures can



be scaled more easily than traditional models. Adding more experts increases the model's overall capacity and potential performance without necessarily increasing the computation required for each forward pass.

4. Better Handling of Diverse Tasks | In multi-task learning scenarios, different experts can specialise in different tasks, allowing the model to perform well across a wide range of applications.

5. Reduced Overfitting | By activating only relevant experts for each input, MoE models can reduce overfitting on specific patterns in the training data.

The implementation of MoE has led to significant improvements in various AI models. For instance, Google's Switch Transformer and subsequent models have demonstrated how MoE can be used to create language models with over a trillion parameters, far exceeding the size of traditional transformer models while maintaining or improving performance and reducing computational costs.

GLOSSARY OF IN-GROUP TERMS USED

ON THIS PAGE

ETL PROCESS
ETL, which stands for Extract, Transform, and Load, is a crucial process in data integration and management. It involves three main steps that work together to move and process data from various sources into a target system. The process begins with the Extract phase, where data is gathered

from diverse source systems. These sources can include databases, flat files, APIs, or even web scraping. The goal is to collect all relevant data for further processing. Next comes the Transform stage, where the extracted data is cleaned, formatted, and restructured to meet the requirements of the target system. This may involve data cleansing to remove duplicates and

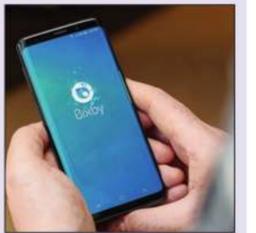
correct errors, standardisation to ensure consistent formats, enrichment by adding derived or calculated values, aggregation or summarisation, and the application of business rules or complex calculations. Finally, the Load phase involves importing the transformed data into the target system. This is often a data warehouse, data mart, or database.

The loading process ensures that the data is stored in a format that supports reporting, analysis, and other business processes. ETL is essential for creating a unified view of data from disparate sources, enabling better decision-making and analytics. It's commonly used in business intelligence, data warehousing, and data migration projects.

AROUND THE WORLD THIS WEEK

Samsung to release upgraded Bixby

Samsung plans to release an upgraded version of its Bixby voice assistant powered by artificial intelligence later this year. The AI-enhanced Bixby will be based on Samsung's own large language models, rather than relying on third-party AI like ChatGPT or Google Gemini. The upgrade aims to make Bixby more conversational and capable of handling complex, multi-step tasks across different apps. While other tech giants have integrated AI into their digital assistants, Samsung's Bixby has lagged behind in 2024 updates. Apple's AI-powered Siri is also expected to receive an upgrade in iOS 18 next year.



SNAPSHOTS

Expecting Aditi to win medal in Paris: Kapil

India's leading golfer Aditi Ashok can go one step further and win a medal at the Paris Olympics provided her form does not betray her in pressure situations, feels newly appointed PGTI president Kapil Dev. "I want to see Aditi playing with the same pomp that she played with in the Tokyo Olympics. If Aditi plays in the same form, she has a good chance to win a medal," Kapil said. PTI

I could have done better in tennis, says Saina: Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal feels she would have perhaps excelled more as a sports person if she had picked a tennis racket instead of playing badminton. "There is more money and I had more strength I think. I could have done better in tennis than badminton," Saina said during her Her Story-My Story talk at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. PTI

Opportunity for direct entry into Jr French Open: Indian players will get an opportunity along with other Asian competitors to earn a direct entry into the junior French Open next year through the inaugural Roland-Garros Junior Series—a qualifying event to be held from Oct 16-20 in Tokyo. To make it to the Tokyo event, the players in the Asian region will first have to compete in the regional qualifying tournaments in Kazakhstan (Aug 5-9) and China (Aug 11-17). PTI

Mumbai City sign Greek striker Nikolaos Karelis: Mumbai City FC on Thursday announced signing of Greek striker Nikolaos Karelis ahead of the upcoming ISL season. This will be 32-year-old's maiden stint in India. PTI

'Paris is my fourth and probably last Olympics': Former Indian men's hockey captain Manpreet Singh very well knows that the Paris Games will be his fourth and last Olympics, and wants to give his best one last time at the world's biggest sporting extravaganza. PTI

Record 8.6 million tickets sold for Paris Oly: The Paris Olympics already has one gold medal in the bag before it begins with 8.6 million tickets sold—a record for any Games. "It's a record held by the 1996 Atlanta Games of 8.3 million tickets and we've already passed that total now some time ago," Games organiser Tony Estanguet said on Thursday. Paris Organisers forecast that total rising to 10 million for Olympics and 3.4 million for the Paralympics. AFP

ACTION TODAY

ATHLETICS: Diamond League, Monaco, 11.30 pm (JioCinema)
CRICKET: England vs WI, 1st Test, Day 3, 3.30 pm (Sony Sports)
CYCLING: Tour De France, Stage 13, 7.30 pm (Eurosport)
TENNIS: Wimbledon, 3.30 pm (Star Sports)

Paolini Pips Vekic To Reach 2nd Straight Slam Final, To Battle Krejckikova For Title

JASMINE SEASON

FULL BLOOM: Italian Jasmine Paolini exults after beating Donna Vekic in the longest (2hrs, 51mins) Wimbledon women's semifinal

TIMES AT WIMBLEDON
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London: Jasmine Paolini sprinted across the lawn and chased down a drop shot midway through the Wimbledon semifinal. Donna Vekic replied with a heavily spun topspin lob. The Italian had no business getting to the ball, she was almost kissing the net cord when she turned and charged back to the baseline. Racket on ball, she got it over the net. Vekic, whose forehand was calling the shots until that point, thumped the ball wide.

Centre Court gasped. There was a hint of a smile on Paolini's expressive face, a reminder perhaps to never count her out. Vekic, hands on hips, also smiled, but for a whole different reason. That right there—with the sun casting a glow on SW19 for the second successive afternoon—was where the first of the ladies' semifinals turned. An extraordinary contest, where every nook and corner of the court was used and covered. Lines met angles and power met poise. Paolini, the No. 7 seed, stopped the inspired run of Vekic, 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8) in two hours and 51 minutes in the longest women's singles match in Wimbledon history.

Paolini, the first Italian woman

to reach the Wimbledon final in the Open Era, and the first player to reach the final at Roland Garros and the Championships in the same year since Serena Williams in 2016, will play Barbora Krejckikova in the title match on Saturday. The 31-st seeded Czech produced a stirring comeback of her own to stun 2022 champion Elena Rybakina 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the second semifinal.

What turned the three-hour affair into gripping cinema was the back stories of these two women, both 28 years of age.

Some of the shots Vekic hit, you could see a lifetime's work on it. The RPMs were singing. On the other side, Paolini's resolve shone brighter than the sun, while her craft sparkled.

They have both loved and lived, had their hearts broken and wills tested. Vekic's body was so bruised and beaten that two months ago she was seriously considering walking away from the sport. The Croat made her first Grand Slam semifinal in her 43rd major, after losing in the first round 20 times.

Paolini, 5'4", had lost in the first round of her three previous Wimbledon main draw appearances, earlier she had fallen in the qualifiers thrice. It wasn't until January, in Australia, that she had made the second week of a Grand Slam.

The semifinal then stood for

everything women's sport stands for—titanic ability, physical and mental prowess; pulsating power, lightning speed, resilience. And an unbendable steel. Vekic, clearly injured, and struggling to motor on, sobbed. Paolini screamed 'forza'.

Then, when it was all over, the seventh seed led the Centre Court applause as Vekic walked off the court. "It was really tough today, she played unbelievable. She was hitting winners everywhere, I was struggling at the beginning, but I told myself to fight for every ball. I'm so happy with this win." Paolini said. She then added with a smile, "This match I will remember forever." She is not alone.

"I thought I was going to die in the third set. I had so much pain in my arm, in my leg. It was not easy out there. I was more crying because I had so much pain."

—Donna Vekic

SEMIFINAL RESULTS

Women: 31-Barbora Krejckikova (CZE) bt 4-Elena Rybakina (KAZ) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; 7-Jasmine Paolini (ITA) bt Donna Vekic (CRO) 2-6, 6-4, 7-6(10-8).

Can Musetti stop the Djokovic juggernaut?

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London: Lorenzo Musetti's play has been doing some talking at Wimbledon. The 22-year-old Italian is the owner of a single-handed backhand, that's all art, and a forehand that's precise and fiery. Timing is his touch. Musetti, 6 ft 1", is slightly built, and has wheels that are both fast and sturdy.

If the world No.25's win over Taylor Fritz in the quarterfinals on Wednesday, putting him in the last-four of a Grand Slam for the first time in his career, is any indication of the mental miles he may have covered in recent weeks, expect a cracker of a last-four clash against the seven-time champion Novak Djokovic on Friday.

In the first of the last-four clashes—defending champion Carlos Alcaraz goes up against Daniil Medvedev in a replay of their US Open semifinals last September.

Musetti trails Djokovic 1-5 in head-to-head clashes, their rivalry (so far) bookended by their only two meetings in majors, both at Roland Garros, and on both occasions Musetti going down in five-sets without winning a game in the deciding set. The first time was three years ago, a teenager then, he retired from the match (when trailing 0-4 in



FATHER TIME: Djokovic plays with his daughter Tara at practice

the fifth set) and again last month in the third round after Musetti had taken the second and third sets.

The Italian was in a similar situation against Fritz, leading by two-sets-to-one. The American fell back 0-40 in the fifth game of the fourth set, where Musetti had four chances to break, but came up short. The Italian media groaned in unison, they had seen this before. In his box his long-time coach Simone Tartarini could hardly believe all that was playing out before him.

Musetti was doing a Musetti again. Until he undid it in a stirring fifth set where he lost just 13 points. The 22-year-old's Roland Garros third-round match against Djokovic finished at 3 am.

"I had my chances. I didn't take the chances, especially in the fourth where I was leading," Musetti said at Wimbledon, some 40 days later. "I have analyzed that match, the key moments and where I could do better. I put myself in that position again. In the past weeks, starting from Stuttgart, I started to feel more continuous with that attitude."

In his two grasscourt events before Wimbledon Musetti made the semifinal in Stuttgart and final at Queen's Club. "Even against Fritz I have that attitude, especially after losing the first set where I didn't feel my serve really well. I didn't feel the ball. I was a little bit nervous," he said. "Then immediately with a positive attitude I changed my mindset, and also the feeling with the ball was better."

The Italian's victory over Fritz has given him a 4-6 win-loss record in five-set matches. "I've had many, many tough losses (at Grand Slams). Especially in the French Open," he said. "The losses made me think, made me work harder."

"With Djokovic, I always finished the match with a lesson," Musetti said. "Against him you are probably more stressed because he's probably the best player ever. If I play in a certain way, I could have my shot in the next round."

Musetti would like nothing more than to showcase on Centre Court all that he has learnt.

Pics: Reuters, AFP

ALCARAZ FACES MEDVEDEV IN REMATCH OF 2023 SEMI

London: Carlos Alcaraz's ability to hit any type of shot, from any position on the court, on any surface, keeps fans on the edge of their seats. Keeps other players guessing, too. Alcaraz delights in all of that—he loves putting on a show just as much as he enjoys knowing he makes the guys on the other side of the net uncomfortable—and figures it can only help him in the Wimbledon semifinals against Daniil Medvedev on Friday. It's beneficial, Alcaraz said, that opponents need to focus on whether he'll be "able to be back (in) the point or... able to hit an unbelievable shot." Their clash is a rematch from last year's semifinals, when Alcaraz won in straight sets. AP



ALCARAZ

VS

MEDVEDEV

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Alcaraz 4
Medvedev 2

"The most difficult thing about facing Daniil, or the most special thing about him, is he can reach every ball."

—Alcaraz

At Jimmy's farewell bash, debutant Jamie has a party

Wicketkeeper Smith Slams 70; Windies 79-6, Still Trail Eng By 171

London: West Indies limped to 79-6 at the close of the second day of the first Test against England at Lord's on Thursday, trailing their hosts by 171 runs and heading for a heavy defeat.

Half-centuries by Joe Root, Harry Brook and Jamie Smith lifted England to a first-innings total of 371 before James Anderson, playing his 188th and last Test match, bowled Windies captain Kraigg Brathwaite with a fine delivery that jagged back.

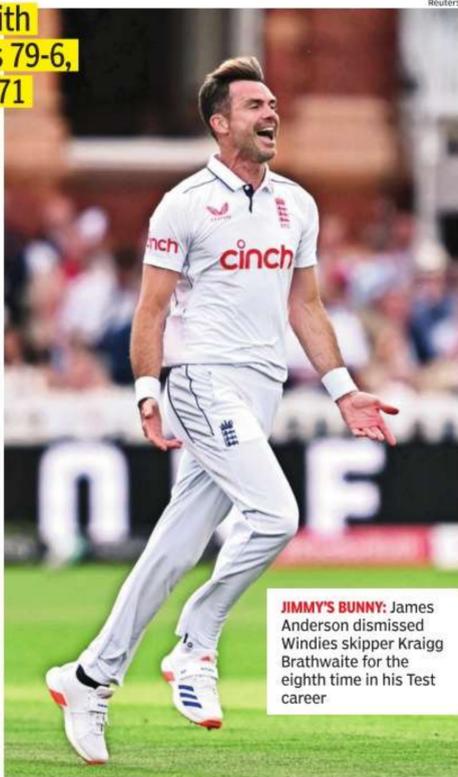
Kirk McKenzie, Mikyle Louis and Kaveem Hodge fell cheaply and only a battling partnership between Alick Athanaze and Jason Holder ensured the game went into a third day.

Anderson dismissed Athanaze for 22, however, and Gus Atkinson snared Holder for 20 with the final ball of the day to leave Joshua Da Silva unbeaten on eight.

England had resumed on 189-3 in the morning and Brook batted with attacking intent, reaching his 12th fifty in 13 tests before getting in a tangle over a short ball from Alzarri Joseph and skying a catch to wicketkeeper Da Silva. Ben Stokes was bowled by Gudakesh Motie for four with a ball that spun sharply and struck the England captain's middle stump.

Root eased to his 62nd Test fifty and looked completely untroubled until just before lunch when Motie produced another fine turning delivery to bowl him for 68.

The 23-year-old Smith, making his Test debut, shared a 52-run partnership with Chris Woakes who was caught at square leg off Jayden Seales for 23. Fast bowler Gus Atkinson, fell first ball to Holder



JIMMY'S BUNNY: James Anderson dismissed Windies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite for the eighth time in his Test career

Tendulkar the best batter I've bowled to, says Anderson

London: Retiring England fast bowling great James Anderson says he enjoyed his battles against Sachin Tendulkar the most over the course of his career. "The best batter I would have to say is Sachin Tendulkar," Anderson told Sky

Sports when asked about the toughest batter he bowled to. "I don't remember having a game plan against Tendulkar. I would just think that I cannot bowl a bad ball. If you get him out in India, the whole atmosphere, in the ground changes," he added. PTI

and Smith went on the attack, hitting two big sixes and eight fours. REUTERS

and 79 for 6 trail England 371 (Crawley 76, Smith 70, Root 68, Pope 57, Brook 50, Seales 4-77) by 171 runs

Brief Scores: West Indies 121

Allrounders with triple of 6,000 runs, 200 wickets and 100 catches in Tests

Player	For	Tests	Runs	Ave	HS	100	Wkts	Ave	5WI	Ct
Jacques Kallis	ICC/SA	166	13289	55.37	224	45	292	32.65	5	200
Garry Sobers	WI	93	8032	57.78	365*	26	235	34.03	6	109
Ben Stokes	Eng	103	6320	35.30	258	13	201	31.66	4	106

Rajesh Kumar

BCCI bats for hybrid model in CT as board sources say India won't travel to Pak

New Delhi: The Indian team will not travel to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and will ask the International Cricket Council (ICC) to hold its matches in Sri Lanka or Dubai, a BCCI source said.

The ICC Champions Trophy will be held next year from Feb to March 2025 in Pakistan. Since the 2008 Asia Cup, India have not played any tournaments in Pakistan due to political tensions between both nations.

A bilateral series from December 2012 to January 2013 in India also marked the final bilateral series between the two nations. Since then, both nations have only clashed at all ICC tournaments and the Asia Cup.

Uncertainty has been looming over India's partici-

pation in the upcoming event due to the relationship between the two countries.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had proposed to India to play all their matches in one city. Lahore was chosen as the location where India would play all of their matches. However, the Indian board is not interested in the prospect of travelling to Pakistan.

While addressing India's participation in the event, the BCCI source said, "India will not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy 2025. Will tell ICC to hold its matches in Dubai or Sri Lanka."

BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla, in May said that the Indian team would be sent to Pakistan for the tournament only if the central government permits it. ANI

Pallekele and Colombo to host India's matches in SL

New Delhi: India will play three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs during their tour to Sri Lanka across July and August, and the matches will be played at Pallekele and Colombo, the BCCI announced on Thursday.

The white-ball tour will kick off with the T20Is (July 26, 27, 29) at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium and the series will then move to Colombo where the one-dayers (August 1, 4, 7) will be played at the R Premadasa

International Stadium.

India will be manned by newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir, while the Lankans will also have a new coach in Sanath Jayasuriya. Gambhir has recently replaced Rahul Dravid, who led India to their second T20 World Cup title in the Americas, while Jayasuriya came in for Chris Silverwood.

India are likely to be led by KL Rahul as regular skipper Rohit Sharma is set to be rested. PTI

HASARANGA QUILTS AS LANKA T20I CAPTAIN

Colombo: Wanindu Hasaranga on Thursday stepped down as the Sri Lanka captain in T20 Internationals ahead of their upcoming three-match series against India.

"Sri Lanka Cricket wishes to inform the public that National Men's T20I Captain Wanindu Hasaranga has decided to resign from the captaincy," a release from Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said. "Hasaranga said it is in the best interest of Sri Lanka Cricket that he decided to relinquish the captaincy duties and remain in

the side as a player," the release added. Hasaranga's last assignment as Sri Lanka skipper was in the T20 World Cup where the 2014 champions failed to make the Super Eight round. "Sri Lanka will always have my utmost best efforts as a player, and I will support and stand by my team and leadership as always," Hasaranga was quoted as saying in the statement.

The SLC added that it has accepted Hasaranga's resignation. "Sri Lanka Cricket, while accepting his resignation, wishes to state that Hasaranga will remain an important player for us in our international cricketing plans," SLC said. PTI

STARC PEEVED OVER SNUB VS AFGHANISTAN

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc has expressed his displeasure at being dropped for the crucial T20 World Cup Super Eights match against



Afghanistan in the Caribbean, saying he was not one bit amused by the team management's decision. The Aussies suffered a 21-run loss to Afghanistan, which dented their chances of entering the semifinals. "No—two World Cups in a row," Starc was quoted as saying.

"Just the match-up, they (team management) saw previous games on that ground in St Vincent with spin playing a part and Ash (Agar) and the left-armed enticing them to make a change," he said. PTI

Heading to Paris as better players: Satwik-Chirag



Chirag (L) and Satwik are among favourites for the men's doubles title

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New Delhi: A lot has been riding on the shoulders of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty to keep India's medal-winning momentum in badminton going at the Olympic Games. The Indian shuttlers have returned with at least one medal from each of the last three editions of the Games—Saina Nehwal in London 2012 and P V Sindhu in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

But this time, the badminton aficionados have placed bets on men's doubles—the country's most successful pair of Satwik and Chirag. "We are heading to the Paris Olympics not only as better badminton players, but also as a pair which has more experience as a team. We have trained well for the Games and are confident about our chances to finish on the podium," Chirag told TOI.

Satwik concurred that over the last three years since their debut Olympics in Tokyo, both of them have evolved as players and have become more mature. "The Tokyo Olympics were conducted under different circumstances due to the Covid-19. It was our debut Olympics and a huge learning experience for us. Over the years, we have grown a lot both as players and also as a team. We are good at game awareness and know how to pull back things from a difficult situation," Satwik said.

The financial assistance provided by the government towards hiring foreign sparring partners and video analysts for pre-Olympic training camps in Mumbai and Hyderabad have helped Satwik and Chirag in their pursuit for success at the Games. Satwik and Chirag, who are currently the third-ranked pair in BWF world rankings in the men's doubles, have endured a topsy-turvy ride on the tour this season after tasting success in the last two years. The duo has clinched gold at the Asian Games and CWG, and had podium finishes at the World and Asian Championships, Thomas Cup and Super Series meets. This year so far, they have made the finals of three events but couldn't cross the finish line. They did win titles at French and Thailand Opens but recently lost at the Singapore Open. While many would say consistency is missing from their game, the duo doesn't seem worried. "Paris is going to be a tough challenge, especially in men's doubles. Every match and every opponent will count. We will be up against some formidable pairs and we are ready for that challenge. We will trust our instincts and play the natural attacking game. It's not just about power but bringing together your 'A' game. We know when to raise the level of our game," Chirag said.

₹91.75
Total funding (in crore) by government on badminton



MOST OF THE TIME VAR WORKS CORRECTLY, BUT THESE SITUATIONS ARE DIFFICULT. IT IS NOT SMART OF ME BUT YOU DO EVERYTHING TO KEEP THE BALL OUT OF THE GOAL. WE TOUCH EACH OTHER BUT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SAY NOW. THE DECISION WAS MADE AND I HAVE TO ACCEPT IT."

— DUTCH DEFENDER **DENZEL DUMFRIES**, WHO MADE THE CONTACT WITH KANE THAT RESULTED IN A PENALTY

OLIVER'S TWIST!

Watkins Is The Unlikely Toast Of England After His Last-Gasp Winner Denies The Dutch; Spain Await In Final

Dortmund: Ollie Watkins is, in his own words, a realist.

He has never pictured himself playing at a major tournament for England — especially when, as a teenager learning his trade as a striker, he was sent on loan to English sixth-tier club Weston-super-Mare in 2015.

So imagine what went through Watkins' mind when he saw his stoppage-time shot fly past Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen and into the bottom corner to earn England a place in the European Championship final?

He had only made one previous appearance at Euro 2024 — as a substitute in the group game against Denmark — so it was a surprise when he was introduced by Southgate in the 80th minute in England's biggest match so far.

The gamble paid off. Fed by another substitute in Cole Palmer; Watkins took a touch with his back to goal just inside the area and, from a tight angle, smashed a fierce shot into the bottom corner. "I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before," Watkins said after England's 2-1 victory over the Dutch in the semifinals on Wednesday.

It was an incredible finish to an evening that began badly for England, as Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead in the semifinal in Dortmund. However, England were soon level through a Harry Kane penalty following a contentious VAR call by German referee Felix Zwayer, and the match looked set for extra time until Watkins struck.

Suddenly, Watkins is the toast of England, an improbable turnaround in fortunes for a striker who had played 24 minutes at Euro 2024 — as a substitute in the group stage against Denmark — before replacing captain Harry Kane in the 80th minute for the biggest moment of his career.

Being an understudy for Kane, England's all-time leading scorer with 66 goals, is a tough business. Minutes are scarce — Kane typically plays the full game — so every opportunity has to be grasped. Watkins did just that with a goal that fans of the Premier League have seen time and again in his games playing for Aston Villa.

Darting behind the Dutch defence in



NETHERLANDS 1
Simons 8
ENGLAND 2
Kane 18 (pen) Watkins 90

LATE ENTRY: Ollie Watkins's smasher in the 90th minute takes England to their first final of a major tournament overseas

0.05 According to football data and analytics StatsBomb, Ollie Watkins' goal had an xG (a statistical measurement of the quality of goalscoring chances) of 0.05. On the previous night, Yamal's goal had an xG of just 0.023.

89:59 Watkins's winner at 89:59 was the latest winning goal scored in a semifinal at the European Championship/World Cup (excluding extra-time). It was also England's only shot on target in the second half of this match.

65 I said to Cole (Palmer) at half-time that we were both going to go on the pitch and he was going to set me up. It happened, I manifested it and as soon as he turned, I knew I needed to make a move. You don't get that opportunity very often so I had to be greedy, I had to take it. After seeing it go into the bottom corner, I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before. Obviously it's such a special moment."

— Ollie Watkins on HOW HE 'MANIFESTED' HIS GOAL

3 England boss Southgate has become the third coach to reach two Euro finals (2020, 2024), after Germany's Helmut Schoen (1972 and 1976) and Bertie Vogts (1992 and 1996).

9 With questions having been raised about Harry Kane's form, his successful penalty made him joint-top scorer at Euro 2024 with three goals. It also meant he has scored more knockout stage goals in major tournaments (World Cup/Euros) than any other European player (9), leapfrogging Gerd Mueller, Miroslav Klose, Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappe (all 8).

FRENCH REFEREE FRANCOIS LETEXIER TO HANDLE FINAL



Berlin: French referee Francois Letexier was picked by UEFA to handle the European Championship final between Spain and England. The 35-year-old Letexier becomes one of the youngest referees to take charge of a major tournament final. Letexier already refereed three games at Euro 2024 including Spain's 4-1 win over Georgia in the round of 16.

SUCCESS AT YOUTH LEVEL

Many of Southgate's squad in Germany have already experienced winning tournaments at youth level. **Anthony Gordon** and **Cole Palmer** were part of the side that beat Spain in the final to win England's first **Under-21 Euros** after 39 years, 12 months. **Ezri Konsa** won the **Under-20 World Cup** in 2017, while the same year **Phil Foden** won player of the tournament alongside **Marc Guehi** and **Conor Gallagher** in winning the **Under-17 World Cup**.

For Dutch, there's no need to look back in anger

Dortmund: When the bitter disappointment of the semifinal defeat fades, the Netherlands will look back on a satisfying campaign at the Euros. The Dutch would surely have jumped at the possibility of a final-four placing if offered before the start of the tournament but after coming so close to the title decider defeat is hard to swallow.

"We felt we were the better team in the last 20 minutes, but then the knockout blow came just before the end. England scored a great goal and then it's over. That's hard to accept," said coach Ronald Koeman.

The Dutch, who have now lost each of their last four semifinal appearances at the Euros, were handed a blow before the start of the tournament with the loss of Frenkie de Jong. Fellow midfielders Marten de Roon and Teun Koopmeiners, both from Europa League winners Atalanta, were also injured weeks before the tournament.

But the Dutch still possessed enough quality to seal qualification to the knockout phase before losing their last group game to Austria, which dropped them to third in the standings but, ironically, handed them a more favourable draw. That 3-2 defeat was followed by a week's break before they met Romania in the round of 16 — ample time for refocused energies.

The resultant 3-0 win over Romania was a display of the team's potential. The Netherlands' quarters match-up against Türkiye was a much grtier assignment and they had to dig deep. They finally met their match in England. "I think everyone can be proud of this team," added Koeman.

Cody Gakpo's three goals confirmed he is best on the left side of the attack, while Nathan Ake, Denzel Dumfries and new first-choice goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen emerged with reputations enhanced. REUTERS

OLLIE'S MOVES	Minutes played	Goals	Total attempts	Assists	Top speed (km/h)	Distance covered (km)
	9	1	1	0	31.7km/h	1.7km

a manner that is beyond Kane these days, Watkins controlled a pass from Cole Palmer with his back to goal then, in one movement, swiveled and fired a low shot through the legs of Netherlands defender Stefan De Vrij and past Verbruggen from a narrow angle. "That's my bread and butter — running in behind, causing trouble," Watkins said.

If that sounds quite basic, then that's the kind of striker Watkins is.

Hard-working. Selfless. Pretty much the ultimate team player. "I've put in a lot of hard work to get to this point," said Watkins, who was tied as the fourth top scorer in the Premier League this season with 19 goals. "It's not just this season, it's cumulative. I've done a lot of hard work and I'm going to enjoy every moment."

That was evident as Watkins was engulfed by joyous teammates on the

field at Westfalenstadion after his goal, his fourth for England. Two of them came against San Marino, the world's lowest-ranked team.

"It was slow motion when I was running to the boys and celebrating... I didn't want to leave the pitch," he said.

"I've had a few messages from my friends saying, 'Be patient, you're going to get an opportunity.' When I've been on the bench, I've definitely said to

(backup goalkeeper) Dean Henderson, 'I can make a difference today, I need to get on that pitch.' Obviously I've taken my chance when I've got it and I've scored and now we're in the final."

Southgate smiled as he said Watkins had "saved us another half hour" of extra time, which England needed to get past Slovakia and Switzerland previously in the knockout stage. "Very, very special for him," Southgate said. AP

ALL WE NEED IS LOVE, SAYS OFT-DERIDED SOUTHGATE AFTER POSITIVE DECISIONS SHOW PROGRESS

Dortmund: England took a long time to get going in Germany but they marched on to Berlin buoyed by more late drama and their best performance of the tournament.



So often derided for his failure to change games from the bench despite the depth of talent at his disposal, England boss Gareth Southgate could drink in the acclaim in Dortmund as his bold substitutions made a decisive impact. "We all want to be loved, right? So, when you're doing something for your country and you're a proud Englishman and when you don't feel that back and when all you read is criticism, it's hard," Southgate told reporters.

"So, to be able to celebrate a second final is very, very special."

With the game slipping out of his side's grasp after a dominant first half, Southgate replaced captain Harry Kane and Phil Foden with Watkins and Cole Palmer 10 minutes from time. The two subs combined to send England into the final. In typical fashion, Southgate refused to gloat when asked about the changes, quietly saying "sometimes they work, sometimes they don't".

However, he did reveal some of the thinking that pundits do not immediately see from the outside when he said one of the reasons for opting for Watkins was his ability to press defenders.

Southgate learned his lesson from defeat by Croatia in the 2018 World Cup semi-finals and the Euro 2020 final against Italy by injecting fresh energy from the bench. "The lads are singing in the dressing room, but they're straight in the ice," said Southgate, with his eyes firmly on the prize. AGENCIES



THE PENALTY DEBATE RAGES

THE VOICES:
VIRGIL VAN DIJK "I think the penalty moment is a big moment. I think England got some confidence from it. So many decisions didn't go our way but I don't want to talk about the referee today. Maybe he should come here and speak about it too. But I think it says it all that the referee went in quite quickly after the game, had no time to shake his hand."



WHAT? Dutch skipper Van Dijk and Simons argue with the referee

RONALD KOEMAN "This is not a penalty. His only attention was to block a shot. Kane then shoots and their feet collide. Football is getting broken with these type of calls by VAR!"

DALE JOHNSON, VAR EXPERT: "It's a very harsh intervention by the VAR, Bastian Dankert. He has taken the nature of Dumfries' challenge, leading with the studs as opposed to making an attempt to kick through the ball, as being reckless — which is why the Netherlands' player was booked. And that's the one area where a defender catching an attacker after a shot can be seen as a penalty — when it's reckless or dangerous."

GARY NEVILLE, FORMER ENGLAND DEFENDER, ON ITV: "Look, as a defender, I think it's an absolute disgrace. It's an absolutely disgraceful decision, that. To have that given against me as a penalty, at any time, but in a game of such importance, he just goes in to try and block the shot. It's nowhere near a penalty and I have to say, I don't think there weren't many England players claiming for it either. Harry stayed down, he got a little bit of a tap on his foot, but it's never a penalty for me."

REMEMBER KANE'S PENALTY IN EURO 2020 SEMIS: THAT WAS ALSO DISPUTED FOR RAHEEM STERLING'S 'DIVE'
There was an increasing outcry over the penalty awarded for a foul on Raheem Sterling in extra time. An array of media and football figures joined Danish fans in condemning the penalty as too cheap for such a big game. Sterling, who had been accused of diving before in EPL that season, went down in the box after minimal contact from Denmark's Joakim Maehle. Former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was among those doubting. "It's important the referee is absolutely convinced it was a penalty. It was not clear enough to say 'yes it is'. He should have at least had a look at the screen," he said.

WHAT THE RULEBOOK SAYS

Rules set by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), which UEFA abide by, perhaps explained why referee Felix Zwayer gave the spot kick. The rule states: "It is committed with an opponent nearby and prevents the opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury. Playing in a dangerous manner involves no physical contact between the players. If there is physical contact, the action becomes an offence punishable with a direct free kick or penalty kick. In the case of physical contact, the referee should carefully consider the high probability that misconduct has also been committed."

WAS THERE A BUKAYO SAKA HANDBALL IN THE MOVE LEADING UP TO PENALTY?

The awarding of a penalty to England after Denzel Dumfries caught Harry Kane on the foot has sparked controversy, with some questioning the decision further due to an alleged handball by Bukayo Saka in the build-up to the incident. The potential infringement was not identified by VAR. One supporter expressed his opinion on social media, stating: "VAR even missed or didn't care about Saka's handball on both hands before the penalty situation. Lucky England should thank the refs."

Ewan MacKenna, a sports writer, also shared his thoughts on the matter, suggesting that VAR not only failed to advise the referee to review the penalty decision on the monitor, as per guidelines, but also neglected to rewind the footage to show Saka's alleged handball that led to the situation. MacKenna questioned the competence of the professionals reviewing the footage, stating: "I really don't think pros looking at TV can be that incompetent. Stinks."



JONAS ERIKSSON, FORMER FIFA REFEREE
"Here, I am surprised that they don't go and look and overturn the penalty. According to the rulebook, it is a penalty. In reality, when you have to interpret it, I don't think it should be a punishment. It is a clear hand (from Saka) and it means that no penalty should be awarded to Kane."

Colombia emerge winners in fractious semifinal contest

Face Messi's Argentina In Final

Charlotte: Ten-man Colombia defeated Uruguay 1-0 to reach the final of the Copa America for the first time in 23 years after an ill-tempered semifinal on Wednesday. A 39th-minute Jefferson Lerma header sealed victory for the Colombians, who will now face holders Argentina in Sunday's final in Miami.

URUGUAY 0
COLOMBIA 1
Lerma 39



TEARS OF JOY: Rodriguez (on the ground) and teammates celebrate

Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo said his team had been rewarded for their bravery. Down to 10 men for the entire second half, after Daniel Muñoz was sent off just before the interval, Colombia held on for victory without the need for ultra-defensive tactics. "The truth is that it was a very tough match. Uruguay is an excellent team, with excellent players and a coach I admire a lot" Lorenzo said of his fellow Argentine, counterpart Marcelo Bielsa.

"But we took the lead, the risk, and we

his player: "Dani is a little more down because he is a lion and he was betrayed by emotion. I gave him a hug and told him: without you we wouldn't be here," he said.

Lorenzo said he was relishing the final match-up against his compatriots. "This is going to be very nice, I am going to be (competing) with players I met during my career and who I admire a lot," said the former Argentina assistant coach.

Winning run extends to 28 games

The win also extends Colombia's unbeaten run to 28 games, 25 of them under Lorenzo's guidance, and it breaks the previous record of 27 matches set between 1992 and 1994 when the likes of Carlos Valderrama and Freddy Rincon graced the side. "As we said we would, we went game by game. We did not surpass (the 90's team) They left a base. So it is not leaving that behind, it is adding to it, so that Colombian football grows". AGENCIES



Players climb into stands during in-stadia fan brawl

Darwin Nunez and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled at Bank of America Stadium after the end of the match. The crowd of 70,644 was about 90% in favour in Colombia, but a small patch of Uruguay fans fought with Colombia supporters as beverages were thrown. Nunez and teammates

"This is a disaster. Our family is in danger. We had to get into the stands to take out our loved ones with small babies, newborns. There was not a single police officer." — Jose Gimenez, URUGUAY CAPTAIN

then climbed a staircase into the crowd. A video showed Nunez hitting a fan in Colombian colours. Uruguay captain Jose Gimenez said players went in the crowd to protect their families.

6 James Rodriguez surpassed Lionel Messi for the most assists in a single edition at Copa America 2024 with six.

3 With this victory in the semifinals, Colombia ended a streak of three semifinal eliminations: 2004, 2016, and 2021. Additionally, they became the fourth team to reach more than one final in the 21st century, after Argentina (6), Brazil (4) and Chile (2).

12 Lerma's goal against Uruguay also set a record for Colombia: it is the first time they have reached 12 goals in a single edition of the tournament, surpassing the 11 scored in the two editions they reached the final (1975 and 2001).

RaGa misleading, 12.5cr jobs were created in past 10 years, says BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Asserting that India was on the path of progress under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, BJP on Thursday cited govt data to accuse Congress MP Rahul Gandhi of misleading people on the issue of employment and govt policies.

At a press conference, the party's national spokesperson **Syed Zafar Islam** said about 12.5 crore jobs were created in the past 10 years and the latest RBI report showed creation of "5 crore jobs in 2023-24 alone".

"This is a record in itself in the entire world. India is the most successful country in the world in job creation due to the strong leadership of PM Modi," he said.

This comes a day after Rahul said youth of the country were completely demoralised by unemployment and claimed that their future was in "limbo" due to BJP's "anti-education mindset".

"Rahul Gandhi, who insulted Hindus, has started following the religion of falsehood. He and other opposition leaders are misleading people by spreading lies," Islam said.

The BJP functionary said Rahul and other opposition leaders may be claiming that there was unemployment in the country and jobs were not being created but the world didn't say so. Multilateral institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund were saying inflation was under control and the country topped in job creation, he added.

Islam said the Congress-led UPA govt, under "an economist" PM Manmohan Singh, had created just 2.9 crore jobs in its 10-year term. "Unemployment rate, which was at 6% in 2017, has now come down to 3.2%," he added.

Data released by RBI earlier this week indicated that India added nearly 4.7 crore jobs in 2023-24, taking the total number of employed people to 64.3 crore spread over 27 sectors covering the entire economy.

Using the Tornqvist Aggregation formula, RBI said the annual growth in employment in 2023-24 was 6% compared to 3.2% in the year-ago period.

Delhi CM gave OK to cut trees, before L-G's approval, SC told

All Authorities Were Involved, Reveal Docus

AmitAnand.Choudhary
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RIDGE ROW: Records show Kejriwal recommended the controversial proposal on Jan 25

New Delhi: In a twist in the case of illegal tree felling in the Ridge in south Delhi, it now emerges that the proposal to cut the trees was moved by the forest department of Delhi govt and was approved by various authorities including the forest minister and the chief minister before being okayed by the lieutenant governor.

Documents placed before the Supreme Court showed that all authorities from the bottom to the top were involved in the decision-making and approval. As per records, forest department of Delhi govt initiated the notification under Section 29 of Delhi Preservation of Trees Act for felling 422 trees in

non-Ridge area for construction of approach roads spanning nearly 10.5 km from the main Chhattarpur road to Saarc University, CAPFIMS (Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences) and other establishments in New Delhi.

"The proposal was recommended by technical officers working in the forest department, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. Thereafter, additional principal chief conser-

Kejriwal gets Sept date in ED summons case

Delhi HC on Thursday posted for Sept 9 a petition by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal challenging several summonses by ED in connection with its probe into an excise policy-linked money laundering case. A bench of Justices Pratibha M Singh and Amit Sharma granted four more weeks to the AAP leader to file a rejoinder to the reply submitted by ED. Kejriwal's counsel sought time to file the rejoinder, saying that there were certain changes in circumstances, and they have not been given a proper legal interview, a plea for which is pending in HC. The counsel for ED had earlier said the petition against the summons was infructuous after Kejriwal's arrest by the agency on March 21 in the money laundering case following the high court's refusal to grant him interim protection from coercive action. **TNN**

uator of forests recommended the proposal to the principal secretary (environment and forest) who, in turn, recommended the proposal to the chief secretary. The chief secretary recommended the proposal to the minister (environment and forest) who agreed and recommended the proposal to the CM who agreed upon and recommended the proposal to the L-G on Jan 25 which was endorsed by LG on Jan 30. Thereafter, notification

was issued on Feb 14," affidavit filed by DDA vice-chairman Subhashish Panda said.

The disclosure, which may strike many as surprising and ironical considering the high-wattage campaign by Delhi ministers and Aam Aadmi Party against the allegedly illegal felling of trees, came after the DDA vice-chairman, who is facing contempt, placed before the court the whole set of documents detailing the sequence of events.

Targeted by BJP in land row as I am from backward class: Sidda

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mysuru: Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday rebuffed BJP's allegations that Mysuru Urban Development Authority



(Muda) had illegally allotted land to his wife Parvathi, accusing the opposition of targeting him due to his successful leadership as a backward class chief minister twice.

"They are upset and are hatching a conspiracy against me because I became CM again," he said, accusing BJP of making claims without proof. "Muda has not suffered losses from the alleged scam; instead, landowners may have due to the involvement of middle-

Why no action against Karnataka CM over ST funds 'scam'? BJP asks Rahul

BJP on Thursday questioned Congress MP Rahul Gandhi over Valmiki Corporation case and asked why he had not taken action against CM Siddaramaiah for diversion of huge amounts of funds meant for Scheduled Tribes. "Investigation into the scam is revealing the true nature of Congress and its commitment to the ST community. The accused not only diverted close to Rs 100 crore to various bank accounts and shell companies, but it has also come to light that one of the accused purchased a luxury car from a dealer in Hyderabad," BJP MP Tejasvi Surya said.

BJP MP Anil Baluni said, "This time, it (Congress) was caught red-handed while looting development funds belonging to the SC/ST community. On the one hand, Rahul takes oath carrying the Constitution and the other hand, his party in Karnataka is snatching the constitutional rights of SC/ST community." **TNN**

men," he added. BJP claimed Muda allotted Parvathi 14 sites totalling 38,284 sqft in an upscale Mysuru locality as compensation for land in Kesare village. The party has demanded a CBI probe into what it cal-

led a Rs 4,000-crore land-allocation scam, but Siddaramaiah denied the charges, saying Muda had encroached upon the 3 acres and 16 guntas gifted to his wife by her brother.

BJP on Wednesday shared documents to support its allegations. Countering the claims, the CM on Thursday said, "It was an agricultural land, and the deputy commissioner effected conversion in 2005. I've no connection (with the entire exercise). Mallikarjunaswamy, my brother-in-law, has legally gifted it. Where is the question of illegality?" he asked.

Addressing social activist TJ Abraham's complaint to EC regarding the omission of the controversial land in his 2013 assembly polls affidavit, Siddaramaiah said: "Whenever EC seeks clarification, I'm ready to provide answers." He dismissed BJP's protest, saying: "Does BJP want to do only politics over everything?" He conceded that issues exist within Muda and called for a clean-up after inquiry.

Rahul: Will raise Manipur issue in Parl with 'full force'

New Delhi: Leader of opposition **Rahul Gandhi** said Congress and INDIA bloc will raise the demand for restoring normalcy in Manipur "with full force" in Parliament, in what sets the tone for a possible stormy budget session starting July 22.



Posting a video of his interactions with locals in relief camps during his recent visit to the northeastern state, Rahul wrote on X: "I have visited Manipur three times since violence broke out, but unfortunately there is no improvement in the situation — even today the state is divided into two parts. Houses are burning, innocent lives are in danger and thousands of families are forced to live in relief camps."

He said, PM Narendra Modi should personally visit Manipur and appeal for peace while listening to people's problems. "Congress and INDIA will raise the need for peace in Manipur with full force in Parliament to put pressure on govt to end this tragedy," he said.

In the video, Rahul is heard telling the locals, "I can help you... I can raise the issue and put pressure... but I can't reassure you when you will be able to go back to your homes because govt has the answer to this will raise your voice." Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said, "We will not stop pressuring govt to act until peace is restored in the valley and the hills of Manipur." **TNN**

Manipur releases ₹15cr for families displaced by strife

New Delhi: Manipur govt on Thursday disbursed Rs 300 crore through direct benefit transfers (DBT) to four lakh beneficiaries under 46 state and central schemes. It included Rs 32 crore for those in relief camps and displaced families from Kuki and Meitei tribes. On Thursday, Rs 25,000 per family, totalling Rs 15 crore, was released as first instalment of the 'special assistance of Rs 1 lakh per family' for nearly 6,000 displaced families in relief camps. **TNN**

BIMSTEC nations talk connectivity & trade at retreat hosted in India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India hosted Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) foreign ministers' retreat on Thursday with external affairs minister S Jaishankar urging his counterparts to harbour higher aspirations and send out a message that they are determined to infuse new energies, resources and commitment into cooperation among the Bay of Bengal nations.

Jaishankar said global and regional developments also made it imperative that member-states find more solutions amongst ourselves. "There are long-standing goals such as capacity-building and economic cooperation that have acquired a new urgency. And not least, a grouping that is so complementary and congenial in its membership should harbour higher aspirations. Our hope is that these would be expressed as shared and ambitious BIMSTEC vision," he said.

Since it blocked SAARC summit in 2016 because of Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism, India has focused on BIMSTEC to intensify cooperation with its neighbour-



Jaishankar urged his counterparts to harbour higher aspirations

hood. As the minister said, for India, BIMSTEC represents intersection of its 'Neighbourhood First' outlook, 'Act East Policy' and 'SAGAR' vision.

Discussions were focused on connectivity, institutional building, cooperation in trade and business, collaboration in health and space, digital public infrastructure, capacity building and societal exchanges, as well as weighing on merits of new mechanisms, according to Jaishankar.

The retreat, according to Indian govt, was an opportunity to discuss avenues to broaden cooperation in fields of security, connectivity, trade and investment, people to people contacts in Bay of Bengal region and littoral.

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Haryana man in ED net over paper leak in J&K cops' test

Sanjay Khajuria | TNN

Jammu: A Haryana native, Anil Kumar, was on Thursday remanded in Enforcement Directorate custody for five days by a Jammu court a day after the probe agency arrested him in connection with the paper leak in the 2022 J&K Service Selection Board (JKSSB) sub-inspector recruitment examination, officials said.

The examination was held on March 27, 2022, but was cancelled in July by the J&K administration, following allegations of paper leak as well as malpractices.

The probe was handed over to CBI, which filed a chargesheet against 33 accused, including Yadav, on Nov 12, 2022. The ED case originates from the CBI FIR and chargesheet.

According to ED spokesperson, Yadav executed a well-devised plan involving touts based in Haryana and J&K, who arranged candidates willing to pay between Rs 15 lakh and Rs 30 lakh to access the leaked paper. ED had earlier attached assets worth Rs 1 crore as part of its probe.

Raj univ issued backdated degree certificates: Probe

From P 1

Multiple complaints from students also prompted the probe. On July 5, SOG arrested Dalal, along with former chairperson Sarita Karwasra and former registrar Jitendra Yadav. Preliminary investigations suggest Dalal issued backdated degrees to those requiring graduation certificates for visa applications.

"A detailed probe into the fake-degree scam was launched after allegations surfaced that the university was issuing backdated degrees and certificates, some even before the varsity received relevant accreditation for running the courses," ADGP (SOG) V K Singh said.

DIG (SOG) Paris Deshmukh said that since 2013, the university has awarded 708 PhDs, 8,861 engineering degrees and 1,640 degrees in physical education, among others.

Deshmukh said police found "conclusive evidence" of irregularities in the physical training instructor



DIG (SOG) Deshmukh said the varsity has awarded 708 PhDs, 8,861 engineering and 1,640 physical education degrees since 2013

(PTI) recruitment exam of 2022, where more than 1,300 applicants claimed to have completed the course from OPJS, despite the varsity being accredited for only 100 seats since 2016. Only students enrolled before 2020 were eligible for the PTI 2022 exam.

Although police clarified that not all 43,409 degrees under scrutiny, including PhDs, have been deemed "fake", they have not ruled out irregularities in each course. Police suspected candidates obtained backdated degrees to apply for govt jobs, including the PTI exam aimed to fill about 4,500 vacancies. "The university has a sa-

laried staff of fewer than 30, including eight to nine class-4 employees. With such limited numbers, it is not possible to run a university," Deshmukh said. According to sources, a divisional commissioner-led inquiry questioned the university's exam process. When police requested old records, Dalal claimed the documents were destroyed in a Dec 2019 fire.

"We have informed the education department and asked them to re-examine degrees of all candidates who cleared the PTI exam. Degrees issued for other courses are also under the scanner. The education department is mandated to act against the university," an official said.

On June 24, Rajasthan higher education department issued an order to halt new admissions to all courses at OPJS following an investigation that found irregularities in the degrees issued. Prior to that, UGC barred OPJS from enrolling scholars in all PhD programmes in Dec last year.

As judicial officers' arrears remain unpaid, SC summons chief secys

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New Delhi: Riled by non-compliance of orders to disburse arrears of pay and allowances to judicial officers despite seven opportunities, Supreme Court on Thursday ordered chief secretaries and finance secretaries of 20 states to be present in court on Aug 23 and warned, "if dues were not paid by Aug 20, marching orders will be issued".

This order was passed by a bench of CJI D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra after amicus curiae K Parameshwar gave state-wise details of non-compliance of SC's Jan 18, 2023, order, telling all states/UTs to pay arrears of pay and allowances to judicial officers latest by June 30, 2023.

Parameshwar said the apex court had on six occasions acceded to the state's request for more time to pay up all arrears related to pay, allowances and pension as determined by the Second National Judicial Pay Commission, whose recommendations were comparable to the pay scales fixed under Seventh Pay Commission in

2016 for govt employees. Parameshwar said Tamil Nadu is completely non-compliant with SC orders. The top babus of following states would remain present in court on Aug 23: Delhi, West Bengal, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The SC said states, which comply with the direction to fully pay up arrears prior to the next date of hearing on Aug 23, can move an application for exemption from personal appearance of their top bureaucrats.



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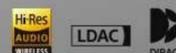
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AFTER MODI'S RUSSIA VISIT, US AMBASSADOR ERIC GARCETTI WARNS AGAINST TAKING THE INDIA-US RELATIONSHIP FOR GRANTED 7

J&K HC's ad hoc bar chairman held under PSA

Senior advocate and ad hoc chairman of J&K High Court Bar Association Nazir Ahmad Ronga was arrested early Thursday from his Srinagar home, according to his family. He was charged under Public Safety Act, which allows authorities to detain a person without trial for up to a year. Ronga, 75, an ex-president of the bar association, is the second ex-president to be held after Mian Abdul Qayoom. **Inside Flap**

Trio who forced Dalit minor to drink urine held

Two days after they made a Dalit minor drink urine, 3 youths were arrested on Thursday in UP's Shravasti. The accused were allegedly peeved over the 15-year-old's family charging them extra for an audio system they had installed for a function at their house. They also reportedly misbehaved with the minor and thrashed him. **P9**

Mason's son is jr cue sports champ



Sanju Ahriwar, 20, whose dad is a mason and mom a house help, has won the Delhi state junior billiards and snooker titles. He has trained on his own. **P10**

'Orange' alert for city on Sat: IMD

IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar for Saturday, indicating 'heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places'. For Friday, a yellow alert has been issued, indicating heavy rainfall. **P2**

Man falls for 3rd Ambani deepfake

In the third such incident, a retired hotel management professional from Andheri (W) lost Rs 62,500 after he fell for a deepfake video of Mukesh Ambani endorsing a stock market forum and providing investment advice. **P2**

Flooding: Tracks at Chunarhatti raised

CR has raised the level of tracks at Chunarhatti by 2-4 inches to avert flooding in case of heavy rain. Due to the lifting of the tracks, CR has imposed a speed restriction on this stretch to prevent derailment. **P3**

3 ferrying kin's body die in crash

Three members of a family accompanying an ambulance carrying the body of a dead relative to Malagaon from Titwala were killed when their car hit a stationary truck in the early hours of Thursday. **P11**

HC upholds leased land rent increase by state

But Strikes Down 5% Hike Every 5 Years

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Mumbai: Bombay high court, deciding a decade-long battle between Maharashtra govt and a bunch of petitioners over increase of lease rent on govt land and renewal, upheld fixation of new rent as "reasonable, not exorbitant", but struck down the state's intention to renew the lease rent with 5% increase every five years, saying such a term never existed in the earlier lease deeds.

The increased rents are neither "extortionate nor manifestly arbitrary," the HC ruled. "If individuals want to hold large parcels of land in a prime locality and want to enjoy this luxury, it is only fair that they would have to

NOT EXTORTIONATE NOR MANIFESTLY ARBITRARY: HC

Court example | A petitioner is occupying 3,914.7 sq m (42,137.5 sq ft) land in a prime location in the city. Though at first glance the figure he would have to pay seems rather large, when one benchmarks that with the area he occupies, he would actually be paying merely ₹6.50 per sq ft per month

Who's Affected

Residents of housing societies or homes on 1,500 leased land parcels in south Mumbai and 500 in the suburbs, going by a minister's estimate in 2012



pay for it a reasonable sum that is now the revised amount," it stated.

Two state govt resolutions (GRs) of 2012 and 2018 were under judicial scrutiny as a clutch of petitions filed in 2014-2015 had challenged the constitutional validity of rent fixation of long-term land lease rentals by the state and questioned linking of lease rents of land on which hou-

sing cooperative societies exist to market value of the lands. In some cases, the raise was '400 to 1,900' times the existing rent, the petitioners had stated.

The 94-page judgment said law mandates govt to be fair and not act as a private landlord, but it also doesn't mean govt has to do charity.

► 'Reasonable return', P 3

Mihir bought 4 strong beer cans, drank them in BMW hours before crash: Police

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Mumbai: Worli police, probing the BMW hit-and-run case, said the prime accused, Mihir Shah (24), had bought four 500ml cans of strong beer from a bar in Malad while heading from Borivli to Marine Drive early Sunday after drinking whisky in a pub. Police claimed that Mihir consumed beer in the car, hours before his BMW rammed a scooter at Worli, killing Kaveri Nakhwa (45), and injuring her husband, Pradip (50).

A police source said on Saturday night, Mihir and three friends visited a pub in Juhu. One of the friends, a 30-year-old who was a regular, told the pub employees they were all above 25, said police. Around 1.30am, Mihir, who was in a Mercedes, dropped the three home and went to



Mihir Shah, after visiting a Juhu pub in a Merc, dropped friends home and returned to Borivli. He later set out for Marine Drive in the BMW and drank on the way

his Borivli residence. Later, he decided to go for a long drive and took the BMW. "While heading to south Mumbai, Mihir bought beer and consumed it," said an officer. He allegedly also offered beer to their family chauffeur, Rishiraj Bidawat (30) — he was with him at the time of the Worli accident — but he declined as he was driving.

► Bar staffer quizzed, P 3

'Andheri bridges didn't align as 2 depts didn't talk'

Additional BMC commissioner Amit Saini, who probed the mismatch between the newly constructed Gokhale Bridge and CD Barfiwala flyover in Andheri, submitted a report mentioning lack of coordination between agencies as the reason. Civic officials blamed railways, saying a policy change resulted in increased height of the Gokhale Bridge. Dhaval Shah of Andheri Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association said, "BMC officials were aware of the height difference from Day One". **P4**

Don't ban digital boards, control lighting: Panel

A committee to regulate digital billboards, appointed after the Ghatkopar hoarding crash, stressed they shouldn't be banned but "overall illuminance level should not significantly exceed the ambient illumination of traffic signal and intersection lighting". At the first meet in May, the panel also flagged extensive use of decorative lighting on poles, streetlights and other fixtures, saying it is not aesthetically pleasing and raises concerns about environmental & safety impact. **P2**

New mins vie for prime houses in Lutyens' Delhi

With a fresh cohort of ministers at the Centre, a few addresses in Lutyens' Delhi have become highly sought-after. At least 4 senior ministers, including an ex-CM, and one a key alliance partner of NDA, have pitched for allotment of a particular bungalow on Akbar Road that was allotted to a minister, who is not part of the Modi cabinet this time. Another such bungalow is on Sardarjung Road, which was allotted to a former minister who lost the election. **P10**

City younger gen scales up: 'Sale of ₹10cr+ luxe homes up 8% in first 6 mths of '24'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Sales of luxury homes costing Rs 10 crore and above in Mumbai have gone up by 8% — touching Rs 12,300 crore in the first half (H1) of the calendar year 2024 compared with Rs 11,400 crore in the corresponding period in 2023, states a report by India Sotheby's International Realty and CRE Matrix.

Top luxury micro-markets in Mumbai — Worli, Goregaon (E), Mahalaxmi, Prabhadevi, Mumbai Central, Malabar Hill, Bandra (W), Lower Parel, Tardeo and Byculla — contributed to 80% of primary luxury sales by value, with more than half the homebuyers in the 35-55 age category. Around 1,040 luxury units were sold in Mumbai over the

'City has 6 of 10 most valuable realty cos'

Six of the 10 most valuable Indian real estate companies are based in Mumbai, which continues to be the country's real estate capital, according to a GROHE-Hurun report released Thursday. The cumulative valuation of 33 Mumbai-based real estate firms is over Rs 6.4 lakh crore followed by Bengaluru. **P5**

past 12 months, the highest number ever recorded in any 12 months. The secondary and resale market also recorded the "highest ever" sales of Rs 3,500 crore in Mumbai between Jan and June 2024.

► Worli leads charge, P 5

'HAND OF VAR' BREAKS DUTCH HEARTS, SPURS ENGLAND TO FINAL

Substitute Ollie Watkins found the net with a superb 90th-minute strike, sending England to its 2nd successive Euro final, in which it will take on an in-form Spain. However, the 2-1 win over a resilient Netherlands was marred by a controversially awarded penalty that was converted by Harry Kane to bring England level in the game

► The Dutch took the lead from a Xavi Simons thunderbolt. In the 18th minute, VAR prodded the referee to take another look at Denzel Dumfries catching Kane on the foot. A penalty was awarded, despite Dutch protestations. Even England ex-player Gary Neville called VAR's call 'an absolute disgrace'

► Some experts questioned the decision also due to an alleged hand ball by England's Bukayo Saka in the build-up, which VAR failed to detect

► A livid Dutch coach Koeman said, 'This is not a penalty. Football is getting broken... by VAR! But England, which, for the 1st time in its 152-yr int'l football history, has reached final of a major tourney held overseas, wasn't complaining



Kane and Watkins

EDIT PAGE Whistle Of Felix, Foot Of Kane & Hand Of God

► In COPA AMERICA, Liverpool star Darwin Nunez and some other Uruguay players were involved in a brawl with Colombian fans that erupted after an ill-tempered 0-1 semifinal defeat. Colombia plays Argentina in final **FULL COVERAGE: P 19**

Pug snouts squashed for look, don't buy: Activists

Mumbai: Ahead of World Plastic Surgery Day (July 15), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals India said it was launching an appeal to remind everyone that while humans may have a choice when it comes to the shape of their nose, pet dog breeds like pugs and other flat-faced dogs don't. PETA said they are intentionally and cruelly bred to have a snout so squashed that it's difficult for them to even breathe, so compassionate people should never buy them, reports Vijay Singh. The awareness drive, PETA said, will be simultaneously held in Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kolkata, among other cities. "The look breeders are trying



Flat-nosed breeds suffer from brachycephalic syndrome, an agonising condition that causes them to struggle just to breathe

to achieve for dogs like pugs condemns them to a lifetime of suffering and gasping for air," PETA India's director of veterinary services Dr Mini Aravindan said.

► 'Most shops illegal', P 5

Second ex-president of J&K bar body held within 3 weeks

Booked Under PSA, Ronga Is A Member Of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's Outfit

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Srinagar: Senior advocate and ad hoc chairman of J&K High Court Bar Association Nazir Ahmad Ronga was arrested Thursday from his home in Srinagar's Nishat area, according to his family. He was charged under Public Safety Act, which allows authorities to detain a person without trial for up to a year.

"At 1.10am, a contingent of J&K Police arrived at our home without any arrest warrant, merely stating, 'It's an order from above' (uper se order hai). We are left in a state of shock and profound distress..." his lawyer son Umair Ronga posted on X. He also posted two videos showing uniformed personnel taking away his father.

Ronga, 75 is a member of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's Awami Action Committee, a constituent of separatist Hurriyat Conference. Ronga, a former president of the bar asso-



NIGHT RAID: Nazir Ahmad Ronga

The arrest came a day after the association issued notice to elect office bearers. J&K administration had not allowed it to conduct elections in the past five years due to the pandemic and fear of a law and order situation

ciation, is the second ex-chief to be arrested after Mian Abdul Qayoom Bhat was taken into custody on June 25 for an alleged conspiracy leading to the fatal terrorist attack on lawyer Babar Qadri in 2020.

Bhat, who is now in his late 70s, had authored the constitution of Hurriyat Conference's Syed Ali Shah Geelani faction in 1993. His son-in-law Javed Iqbal Wani is a serving HC judge. Bhat has been in and out of jail several times.

Ronga's family said he

has been shifted to Kot Bhalwal jail in Jammu, about 250km from Srinagar. The administration has not issued any statement on his arrest. In Oct 2021, police searched Ronga's home in cases allegedly involving his son, following accusations of irregularities in three private companies registered in his name.

Ronga's arrest came a day after the bar association issued a notice for elections of office bearers. J&K administration had not allowed

HCBA to conduct elections in the past five years due to the pandemic and fear of a law and order situation. In 2020, the then district magistrate of Srinagar had sought an explanation from the bar regarding its constitution.

Earlier this month, HCBA dropped the paragraph from its constitution that called for "working towards a peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute." The bar was now preparing for polls before July 31.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq denounced Ronga's arrest: "To arrest him in such a manner in the middle of the night even without a warrant is highly regrettable. Besides, Rongasahab is an elderly person and not keeping well."

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti slammed the arrest. "Go has not only failed to end militancy but is venting its frustration by launching a vicious crackdown on helpless Kashmiris. Nazir Ronga is the latest victim of its oppressive actions," she posted on X.

HC judge opts out of hearing plea for Yasin Malik death

New Delhi: Delhi high court judge Amit Sharma on Thursday recused himself from hearing a plea by NIA seeking death penalty for separatist Yasin Malik in a terror-funding case.

The matter was listed before a division bench headed by Justice Prathiba Singh after a change in roster of judges dealing with such cases.

The J&K Liberation Front chief, who is currently serving a life term in the case, was virtually present from Tihar.

On May 24, 2022, a trial court sentenced Malik to life imprisonment after holding him guilty for offences under UAPA. Malik had pleaded guilty to the charges and was convicted and sentenced to life term. Appealing against the sentence, NIA emphasised that a terrorist cannot be sentenced life term only because he has pleaded guilty and chosen not to go through trial. **TNN**



Neighbours name & shame desis in US trafficking case

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Hyderabad: Neighbours of a house in a Princeton, Texas, street that is at the centre of an alleged human trafficking racket run by people of Indian origin have put up a poster bearing photographs of four PIOs — including three Telugus — that asks residents to be wary of human traffickers and "forced labour" racketeers in their neighbourhoods.

The poster, which bears the message "Be careful neighbours! Human labour trafficking happened in OUR neighbourhood at the 1000 block of Ginsburg Lane (sic)" and photographs of the four accused — Santosh Katkooori, his wife Dwaraka Gunda, Chandan Dasireddy and Anil Male — was pasted on a wall in a public place in Ginsburg Lane, Princeton. Katkooori and Dwaraka re-

side in Mattie Grey Lane in Melissa, while Male is a resident of Prosper, a suburb.

The neighbours also reproduced on the poster a Princeton police press note regarding the arrests of the accused. On July 8, the four were charged with human trafficking and second-degree felony and 15 women were rescued from the Ginsburg Lane house. Police are

TROUBLE IN TEXAS

continuing their probe, which began in March.

Local media outlets, quoting the probable cause affidavit filed in court, said Katkooori, Gunda and Dasireddy were mentioned as Indian nationals, while there was no update on Male's nationality.

As per the arrest warrant, on March 13, a pest control company contacted the Princeton police department

after its technician, who went to the Ginsburg Lane home to check on bedbugs, saw suspicious conditions in the house. The technician reported to police that he saw 15 women in the home and that there were only folding tables, suitcases, and an air-mattress. He told cops that there was no other furniture and that all the women were sleeping on the floors.

Following this tip-off, cops, after getting a warrant, arrived to search the home. Police said the search led them to Katkooori's home in Mattie Grey Lane in Melissa, 17 km from Ginsburg Lane. On March 14, at 3.01 pm, a judge gave the go-ahead to police to search the Katkooori home in Melissa. Local media outlets said Katkooori himself answered when police knocked the door and later referred his attorney Jeremy Rosenthal to the police.

Gandhi statue uprooted to make way for clock tower

Rajib Dutta | TNN

Dibrugarh: The removal of a Mahatma Gandhi statue to make way for the construction of a clock tower has led to major protests in Doomdooma, a town in Assam's Tinsukia district. The 5.5-foot tall statue, which stood at Gandhi Chowk in the town for several years, was removed on Wednesday using an excavator crane.

Former Congress MLA from Doomdooma, Durga Bhumij, spearheaded the protest. He said, "We won't allow the clock tower to be built in place of the statue of the Father of the Nation. They can construct the clock tower anywhere else, but Gandhi's statue should remain in its original place. It is an insult to him. Sentiments of the people have been hurt."

Following a public backlash, BJP MLA from Doomdooma Rupesh Gowala on Thursday assured that a



Following a public outcry in Assam's Doomdooma town, BJP MLA Rupesh Gowala assured that a statue taller than the original would be erected at the site within six months, in addition to the clock tower

new and taller statue (6.5-feet) of the Mahatma would be constructed at the original site within six months, in addition to the clock tower.

However, despite the assurance of a new statue, residents expressed displeasure over the clock tower coexisting with the statue. Concerns have been raised re-

garding the symbolic significance of placing the Gandhi statue beneath the clock tower, considered emblematic of British colonial heritage.

"Gandhi led the freedom movement against British rule. His statue should not be overshadowed by the clock tower. It should be built somewhere else," a local claimed.

ASI slapped, CISF & airline now in face-off

Jaipur: A female crew member of a private airline was arrested at Jaipur airport Thursday morning after a CISF ASI lodged a complaint alleging she slapped him when he asked her for security screening.

The woman, too, filed a counter-complaint of sexual harassment against the ASI, and the airline backed its employee.

The scuffle took place when the woman was entering the airport and was stopped by the ASI, who said she did not have valid permission to use that gate. The ASI reportedly asked her to undergo screening, but no female CISF personnel were available at the gate at that time. While the ASI called for a female personnel for the security check, the argument had already escalated.

The airline added it was taking legal action in the "case of sexual harassment" against its woman employee. **TNN**

When a book thief made Rowling happy and earned redemption for himself

Marilyn Rajesh & Juliya Grace | TNN

Kochi: It was June 2007. Reese Thomas, then just 14, had devoured all six books of the Harry Potter series and now the seventh and final one was out where the budding wizard would finally bury his adolescent squeamishness and go for Voldemort's jugular.

Coming from a modest family and unable to afford "Deathly Hallows" in its glossy dust wrapper, Reese decided on the next best thing — he stole it. Though he himself was a Muggle, a mundane human without the benefit of magical arts, Reese intuited that "coming of age" entailed crossing the line, a transgression however tiny, and that Harry, not

much older than him, would approve. As it turns out, 17 years later, JK Rowling is delighted.

Last Monday, the author of the Harry Potter series spoke of Reese. "I know I'll be accused of encouraging book stealing by sharing this, so PLEASE DON'T STEAL BOOKS, BOOK STEALING IS BAD. Anyway, this is the loveliest thing and made me really happy," she wrote on X. She was referring to Reese's recently published debut book, "90s Kid", in which he had confessed stealing the last part of Deathly Hallows because as a student in class IX in a Mu-



JK Rowling and Reese Thomas

vattupuzha school, he couldn't afford to buy it. Following Rowling's message, Reese wrote: "Years before, I did something and it has reached all over the world. But most importantly, it has reached the one and only JK Rowling, the exact person who I wanted to read it".

While Rowling's message helped erase whatever residual guilt he might have felt, Thomas had found sufficient closure last month itself when, after 17 years, he summoned the courage to go to the New College Bookstore in Muvattupuzha to pay for the book he had filched. Redemption couldn't have been

sweeter when the owner, after hearing him out, said all he wanted was Reese Thomas to sign a few copies of his own book and give it to him.

Reese recalls that as a 14-year-old raised in a devout Catholic family he had qualms about shoplifting. But goaded by his classmates — who challenged him to see to what extent a Potter fan would go — Reese went ahead and did it anyway. Looking back, he says heist movies like "Dhoom 2" also played a part. At home stealing was a sin, but in the big bad world outside it didn't seem such a big deal. Reese, who was a big movie fan, now works as an assistant director in the Malayalam film industry and has featured in several notable movies.