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Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum wins the men's London Marathon in the second-fastest official time over the distance in history. The 23-year-old breaks the course record with an astonishing time of 2 hours, 1 minute and 27 secs **P 15**

Ukrainian Prez Zelensky signs two laws that strictly reinforce his country's national identity, banning Russian place names and making knowledge of Ukrainian language and history a requirement for citizenship



INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER



In a surprising turn of events, Elon Musk-owned Twitter restores verification badges on several high-profile celebrity accounts with millions of followers, just days after the platform pulled the legacy blue checkmarks for non-paying users **Inside Jacket**

PM to meet 8 top church leaders in Kochi today

In a move that is expected to give an impetus to BJP's outreach to the Christian community in Kerala ahead of the 2024 elections, PM Modi will hold discussions with various church leaders in Kochi Monday when he starts his two-day visit of the state. Sources said leaders of eight denominations of the church, including the Syro-Malabar, Malankara Orthodox and Syro-Malankara Catholic, will meet the PM **P 6**

Naroda: SIT to appeal acquittals

The SC-appointed SIT is preparing to challenge before the Gujarat HC the acquittal of all the 67 accused in the 2002 Naroda Gam massacre case, sources said, adding that they will first study the judgement copy which is awaited. **P 6**

Man dies in soc parking fight

A parking dispute between two neighbours of a Kandivali society took an ugly turn after one of them allegedly manhandled the other—a senior citizen—resulting in the latter's death. **P 3**

Pregnancy tests at mass wedding

A row has erupted in MP's Dindori over reports of pregnancy tests conducted on some beneficiaries of Mukhya Mantri Kanya Viyah Yojana. **P 10**

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Times Interact | P 6 & 8

Amritpal arrested outside Bhindranwale village gurdwara. Surrendered, he says

Booked Under NSA, Flown To Dibrugarh

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Chandigarh: The hunt for fugitive Khalistan sympathiser and Waris Punjab De head Amritpal Singh (30) ended Sunday morning with Punjab police arresting the preacher outside a gurdwara in slain militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's native village of Rode in Punjab's Moga district.

He was taken into custody under the National Security Act (NSA) and later flown to Dibrugarh central jail in Assam, where nine of his associates are being kept. All of them are facing charges under the stringent NSA.

"He was located in the villa-

END OF A 37-DAY HUNT

March 18 | Punjab police launch an operation to nab Amritpal Singh, but he escapes with aide Papalpreet Singh. 78 people arrested and 9 weapons seized. Mobile internet services suspended across state

March 19-21 | Four of his aides booked under NSA, taken to Dibrugarh jail. 34 more held. Amritpal's uncle surrenders. NSA against 8 more arrested amid suspicion of ISI links, foreign funding. Some of the getaway vehicles used by Amritpal confiscated

► AAP, BJP talk tough, SAD backs him, **P 8** | ► Seen as ISI pawn to revive militancy, **P 8**

of Rode based on operational inputs by Punjab police. The village was surrounded by police. He knew he couldn't

escape. He was arrested at 6.45am." Punjab police IG (headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said. Amritpal was inside



Amritpal addresses a congregation at a gurdwara in Rode village of Punjab's Moga before his arrest

and former Akal Takht jathedar Jasbir Singh Rode claimed that Amritpal wasn't arrested, but he surrendered. In one of three video clips that surfaced after his arrest, Amritpal was heard telling a congregation in Gurdwara Sant Khalsa of Roide village: "I have decided to surrender and this arrest is not an end, it is the beginning."

Amritpal's parents believe he surrendered after carrying out *nithai* (daily prayer) in the gurdwara. They said they are prepared to visit him in Dibrugarh and fight the legal battle for his freedom.

But the AAP government and police said categorically that Amritpal was arrested and he did not surrender. CM Bhagwant Mann said in a video message that he was informed Saturday night about the police operation.

► Bhindranwale robe, **P 8**

2 IAF planes in Jeddah, ship in Sudan ready to evacuate Indians: Govt

New Delhi: Describing the security situation in Sudan as complex and evolving, the government on Sunday said it is pursuing multiple options to evacuate the 3,000 Indian citizens stuck in the conflict-hit country.

The external affairs ministry, in a statement, said India has positioned two IAF C-130J on standby in Jeddah and naval ship 'Sumedha'

► Exodus of diplomats from Sudan, **Inside Jacket**

has reached Port Sudan. India's decision to deploy the Super Hercules followed the high-level meeting PM Modi chaired on Friday in which he asked officials to ready contingency evacuation plans. India had used the C-130J earlier also for Afghanistan evacuation. **TNN**

► 'Airspace closed', **P 8**

'SCENARIO VOLATILE'

► Govt says 'contingency plans are in place but any movement on ground would depend on the security situation', which continues to be volatile with reports of fierce fighting in Khartoum

► Decision to deploy two Super Hercules followed a key meet PM chaired on Fri

► Govt is also in contact with UN, Saudi, UAE, Egypt, and US for Indians' evacuation

Take us home: Wife of slain ex-serviceman

Sabella, wife of ex-serviceman Albert Augustine who died after a stray bullet hit him in Sudan, has sought Indian intervention to evacuate her and her daughter who are stuck in a Khartoum flat for days. **P 8**

Leave same-sex marriage issue to Parl: Bar to SC

New Delhi: The Bar Council of India and state bar councils, at a joint meeting on Sunday, opposed any decision by the SC on the right to marriage of same-sex couples and said given the country's social, cultural and religious diversity, the issue must be left to Parliament, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

While there was no official word on the outcome of the 18th round of the corps commander-level talks, sources said the Indian side strongly pressed for troop disengagement at Dapsang Bulge area and Charding Ninglung Nallah. **Flap Opp**

More than 99.9% of people of the country are opposed to the idea of same-sex marriage... Any decision by SC may prove very harmful for the future generations

► BCI & state bar councils

ly compunction," they said.

They passed a resolution saying, "The vast majority believes that any decision of the SC in the petitioners' favour will be treated to be against the culture and socio-religious structure of our country."

► '99.9% against it', **P 8**

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► GREATER LEG-ROOM

► SCAN TO BOOK



STAR ALLIANCE



HC appoints 81-yr-old woman as legal guardian of 71-yr-old comatose brother

Rosy.Sequeira@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The Bombay high court recently appointed an 81-year-old woman as legal guardian of her brother (71), who was in a comatose state following a brain haemorrhage.

Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale on April 13, allowed the petition by Dadar (W) resident to declare her legal guardian of her unmarried brother as she is his only surviving family member and there is no one to take care of him. They authorised her to operate his bank accounts, investments and to ma-

nage his immovable properties subject to the condition that it is only for purposes of meeting "his needs" and for "his maintenance, care and upkeep". Incidentally, her brother passed away on April 17.

The sister's petition, filed through advocate Suneet Moholkar, said that on January 17, her brother was found unconscious/non-responsive at his Vashi residence. He was admitted to Navi Mumbai hospital and CT scan showed large intracerebral bleed. In spite of surgery/treatment, he continued to be in a comatose state till his discharge on

February 4. There was no prospect of his neurological recovery. She and her married daughter somehow manage to pay the huge hospital bills and medicine charges.

The brother was shifted to his Kandivali flat and under observation of their family physician. The petition said the sister is continuously taking care of him and is incurring expenses for hiring nurses, life support, medical devices, physiotherapy, medicines, tracheostomy tube which has to be replaced periodically, doctor's fees and other household expenses. The average monthly expenditure is over Rs 1 lakh.

The judges referred to a report of JJ Hospital neurological team that confirmed his condition. "He does not comprehend or obey commands. There is spasticity in the right upper limb and right lower limb. He requires constant medical care... is in a vegetative state," they noted. Referring to cases where similar orders were passed on appointment of legal guardians for comatose patients, the judges declared her legal guardian and also directed all authorities to accept her status as her brother's guardian.

Govt dept meet today to tackle heat wave and water shortage

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Mumbai: A week after the Kharhara tragedy, in which 14 people died of heatstroke or dehydration, the Shinde-Fadnavis government has convened a meeting of divisional commissioners and district collectors. They will meet on Monday to draft a strategy for tackling heat wave-like conditions and shortage of drinking water across the state.

As per the agenda for the meeting, more than half a dozen departments will make PowerPoint presentations on measures needed to shield the populace, especially those working outdoors, from the effects of a heat wave.

The relief and rehabilitation department will present the steps needed to be taken, guidelines prescribed by the Centre and revised measures to be adopted by the state government. The agriculture department will make a pre-

> Litmus Test, P5

KHARGHAR TRAGEDY: SUNSTROKE DEATHS AT EVENT

14 people die of heatstroke and related health problems after attending Maharashtra Bhushan award ceremony for social activist Dattatreya Narayan alias Appasaheb Dharmadhikari in an open ground at Kharhara on April 16

What Appasaheb said
Appeals to people not to politicize the issue; expresses grief over the deaths

What state govt said
Arrangements for ambulances and other healthcare facilities provided on the ground; all preparations made but weather changed over 2 days; event held based on time given by Appasaheb Dharmadhikari



Activists had alleged poor healthcare arrangements

Crime branch to probe post on fake 'award wapsi' letter

Umesh K Parida

servation on the possibility of a sustained heat wave and other natural calamities, such as a drought and unseasonal rain, and measures needed to counter their effect. The water supply department will present an action plan on preparations made for tackling shortage of drinking water, while the public health department will make a presentation on the state's preparedness for tackling a heat wave in terms of health concerns.

A bureaucrat said officials of public health, water supply and relief and rehabilitation departments will probe the source of the defamatory post on the alleged letter of social reformer and Maharashtra Bhushan awardee Appasaheb Dharmadhikari, which had been tweaked to create enmity and hatred among people. The post had gone viral on social media.

Rajendra police had filed an FIR against unknown persons for defamation and publishing and circulating statements containing rumour to create enmity and hatred under the relevant Indian Penal Code sections and for identity theft under the Information Technology Act.

The FIR was filed on a complaint by Dharmadhikari's personal aide Sandeep Patil.

The alleged letter had stated that Dharmadhikari will

return the Maharashtra Bhushan Award as he was saddened after the death of 14 of at the Kharhara event on April 16. "I had told that I do not need the award, but I was compelled to accept it... My followers were used for political mileage...had to sit in the scorching heat on the open ground. I am requesting the Shree sevaks not to vote for BJP and Shinde faction... I will return the award and prize amount," claimed the fake letter.

Rajendra police had welcomed the move, but said IMD needs to consider areas like Kalyan-Dombivli and Thane too. "The readings from these AWS...should reflect on IMD website daily to help in data collection...There is generally a significant difference in the recordings in Mumbai city and in the suburbs, therefore more weather stations are needed," he said. —Richa Pinto

'Need weather stns at Thane, Dombivli too'

Mumbai: IMD has decided to set up an automatic weather station at Kharhara following the April 16 heatwave tragedy. "We were considering placing AWS in areas that are unrepresented, but after the incident, we decided to immediately set up one at Kharhara," said Sunil Kamble, chief of IMD, Mumbai. "Before placing the AWS we need to check if the site has good exposure conditions, plain and clear ground below and no tall buildings around it to block wind speed. This AWS will record day and night temperatures and also rainfall."

Abhijit Modak, who runs Konkan Weather blog, welcomed the move, but said IMD needs to consider areas like Kalyan-Dombivli and Thane too. "The readings from these AWS...should reflect on IMD website daily to help in data collection...There is generally a significant difference in the recordings in Mumbai city and in the suburbs, therefore more weather stations are needed," he said. —Richa Pinto

In the first three months of 2023, 1,205 cyber crime cases have been registered across the city. Police have solved 92 of these cases and made 135 arrests. TNN

'Recommend pre-paid taxi service from T2 to Andheri'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

State reaches out to pvt sector for HIV estimate

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Mumbai: Flyers arriving at the city's Terminal 2 airport continue to be stranded or fleeced by errant cabbies and autorickshaw drivers as the prepaid taxi service for Andheri West is still not operational for over five months.

With a delay in reconstruction of Gokhale bridge, local activists demand that the airport should restart the prepaid taxi service.

Said Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association (LOCA) director Dhaval Shah, "A few days back, a commuter was charged three times the normal fare to travel in an autorickshaw from T2 airport to Juhu gully. Others have complained of cabbies demanding at least Rs 100 more than the meter fare to travel to Andheri West. This is frustrating as it's been over five months since the Gokhale bridge has been shut down, leading to diversions. And, the airport authorities have closed the prepaid taxi service to Andheri West during this period."

Need more awareness on cyber crimes: Police chief

Mumbai: Expressing concern over the spurt in cyber crimes in the city, police commissioner Vivek Phansalkar on Sunday said the need of the hour is greater awareness among citizens. Phansalkar, who usually keeps a low profile and does not speak much at public events, attended the 'AGNI Meet Your Police' event organized by Agni H-West ward at Bandra.

Mumbai Police has a dedicated cyber crime wing, headed by a DCP-rank officer, and has opened five cyber police stations to deal with such cases, said Phansalkar. He added that every police station has a dedicated cyber cell — comprising an inspector, two sub-inspectors and two-three constables — to facilitate Mumbaiites to file complaints.

Dinesh Ahir, trustee and convenor of AGNI, said citizens and police should have regular meetings on the lines of ALM meetings with BMC. In fact, he suggested that local police should also attend ALM meetings for "better coordination among BMC and cops to cater to citizens' issues".

In the first three months of 2023, 1,205 cyber crime cases have been registered across the city. Police have solved 92 of these cases and made 135 arrests. TNN

HIV PROGRESS FOR MAHARASHTRA

Indicators	Tested	Positive	ART started
2018-19	30.5 lakh	19,040 (0.62%)	92%
2019-20	41.4 lakh	17,674 (0.42%)	95%
2020-21	25.7 lakh	9,497 (0.37%)	95%
2021-22	30.8 lakh	11,196 (0.36%)	96%
2022-23*	23.3 lakh	8,497 (0.36%)	100%

*Up to October

Patients in active care under national programme in Maharashtra:
2.3 lakh

Patients on antiretroviral therapy in Mumbai (data till Dec):
38,408

be an underestimation.

Interestingly, the idea of engaging with the private sector to improve HIV/AIDS control efforts was first initiated over a decade ago by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). However, despite this, many states have faced challenges in getting all doctors on board. According to a state official, larger hospitals and prominent doctors have been reluctant to enrol due to concerns over increased paperwork and periodic reporting mandates. A previous survey indicated that Mumbai could have more than 10,000 people going to the private sector.

Ganesh Acharya, an HIV activist, said that one benefit of such a collaboration would be understanding the regimens being used. "There is limited scrutiny over the types of testing conducted and the specific regimens prescribed to HIV/AIDS patients in the private sector. Such initiatives can provide a better understanding of private healthcare practices," he said. A state official concurred that often patients land up in the national programme after running out of resources to afford private care. "We may be able to prevent these situations if private doctors are more informed of the national drug regimens," he added.

Malad murder: Maid expected to find money from land sale

Accused Had Overhead Discussions Of Property Sale

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Marie D'Costa

ded against staying in the house for long for fear of getting caught," said a police officer. CCTVs captured Umer entering the premises at 5.31pm and leaving at 5.48pm. He then went to Kandivali by an autorickshaw.

Eventually the police traced him to Vasai Phata. Umer changed his hairstyle and trimmed his moustache to avoid being identified by policemen who were hunting for him.

"We have learnt that Umer was booked in another case of murder in the early 70s at Bandra and are trying to verify the information," said an officer. Umer's exact age is also under a cloud as his documentation mentions a different number.

Shabnam and Shehzad pretended that D'Costa had been waiting for a repairman to arrive and that he had left the door open for the masked man presuming him to be the repairman," said officer.

Doctor among 20 bikers held for racing in Bandra

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Mumbai: A total of 20 bikers were arrested, and their vehicles were seized in an anti-racing drive carried out by Bandra police on the Bandra Reclamation early on Sunday. The arrested accused fall within the age group of 19 to 33 years. And, also include a Dr Abdul Mohiuddin Sayyed (24) from Chembur.

The drive was carried out on zonal DCP Anil Paraskar's instructions. Among the arrested accused are a doctor, a medical shop owner, a mechanic, a tailor, a delivery boy, a construction supervisor, a vegetable seller, and a real estate agent. All the 20 bikers were caught racing on the Western Express Highway in Bandra in the wee hours of Sunday.

The race began from the MSRDC gate to Bandra Reclamation when the police on bandobast duty in the locality signalled to stop them. They tried to speed away but were caught at the naka bandi.

"The arrested accused

hail from areas including Chembur, Kurla, Wadala, and Panvel. They got in touch with each other on social media for participation in the race," said a police officer.

Acting on a tip-off, Paraskar supervised the Bandra police senior inspector Rajesh Devere who led a team of inspector Pradeep (24) from Chembur.

The drive was carried out on zonal DCP Anil Paraskar's instructions. Among the arrested accused are a doctor, a medical shop owner, a mechanic, a tailor, a delivery boy, a construction supervisor, a vegetable seller, and a real estate agent. All the 20 bikers were caught racing on the Western Express Highway in Bandra in the wee hours of Sunday.

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"The arrested accused

TOI

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CHANGE Begins Here

Sextortion:
Senior citizen
duped of ₹8L
by fake cop

Mumbai: A 60-year-old businessman from Santa Cruz (E) became the latest victim of sextortion when a scamster extorted Rs 8.2 lakh from him between November 2022 to January 2023. He later informed his son-in-law and lodged a complaint with the Vasco police on Friday. The man was paying the accused who had impersonated a cop by using a fake WhatsApp DP in uniform. He was threatening him with a fake case after the woman with whom he had chatted had allegedly committed suicide.

The cyber team has sought details from the bank to track the person in whose account the money was credited. The team is also tracking the number that was used to communicate with the businessman," said a police officer of the Vasco police station. It was in November 2022 when the man had received a video on his cellphone while having nude chat with a woman. In the complaint, he said: "A few minutes after the chat, I received a call from another number. The person identified himself as a cop named Vikram. The accused claimed that the woman ended her life by consuming poison after her chat with me. The scamster demanded money and threatened to fix me in the case if I didn't pay him." The man first sent Rs 80,000 on November 15, 2022, followed by two transactions of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 20,000 in December 2022, and later six transfers for Rs 5.2 lakh in January.

—VNarayan

Two drown in Mahim, youth in Pavana dam

Mumbai: Two minors and a youth drowned in separate incidents on Sunday.

In the first case, a 12-year-old boy identified as Rehan Mandan entered the sea behind Mahim dargah and drowned. His body was fished out by local police. The body of another unidentified minor was found in the sea at a different location—near Hinduja Hospital. He is believed to be around 15-16 years.

In a separate incident, an 18-year-old youth from Patel was feared drowned in the backwaters of Pavana dam on Sunday afternoon. His body is yet to be recovered, said police. TNM

35% drop in Covid cases as testing dips

Mumbai: On Sunday, Maharashtra reported 545 Covid-19 cases, with 141 of them coming from Mumbai. This is a 35% drop in cases from 850 reported across the state on Saturday, which was likely due to a decrease in testing. Two deaths were reported — one each in Mumbai and Ratnagiri. The death in the city was that of a 33-year-old male with comorbidities.

As many as 8,278 people were tested on Sunday, with 5,540 tests conducted in government labs, 2,616 in private labs, and 122 self-tests. Of the 6,000 active cases in Maharashtra, 301 (4%) are being treated in hospitals, with around 60 patients in the ICU. Mumbai recorded seven hospitalizations. TNM

Carmichael Road bungalow sold for ₹220 crore

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Mumbai: A Parsi-owned bungalow on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai has been sold to BGH Properties, an Aditya Birla Group company for Rs 220 crore.

The half-acre property called Sunny Ville belonged to a Parsi woman, Ernevez Kharshedji Dubash, who passed away in 2013. It is learnt that the proceeds of the sale will be used for charitable purposes. The objects of the trust are relief to the poor, advancement and propagation of education to students and institutes and medical relief to individuals and hospitals or like institutions.

The mother of Ernevez

1-yr-old kidnapped from CSMT, found in Churchgate 2 hrs later

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Mumbai: Nearly two hours after being kidnapped from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) where she had been sleeping with her mother in the waiting hall, a one-year-old girl was traced to a footpath at Churchgate on Sunday. The unknown kidnapper is suspected to have abandoned her after being unable to find any mode of transportation. The child has been reunited with her mother Farida Ansari (30), who lives in Worli.

The CSMT Government Railway Police (GRP) have

registered a case of kidnapping and are looking for the suspect.

Ansari and her daughter reached CSMT late on Saturday to board a morning train to their hometown in Uttar Pradesh. Her husband and two older children had already left for UP on April 20.

Ansari dozed off while holding on to her daughter in the waiting hall. When she woke up around 3am, the girl was missing. Distraught, she searched for the little one everywhere, but to no avail. At 3.15pm, Ansari approached the CSMT GRP, who checked CCTV footage of the

premises and found a person, dressed in a full shirt and shorts carrying the child away, a little before 1am. As the kidnapper's face had not been captured on camera, the police couldn't determine the person's gender.

An FIR was registered and teams were formed to trace the girl. Pictures of the girl were circulated to all police stations on the railways and outside. Azad Maidan police station responded that the girl had been found at 2.30am on a footpath outside Adelphi building on M K Road in Churchgate. The watchman had spotted her alone

and dialled the police emergency number '100'.

On checking other CCTV cameras in the vicinity, police found that the kidnapper had walked out of CSMT, crossed Azad Maidan on foot, and proceeded through Khau Gully before reaching Churchgate. "There's a possibility that the kidnapper did not find any mode of transport as train operations are shut for a few hours at night. The child may have started crying and the kidnapper could have panicked. We have launched a manhunt for the accused," said senior inspector Vijay Tayade, CSMT GRP.

MOST PASSENGERS WERE ASLEEP... SOME NEVER WOKE UP



At least 22 passengers of a luxury private bus were hurt in the accident on Katraj-Dehu Road bypass which claimed five lives on Sunday. Vehicular movement to and from Satara was affected for a few hours as police and fire brigade teams used cutters to prise open parts of the bus to rescue 18 victims. As it was dark, locals who rushed to the site used cellphone torches to help officials in rescue operation. Two more accidents were reported on the road during the early hours the same day. Over the past few years, the stretch has witnessed multiple accidents, including a pile up of 48 vehicles last November.

Kalyan man among 5 killed as truck hits Dombivli-bound bus on Katraj bypass

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Pune: Three men and two women were killed and 22 others were injured after a multi-axle truck rammed into a private bus going from Kolhapur to Dombivli in Thane on the stretch between the Katraj viaduct and Navale bridge in Pune around 2.15am on Sunday.

Police identified the deceased passengers as Arun Sawant (54) from Kalyan (East) in Thane; Ravindra Koregaonkar (46), his mother Suvarna (83) from Radhanagar in Kolhapur; and Nisha Bhaskar (36) from Shastri Nagar in Kolhapur.

The injured victims, in-

cluding the truck driver, were taken to private hospitals in Erandwane and Dhankawdi in Pune city, as well as Sassoon General hospital.

"The truck driver claimed he lost control over the vehicle due to a brake failure. We will call RTO officials to inspect the vehicle and verify his claim," said senior inspector Vijay Kumbhar of the Bharati Vidyaapeeth police.

The bus belonged to a private tour and travel operator, while the truck was carrying sugar bags from Sangli to Mumbai. Both vehicles turned on their side after the truck rear-ended the bus near the Swami Narayan temple in Narhe Ambegaon.

Over the past few years, the stretch has witnessed multiple accidents, including a pile up of 48 vehicles last November.

Twenty-eight-year-old Sunil Pawar from Karad was returning to Murbad near Ka-

lyan in the bus. "I boarded the bus around 10.20pm on Saturday from Karad and even posted a selfie to my friends from the bus. It could have been my last selfie," Pawar told TOI. "Around 2.15am, I woke up to a loud noise. The bus moved forward rapidly like it was doing a nose dive. The front section of the bus touched the road and there was another sound of a tyre burst and then the bus fell on its right side."

Senior inspector Vijay Kumbhar of the Bharati Vidyaapeeth police told TOI: "We will register a case against truck driver Sunny Yadav on charge of rash and negligent driving, resulting in the death of the four passengers."

Parking dispute ends in man's death in Kandivli

Neighbour Held After He Manhandles Senior Citizen

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Patil runs a business.

The FIR said an altercation broke out between Patil and a security guard employed by the courier firm in connection with parking of the firm's vehicles.

Borade was away at the time. The guard went to Charkop police station to lodge a non-cognisable complaint against Patil. Shortly after reaching home, Borade left again to go to the police station to offer support to the guard.

Around 6pm, Borade went to meet Patil to inquire about his tiff with the guard. The two argued, which ended in a scuffle.

Patil had fought with his

husband was "beaten and pushed to the ground". Later, Borade dialled the police emergency number 100 to seek help against Patil but he suddenly collapsed. Asha immediately called up their son. A police car took Borade to Oscar Hospital in Kandivli, where he died while treatment was on.

"We are awaiting a detailed post-mortem report. Based on Asha's complaint, we have arrested Patil," said senior inspector Manohar Shinde, Charkop police.

Asha told police Patil had fought with her husband previously too.

CM warns of stern action over potholes

Thane: Chief minister Eknath Shinde has warned government departments and contractors of stern action if they fail to ensure safe and pothole-free roads and highways cutting through Thane and adjoining region in monsoon, officials informed on Sunday. The warning, said officials, was issued at a late Saturday night review meet.

"All agencies should fill potholes and repair roads before monsoon. Poor quality work will not be tolerated. In case of any neglect, strict action will be taken against concerned officials and contractors," Shinde told the officials. He also directed Mumbai corporation to ensure BMC pipeline road is repaired.

"We are awaiting a detailed post-mortem report. Based on Asha's complaint, we have arrested Patil," said senior inspector Manohar Shinde, Charkop police.

Asha told police Patil had fought with her

husband previously too.

solicitor of Mulia and Mulla. Ernevez Dubash left a last will and testament dated November 5, 2012. By her will she appointed six persons as her executors to administer her estate and carry out her wishes. They were Madhusudan Tiwari (since deceased), Eddie Palia, Adi Jehangir, Cyrus Nallaseth, Darious Cambatta and Chetan Shah.

In her will, Dubash had specifically mentioned that her shares and securities should be sold and transferred to Perowshaw Dhunjishaw Bolton Charities. The paintings included a rare work by V.S. Gaitonde.

The bungalow, Sunny Ville, that has been sold, can be redeveloped under development control regulation 33 (7) since it's a cessed property with tenants. The new buyer could get a total gross built up area of over 70,000 sq ft, which includes space for rehab, free sale and Mhada's share.

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In 2015, her private collection was sold in a public auction at Mumbai's Pundole Art gallery and is believed to have raised about Rs 18 crore. These included Mughal and Deccani paintings dating back to the 16th and 18th centuries, jewellery and a crystal chandelier. The paintings included a rare work by V.S. Gaitonde.

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In separate mishaps over weekend, two boys mowed down

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Two minors lost their lives in separate road crashes in the city over the weekend.

In the first case, 11-year-old Arnav Kamble was riding pillion on his father's motorcycle when it skidded and hit an oncoming BEST bus at Pratiksha Nagar in Sion on Saturday evening. The bus ran over Arnav, resulting in his death, while his father, Ankush, 40, suffered serious head injuries.

The Antop Hill police have arrested the BEST bus driver, Arnav's father. The incident occurred in the afternoon. Shaikh was a Malwani resident and had set out on his cycle with a 15-year-old friend seated pillion. Police believe Shaikh may have tried to overtake the tempo and lost his balance.

Police said the Kambles were riding from the opposite direction when their motorcycle skidded and hit the bus on the right side. Arnav fell off and came under the wheel of the bus. His father landed on the other side and lost consciousness.

It is not clear where the father-son duo were headed at the time of the crash. Police said Ankush is presently out of work. Arnav had cleared his class VI exams and was to start class VII.

"We arrested the BEST bus driver and produced him before a local court," a police officer said. According to a

source, "But we need to check CCTV footage and speak to witnesses before reaching a conclusion on how the crash occurred," said an officer.

Shaiikh was rushed to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.

After the incident, the tempo driver fled as bystanders started to gather. Police seized the tempo and looked up to a loud noise. The bus moved forward rapidly like it was doing a nose dive. The front section of the bus touched the road and there was another sound of a tyre burst and then the bus fell on its right side."

"We arrested the BEST bus driver and produced him before a local court," a police officer said. According to a

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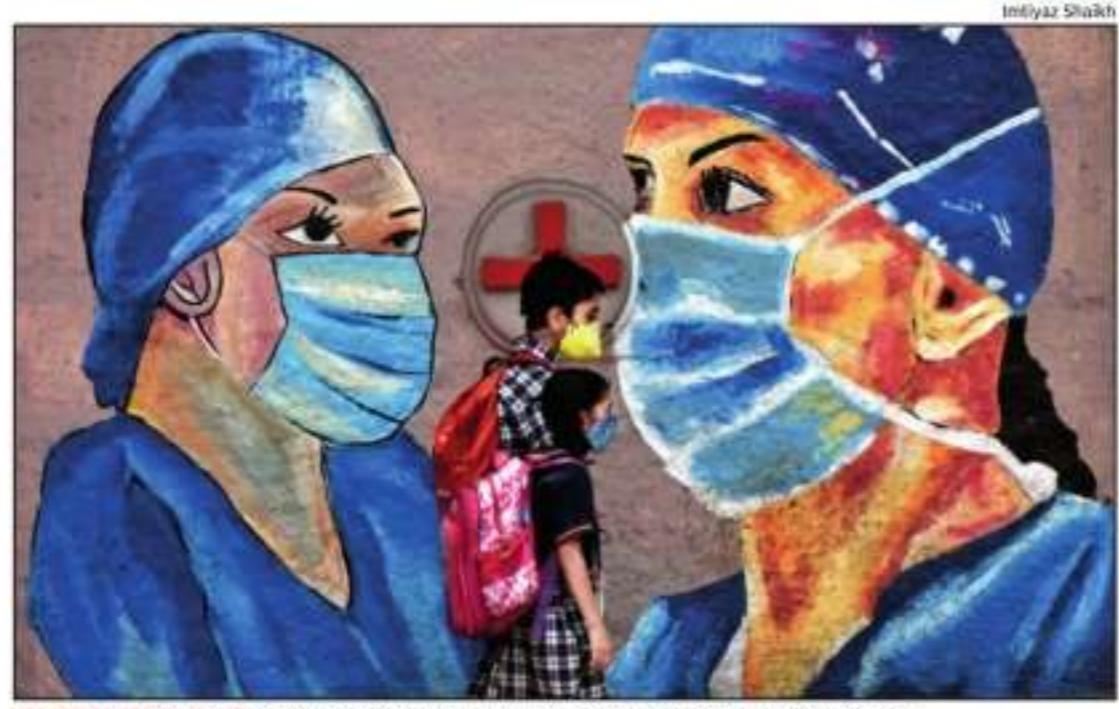
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CITY LIGHTS**Inclusive Art**

It was an evening to remember, as 150 of Mumbai's most generous recently turned out to support The Jai Vakeel Foundation, a charity for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) founded in 1944. The fundraiser championed the cause of inclusion through the concept of "moonchildren". Born from humble scrap fabrics, the idea germinated when a 15-year-old Avantika Swali, the designer, would visit Jai Vakeel School as a volunteer teaching origami to the kids, creating these characters as a tribute to their feisty personalities. The collaboration marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2022. "Each of them has a

**MASKING UP IS BACK:** Schoolchildren pass by a painted wall at Kasturba Hospital

story that focuses on their abilities, rather than their disabilities," said co-designer Karishma Swali. The event also featured 'A Seat at the Table,' an immersive art in-

stallation featuring these very same large, life-sized dolls at a dinner table. The idea being that everyone, no matter what their disabilities, deserves a seat at the table. Originally

launched on World Disability Day, the exhibit was auctioned and acquired by art patrons Sangita Jindal, chairperson of JSW Foundation, and Tarini Jindal, founder of gallery

equo, and will soon be displayed at the forthcoming Museum of Solutions (MuSo).

Kids Party

Aika Karnik loves plays—and children. Blending the two, the 67-year old grandmother from Vikroli hit upon a novel idea. She began to take children to city auditoriums to watch a children's play in Marathi. Up until now, Karnik has watched over 200 performances of the play Whenever and wherever—from Parel to Kalyan—the play is to be staged. Karnik 'aaji' is ready with her 'bachcha' brigade. After the show, she heads straight to the green room to meet the artists, and piles them with chocolates and cookies. So far, over 100 children have watched it with Karnik as their guardian angel. The entire team of 'Albatya Galabta' felicitated Karnik during a recent show.

Bonding over Iftar

Amidst non-stop recorded recitations of the Quran, former minister Baba Siddiqui and his MLA son Zee-shaan Siddiqui's annual iftar party in Bandra saw guests enter the massive, tent-like air-conditioned pandal where uniformed ushers guided them to laid-out tables. Plates of fruits, dates and fragrant sherbet awaited both fasting and non-fasting guests. "Our guests comprise people from different faiths and genders. The idea is to meet, greet and eat together. We facilitate people to bond over delicacies in the holy month," said Baba. Unlike most political iftar parties, here no one presented shawls or flowers and no speeches were made.

(Contributed by Namita Devidayal, Ambarish Mishra & Mohammed Wajihuddin. Compiled by Rucha Chitrodia)

State govt's death warrant issued: Raut

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday claimed the Shinde-Fadnavis government's "death warrant" has been issued and it'll collapse in 15-20 days. "...only when and who will sign it [death warrant] is to be decided," he said. Raut was referring to the SC judgment pending on a batch of pleas, including one seeking disqualification of 16 Sena MLAs who revolted against the Thackeray leadership and joined hands with BJP to form the government.

In Shirdi, where deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis was to attend a function on Sunday, BJP minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil said, "In our minds, Devendra Fadnavis is the chief minister." TNN

School head 'talked dirty' with teacher, HC denies quashing FIR

Rosy Sequeira@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The Bombay high court refused to quash a first information report (FIR) against the headmaster of a Pune zilla parishad primary school who was booked for allegedly speaking to a teacher using "double-meaning phrases".

Justices Ajay Gadkari and Prakash Naik recently dismissed a petition filed by the headmaster to quash the July 2022 FIR lodged by Paud police station under IPC section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with the intent to outrage her modesty) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult modesty

of a woman).

The teacher's complaint stated that the headmaster was not behaving properly with her. He used to deliberately call her to his office and make her sit in front of him. The FIR cited two instances. During the May 2021 summer vacation he called her to write her confidential report. Realising that it was "deliberate" as no other teacher was called, she took her husband along. She was called alone in his office. He asked her the meaning of "incinerator" thrice despite being "well aware of the fact that the word is pertaining to the private aspects of women". He told her "incinerator

means a machine in the women's bathroom for disposal of sanitary pads" and laughed at her. On April 29, 2022 in the presence of education authorities he "stared" at her and told her that "she is yet to complete long service". The complaint said the words used in Marathi "were having sexually explicit dual meaning" which amounts to outraging of her modesty. A magistrate granted him bail on July 26, 2022.

On March 31, prosecutor Ajay Patil said a chargesheet was filed in December 2022 and the applicant should file a discharge application before the trial court. The headmaster's advocate, H V Sub-

edar, said the FIR was filed three months after the last incident. He said his client was falsely implicated. Also, as there was no assault or criminal force, section 354 is not attracted and at the most an offence under section 509 can be discerned.

Referring to Supreme Court judgments on quashing of FIR and after perusal of the FIR and other relevant material, the judges said "a safe inference and conclusion can be drawn that a strong prima facie case has been made out by the prosecution against the applicant". No case for interference by this court is made out, they added.

Earth day is 'vyarth day' say greens in missive to PM

BB Nayak

Navi Mumbai: This year, Earth Day turned out to be a Vyarth (waste) Day with the government agencies themselves ignoring the importance of protecting the environment in their quest for rapid urbanisation and infrastructural development, green group said in their missive to the Prime Minister.

Welcoming PM Narendra Modi's Earth Day tweet hailing the efforts by "all those working to make our planet better", a group of environmentalists called for making rainwater harvesting a must for all government departments from the Panchayat to Parliament and increase transparency in the execution of climate related policies. Even the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Control (MOEFCC) remains a mute spectator when the state departments do not respect the Centre's directives, green groups said.

The PM also said in his tweet that "India is committed to furthering sustainable development in line with our culture of living in harmony with nature." Appreciating this, NatConnect Foundation called for transparency in the functioning of the government and its agencies. "In this context, we would like to draw the attention of the PM that for the last six months, the official website Parivesh.nic.in has stopped updating information on environmental aspects," said B N Kumar of NatConnect.

New court bldg has rooftop solar units

Mumbai: The new Mazgaon court complex inaugurated on Saturday has rooftop solar electric generation units and rain harvesting systems besides being aesthetically designed and eco-friendly. The court complex has 42 air-conditioned court rooms, independent bar room for female lawyers and a creche.

The air-conditioning systems and lifts run on solar energy, which makes it one of its kind. The new court building was inaugurated by acting Chief Justice SV Gangapurwala. The opening follows an April 13 high court order disposing of a 2014 petition seeking orders for a new court building at Mazgaon. TNN

Remembering the Cabaret

Santosh Desai

hibited female sexuality. The cabaret imbued the woman with sexual agency. She lived her life on her terms, smoking, drinking, wearing what she wanted and generally having a good time. Unlike the heroine, who was bound up in a surfeit of social expectations, the cabaret dancer, often the vamp, could give us a taste of what the freedom could be like — although it was framed explicitly using a lens of strong disapproval.

In a society where acknowledgement of desire and the sexual instinct were repressed, the cabaret became an outlet that came accompanied by many safety features. And while the vamp usually met with an unhappy end, either by going to prison or more heroically, perishing in her attempt to save the hero after whom she had pined, what she allowed for had nothing to do with the fate her character met.

Often, we tend to think of what happens to a character as a kind of 'moral of the story'. Women who are sexually expressive and live life on their own terms come to a bad end, suggesting that the reason why this trope is used is to reinforce conventional social values. While this is not untrue, this is only part of the story. What such depictions do is to gradually insinuate apparently deviant behaviour as part of our imagined landscape of reality. The ability to represent female desire, no matter what its cinematic outcome was, by itself, a step forward. The Overton window, the frame that determines what is socially acceptable, shifts.

The mujra attracted a male gaze directed at her that was far more commanding, for, unlike the cabaret who evoked fear through her expressive sexuality, the courtesan in films operated within a much tighter social frame. While

CITY CITY BANG BANG

many scholars have argued that the courtesan in real life did not always constitute a tragic and passive figure, the cinematic depiction, as exemplified by the mujra, made no such allowances.

The passing of the cabaret sequence has a lot to do with the fact that sexual expressiveness began to take on a more mainstream role in cinema and the need to construct a fantasy theatre, like the night club, began to recede. More significant, perhaps, was the fact that, in the 70s and the 80s, heroines began to do what the vamp was needed for earlier.

The item song that had become a mandatory part of recent cinema follows the arc of the cabaret but is fundamentally different. Here again, the sexual instinct is located in the woman, but the settings are far from being decorous and the male reaction is often that of frenzied lust rather than coy indifference. The item song is a complex form that requires its own examination, but the only similarity it shares with the cabaret is that it creates room for the evocation of desire in films, an area which, on the whole, continues to be represented awkwardly.

Woman, her friend kill lover, held

Kalyan: Manpada police on Sunday arrested a woman and her friend for killing the man's boyfriend. The accused have been identified as Sandhya Singh and Guddu Shetty, and the deceased as Maruti Hande. The incident took place on Saturday in Kolagao, Dombivli. Singh and Hande were in a live-in relationship. However, Hande was unhappy with her friendship with Shetty. On Saturday, when he objected to it, Singh and Shetty beat him to death with a bat and stick, and fled. The duo were nabbed the next day, after which they confessed to the crime. TNN

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Tenders are invited from eligible bidders for following works by E-tendering method. The bidders are requested to get registered for e-tendering procedure.

Contact Person - Executive Engineer (Adm.), Kalyan circle-II, Tel No. 0251-2328283-Ext No. 302, Mob:EE(Adm) 8879626969. Add: M.S.E.D.C.Ltd., Kalyan Circle-II (O&M), Tejshree Build., Third Floor, Kalyan (W) - 421 301 Email - sekalyan2@gmail.com, Website - www.mahadiscom.in

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1	(SE/KC-II-HR/OS/2023-24-T-03) Limited to Rs. 3,24,89,568/-Rs. 5,900/- Rs. 1,62,448/- Providing Outsourced Skilled & Unskilled Manpower under Ulhasnagar Division-II.	From Dt. 24.04.2023 to 08.05.2023	Dt. 08.05.2023 to 15.00 Hrs

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TIMES

Will support JPC on Adani if entire Opposition wants it, says Pawar

Abhishek Choudhary & Anil Jadhav | TNN

Nagpur/Amravati: NCP chief Sharad Pawar said he won't oppose a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Gautam Adani issue if "entire Opposition" wants it. Pawar was in Amravati on Sunday to attend an event organized by NCP's Agriculture Graduates Cell.

"My opinion is that JPC is not a solution for it [Adani controversy]. What I had said earlier was that the Supreme Court has already appointed a committee to look into the matter. However, other Opposition parties are demanding a JPC probe. If everyone wants it, then I will not oppose it,"

If someone is trying to do that [trigger a split in NCP], that's their strategy... We will have to take a stand on it, but it will be inappropriate to speak about it today because...we have not discussed it amongst ourselves

Sharad Pawar | NCP PRESIDENT



said Pawar.

On the political rumblings, specifically about rumours that BJP is trying to wean away Ajit Pawar from NCP, the senior Pawar chose to refrain from stoking

the controversy further. "If someone is trying to do that [trigger a split], then that's their strategy, their style of working. We will obviously have to take a stand on it, but it will be inappropriate to speak about it today because so far, we have not even discussed it amongst ourselves," said Pawar.

Regarding talks of an alliance with Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), Pawar said no final decision has been taken. "Prakash Ambedkar [VBA president] has not held any talks with me, but there is a proposal to go into Karnataka polls together. We will decide at the appropriate time."

The Agriculture Graduate Cell organized the convention to discuss various issues impacting

farmers, specifically those in Vidarbha. Addressing the gathering, Pawar expressed concerns over shrinking land area under cultivation. "Agriculture land is being sold by farmers and projects are coming up there. When I see the Samruddhi Expressway from Nagpur right up till Nashik, the land it is built upon is agricultural land," said Pawar, adding that apart from government projects, farmers are also forced to sell land because they have to meet expenses like repaying debt.

"During the UPA tenure, I told the then PM Manmohan Singh that we have to waive off farmers' loans. He supported my stand and we announced the biggest package for farmers back then," he said.

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No data theft, says MPSC after admit card leak

Pune: Admit cards for the Group B and C combined preliminary exams, to be conducted by the MPSC on April 30, were leaked on an external link on a popular social media application. The Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) has, however, denied any data theft. It has also lodged a complaint with the Mumbai cyber cell against the administrator of the channel, from which the link has now been taken down. In a statement it assured the candidates that the commission's technical experts have concluded that there was no data leak, and the rumours were not true. It also clarified that hall tickets downloaded from its official website will only be accepted on the day of the exam. "The commission had arranged for two options to download admit cards, on the official website and through a link on an external portal, in view of glitches on the website. However, it was observed that an external link was being circulated on a popular social media app. On being informed about this, the commission's technical team acted upon it," a statement from the MPSC read, adding, "The exams will be conducted as per schedule."

Candidates, meanwhile, were frustrated with the development. "Security of data is the responsibility of the commission and it should look into it," Yogesh Sureave, an aspirant from Pune said. Another aspirant Pravin Kumar added, "The website crashes when the commission releases the date to download the admit cards.

— Swati Shinde Gole

Car rams into parked tanker on e-way, passersby extricate 2 from wreckage

George Mendonca



The car driver escaped with minor injuries, but the person seated beside him has sustained severe injuries and is under treatment

Manthan Thakkar (38). Both are residents of Kalyan.

Ganesh Burukul, police sub-inspector of Palapse traffic unit, informed that LPG

tanker driver Saurabh Yadav had parked his HMV on the shoulder Kalamboli on the extreme left as his HMV had de-

veloped a mechanical fault around 8.45am. Bhalerao, accompanied by Thakkar, lost control of the car at the curved road and crashed into the rear end of the parked tanker. "As the car's left side rammed into the tanker, the driver escaped with minor injuries but Thakkar seated besides him sustained severe injuries," said Burukul.

Assistant police inspector Vithal Pisal of Khandeshwar police station said, "Bhalerao is out of danger, but his companion Thakkar is still unconscious. Bhalerao has been booked under relevant IPC sections and Motor Vehicle Act."

Doc, brother duped of ₹23L in job scam

Thane: The Vartak Nagar police have booked an unidentified woman for allegedly conning a Thane doctor and his brother of collective Rs 23 lakh under the pretext of providing them job opportunities at plum positions in various government organisations.

The accused and the victim are learnt to have met a few times over the issue whether a proposal to find a suitable job for his brother was also discussed to which the woman agreed. The accused reportedly sent some emails to the victim trying to garner his trust following which she made demands for some money.

TNN

Psychiatric autopsy urged in IITian suicide

Clara.Lewis@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Well-known psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty, in an email to chief minister Eknath Shinde, has urged the state government to conduct a psychological autopsy in the death of IIT-Bombay student Darshan Solanki who died by suicide in February.

The psychiatrist, who is a visiting faculty at the National Judicial Academy as also the Maharashtra Judicial Academy and the Maharashtra National Law University, said random attributions, and lay explanatory models increase the stigma related to mental health and illness.

"Political football can actually vitiate the atmosphere in the institutes and divide students on religious and caste lines," he said.

The government must appoint a team of mental health professionals from government medical colleges and mandate a psychological autopsy in the death of the student.

Dr Shetty in his email said suicide should be investigated with scientific tools rather than through caste, religion, ideology or other speculative and generic methods. He said psychological autopsy has been conducted for long in the army and other institutions when there are deaths by suicide.

"I have conducted psychological autopsy in the past," he said. Dr Shetty, who has worked with victims of Marathwada earthquake, Kan-

dia cyclone, Gujarat riots, besides conducting campaigns on suicide prevention, noted that suicide is generally a consequence of a complex process.

"The National Crime Records Bureau figures point to the increase in number of suicides among all age groups. There has been a 10% increase in suicide between 2019-2020 and a 7% increase between 2020-2021.

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Dr Shetty in his email said suicide should be investigated with scientific tools rather than through caste, religion, ideology or other speculative and generic methods. He said psychological autopsy will kill all speculation and give a true picture of the processes leading to death by self-harm. "It will also help in preventing future such deaths and aid in early detection," he said.

Fake news on same-sex marriage law busted

MEET FIVE OF THE CHAIN-BREAKERS



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Watch out for

- Fake News Of The Day column on page 2
- Weekly round-ups of top trending fake news and appeals to join the fight against fake news by sharing these on your social networks, so that communities, near and dear ones are made aware

— comprising reporters, editors and representatives from the municipality and government — taps into its sources.

Since the national launch of the 'Times Verified' initia-

tive on November 21 last year, TOI's editorial team has received nearly 1.5 lakh messages, half of which turned out to be false. Besides misleading international headlines such

as, "According to the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook, India will be poorer than Bangladesh by 2025 & is no longer a developing nation" to "Getting US visa appoint-

ments in India will not take more than 5 working days, starting 1st May 2023. More than 2,000 people deployed in US consulates to fast track processes", the misinformation also included messages like,

"In order to provide employment to the women of the country, the central government is providing free sewing machines to women under the Prime Minister's Free Sewing Machine Scheme 2023."

To guard against rising instances of online scams and fake news in India, media and information literacy is critical, stated experts in an online publication recently.

In this scenario, the role of our vigilant army of chain-breakers becomes significant. The alert brigade includes Maharashtra's K V Nair and Ganesh Shetye, Haryana's Nav Jyot Kalra, Karnataka's Sudersan S and Bihar's Haridharan Ram.

Litmus test for babu tasked with heat death probe

In his bureaucratic career spread over more than three-and-a-half decades, the biggest challenge for Nitin Karir will be to probe the Kharharghat tragedy in which 14 people lost their lives to heat stroke at a government event organised to present award to social reformer Appasaheb Dharmadhikari.

Almost for a week, both CM Eknath Shinde and deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis had maintained a discreet silence on whether the government would conduct a probe. With mounting pressure from opposition, Shinde declared Karir will conduct the probe and submit a report within a

month. NCP president Sharad Pawar and MPCC president Nana Patole had demanded a probe by a sitting judge of the high court, while leader of opposition Ajit Pawar had demanded inquiry by a retired judge of the HC. Although Pawar showered praise on Karir, saying he is one of the most honest and efficient officers with a proven track record, he maintained that in the present case, Karir will not be able to present a true picture of the situation. Pawar felt that since Karir will have to examine the role of both Shinde and Fadnavis, his political bosses, truth will never come out. It is believed that not

PUBLIC EYE

PRAFULLA MARPAKWAR

withstanding the honesty and efficiency of the bureaucrat, Karir may not make critical observations against the government over its failure. It remains to be seen if Karir proves Pawar wrong.

A reformist at work: IPS officer Tejaswi Satpute has won the prestigious Prime Minister's award for excellence in public administration. An IPS officer of the 2012 batch, Satpute, during her tenure as the Solapur superintendent of police, successfully implemented 'Operation Parivartan' to bring about drastic change in the lives of tribals. When she took over the reins of the Solapur (rural) police, Satpute found that there was rampant illicit liquor trade in certain rural areas as there was no means of livelihood. Law enforcing agencies would raid the premises, seize illicit liquor, and destroy the machinery, but the tribals would be back in business, knowing the next raid would be after a month. Satpute changed the entire system and raided the areas at least twice a week. Later, Satpute personally stepped in, had several rounds of interactive and counselling sessions with the families and organized training sessions for women folk, men and children on measures to be taken for setting up alternative means of livelihood. Satpute has now been posted in Mumbai. It remains to be seen what reforms she would usher in now.

— PRAFULLA MARPAKWAR

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BJP USED PULWAMA ATTACK, BALAKOT AIR STRIKE TO
WIN 2019 LS POLLS: FORMER TRIPURA CM MANIK SARKAR



Two men beat biker to death in Delhi for not giving way

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 39-year-old scooterist was allegedly beaten to death by two youths in central Delhi's Shadipur village on Saturday night. The two suspects, who were agitated over the victim's parked scooter blocking the way for their cab on a narrow lane, have been arrested, police said.

The victim was identified as Pankaj Thakur, a resident of West Patel Nagar who worked at a shop and did other part-time jobs.

Police said they received a call at 11.30pm about the incident at Main Bazar Wali Gali in Shadipur Village. "The caller said an injured man was lying on a street. He was taken to the hospital by locals. We later came to know that he was declared dead by the doctors," deputy commissioner of police (central) Sanjay Sain said.

Sain said during the scanning of the CCTV camera at the spot, they identified two suspects. Investigations revealed that the two youths kicked and punched the victim. Raids were conducted, and two men were arrested in central Delhi. The accused were identified as Manish Kumar (19) and Lalchand alias Golu (20). Both are friends and live in Shadipur Village. The accused had an argument with Thakur amid continuous honking by others. A scuffle followed soon after.

Modi to meet 8 top church leaders in Kerala today

Aim To Boost BJP's Chances In 2024 LS Polls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



BUGLE OF FAITH: PM offering Easter greetings in Delhi, on April 9

Kochi: In a significant move that is expected to give an impetus to BJP's outreach to the Christian community in Kerala ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold discussions with various church leaders in Kochi on Monday, when he starts his two-day visit of the state.

BJP sources said leaders of eight denominations of the church will meet the PM.

Syro-Malabar church major archbishop cardinal George Alencherry, Malankara Orthodox church head Mar Athanasius Ioseph Mor Severios, and Chaldean Syrian church head Mar Angi Kuriaose are expected to hold discussions with the PM. They said they

haven't received the final list of the church representatives with whom the PM will hold talks.

The PM tweeted in Malayalam and English on Sunday: "A significant enhancement to Kochi's infrastructure! The Kochi Water Metro would be dedicated to the nation. It will ensure seamless connectivity for Kochi." He also tweeted about Kerala's first Vande Bharat Express which is to be flagged off.

'Exterminated', 2 netas field wives from home turf

Bengaluru: Two "banned-entry" candidates Vinay Kulkarni and G Janardhana Reddy presented a picture of a peculiar case in the run-up to the Karnataka assembly elections. While Congress candidate Kulkarni can't go to Dharwad, the constituency he is contesting from, following a court-imposed ban,

Reddy fielded his wife in Ballari city as he is barred from entry there.

Kulkarni's wife Shivaleela filed the nomination on his behalf. Kulkarni was arrested in November 2020 in connection with the murder of BJP leader Yogeshgo-



uda Goudar in June 2016. He was granted bail by the Supreme Court on the condition that he would not be allowed to enter Dharwad.

The case of former mining baron Reddy is not much different.

A former BJP mi-

Kochi: A catering firm owner was on Sunday arrested for allegedly writing a letter threatening a suicide attack on PM Modi. Modi is slated to visit Kerala on Monday.

Kochi police, who confirmed the threat was a "hoax", said Xavier Anjanikal (53) of Ernakulam wrote the letter to falsely implicate neighbour NJ Johnny by mentioning his name and phone number and sending it to the BJP office in the area a week ago.

Kochi police commissioner K Sethu Raman said forensic tests had confirmed that the handwriting matched Xavier's. Xavier and Johnny were members of the same church. TNM

nister, Reddy has been barred by the apex court from entering Ballari in connection with illegal mining case. Since he is not allowed to enter Ballari, Reddy chose to contest from neighbouring Gangavathi and fielded his wife Lakshmi Aruna G from Ballari City constituency instead. AGENCIES

Stray dog lifts baby sleeping in UP home, mauls her to death

Mohammad Dilshad
@timesgroup.com

Muzaffarnagar: In yet another dog attack in Aligarh, a stray entered a house, picked a three-month-old girl by its jaws and mauled her to death on Sunday. All this happened even as the family was busy attending a wedding function near the home while the baby slept in her room alone.

The incident took place under Quarsi police station limits. The infant's father, Pa-

Strays kill 7-yr-old boy

A student of class II was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs in Bilari area of UP's Moradabad district around 10am on Sunday. The seven-year-old boy, Savendra Kumar, who died during treatment of his injuries, had gone out with his elder sister Radhika, 12, to serve tea to his father when they were surrounded by the strays, reports Kanwardeep Singh.

wan Kumar, a daily wager, said, "My two sisters were getting married and we had stepped out to attend the function nearby. The baby was sleeping in a room unattended. A dog took her away and mauled her to death." He added, "When I returned home, I couldn't find her in the room. I saw a stray tearing into her in a nearby plot. It was a terrible sight."

SIT to challenge all 67 Naroda Gam acquittals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The Supreme Court-appointed special investigation team (SIT) will challenge in the Gujarat high court, the special court's acquittal of all 67 accused in the 2002 Naroda Gam massacre case last week, top sources said on Sunday.

Sources in the SIT said the probe agency firmly believes that it had placed on record strong, reliable and irrefutable evidence against the accused in the case. After the special SIT court acquitted the 67 accused on Thursday, the SIT is now set to file an appeal before the HC after scrutinising the copy of judgment, which is awaited.

The case pertains to the killing of 11 people on February 28, 2002, a day after a mob torched the S-6 coach of Sabarmati Express near Godhra railway station, leaving 59 bodies returning from Kodhnana, Bajrang Dal leader Baba Bajrangi and Patel.

Following a petition filed by the NHRC, the Supreme Court constituted the SIT to probe nine riot cases, including Naroda Gam. It was after the SIT came into action, the then minister Maya Kodnani, VHP's ex-general secretary Jaydeep Patel and a couple of other people were arrested and put on trial on charges of murder, criminal conspiracy, rioting and arson. The SIT arrested 37 more individuals after taking over the probe from Gujarat police.

SIT examined 187 witnesses, whereas the accused examined 58 witnesses in their defence. Kodnani brought Union home minister Amit Shah to the witness box in her defence to prove her alibi that she was not in Naroda that day. Bodies were brought from Godhra to that hospital. After a 14-year trial, special judge SK Baxi acquitted all, including Kodnana, Bajrang Dal leader Baba Bajrangi and Patel.

UP police to move court for narco test & polygraph of Atiq's killers

Lucknow/Prayagraj: Almost eight days after the twin murder of don-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf and the subsequent arrest of three killers—Mohit Singh alias Shani, Lavlesh Tiwari and

Arun Maurya—police are planning to move court to seek lie detector and narco tests on the accused. Meanwhile, the accused trio was sent back to Pratappgarh jail after their police custody ended on Sunday. TNM

Cong harassment row: Notice to neta

Mukul Das
@timesgroup.com

public and filed an FIR against Srinivas.

Joint commissioner (in charge) of Guwahati police Thube Prateek Vijay Kumar, who led the five-member team to Bengaluru, said: "We went to Srinivas's house. As no one was present, we pasted the notice on his door. We are also sending the notice to his native place."

The notice says during investigation, "reasonable grounds" were found. It warned of arrest in case of failure to comply with the notice. Bengaluru City police confirmed that an Assam Police team had visited Srinivas's residence and pasted the notice.

It's not bad to consider Modi as god: Koshyari

Dehradun: Former Maharashtra governor and ex-CM of Uttarakhand, Bhagat Singh Koshyari, said, "It is not a bad thing to consider Prime Minister Narendra Modi as god." Speaking at an event in Nainital on Saturday, he added, "I am not saying that we should worship the PM, but we should listen to what he says."

Koshyari said, "The government has given jobs more than its capacity. No government will be able to provide employment to every job seeker and, hence we have to become self-reliant." TNM

Tight vigil in UP dist as Hanuman idol vandalised

Kanpur: Tension prevailed in Kanpur Dehat's Akbarpur area after an idol of Lord Hanuman was vandalised on Saturday. Heavy police force has been deployed near the Shukla Talab area, under the limits of Akbarpur police station.

Kanpur Dehat district additional superintendent of police Rajesh Pandey said, "Some part of the Lord Hanuman idol installed on the Shiva temple premises in Shukla Talab area was found damaged. Forensic team has conducted a probe and a case has been registered against unidentified miscreants. Strict action will be taken against those responsible." TNM

Two drown in Goa while clicking selfies, 2 missing

Panaji: Strong waves knocked out four persons clicking selfies at Keri beach in Goa on Sunday, killing two from Candolim, reports Murari Shetye. Two others, whose bodies were yet to be found, were feared drowned, police said. Permanent PI Nitin Deulkar said that the four were clicking selfies at a no-selfie zone on the beach.

Mohamed Ali (25) and Thabstun Khatun (12) were rescued and were declared dead at a community health centre. The other two—Shakina Alim, 18, and Mohamed Alim, 16, are missing.

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Obituary

Shri. Rohit Shah
(30/06/1955 - 22/04/2023)
Age: 67 yrs
Place: Thane - Mulund

With profound grief, we regret to inform that our beloved Rohitbhai left for heavenly abode on 22nd April 2023. He lived an exceptional life of love, care and entrepreneurship. We will miss him and cherish his memories forever.

Prayer Meet: Monday, 24th April 2023
from 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm
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Bengaluru has the advantage of a rich heritage, cosmopolitan culture and salubrious climate and is considered a multi-linguistic place. Students across the country view Bengaluru as full of opportunities to make a career. The fact that more than 65% of Bengaluru's population consists of migrants from other states is an indication of its cultural diversity.

"Someone who is educated in Bengaluru is able to carve

an identity for themselves. The accommodative nature, respect for other languages and ethnicity has made Bengaluru a melting pot of ideas and culture. A haven for startups and fortune 500 companies, Bengaluru invariably is the best city in India for education and a great career as well," says Amrita Gupta, a higher education counsellor.

• A KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Bengaluru is credited with more than 125 R&D centres in the field of core engineering, information technology, basic and applied sciences

and aerospace to name a few. Major Indian and foreign IT and manufacturing companies have their R&D centres here. It is also known as a health tourism centre with state-of-the-art hospitals of international repute catering to patients from across the nation and abroad as well.

The list of the city's top educational institutions is rather long and one which boasts of national level institutions in almost every discipline including health, management, Science & Technology, law, social science, education, linguistics as well the existence of an IIM, IISc, IIIT, TIFR,

National Law School and Nimhans. The city is also credited with more than 125 R&D centres in the field of core engineering, information technology, basic and applied sciences and aerospace. The faculty in these institutions are known for their competence. Students passing out of these institutions are geared for a better career with the skill sets they acquire. Bengaluru's topnotch educational institutions will not disappoint. At the graduation level, colleges offer a wide spectrum of courses from biotechnology to genetics, electronics, statistics, fashion and apparel de-

sign, computer applications, hotel management, law, nursing, media and communications and family business.

At the post-graduation level, colleges offer courses from the traditional to the new -- from physics, chemistry, maths, commerce, geography, history, psychology, economics, sociology, to MCA, Masters in Tourism Administration, Master of Social Work, MS in Communications to name a few.

• DEPTH AND DIVERSITY

"Bengaluru has been seen as a preferred destination for higher education from the early 1970s. Initially, it was for school education which slowly transformed itself into a preferred educational hub. Many reasons could be attributed but one single factor that stands out is its cosmopolitan profile and salubrious climate. The presence of a large number of public schools, state private universities and deemed-to-be universities offering a wide range of employability centric programmes, delivered by highly accomplished members of the teaching fraternity has only to the city's allure as a hub of education," says Sheela George, a professor.

• ADVANTAGE BENGALURU

Dr K N B Murthy, vice chancellor of a well-known university, says, "Bengaluru is considered by many as the Silicon Valley of India, with the humongous number of IT companies that operate there. It is the city that conducts a plethora of meetups, hackathons, and other events all around the year. Venture capitalists and angel investors are relatively easy to find in the city, given the innovations and startups which are coming up."

"Apart from contributing to a third of IT exports in India, industrial areas around the city offer opportunities for aerospace, defence, retail biotechnology, electronics manufacturing, machinery and automobiles. Availability of renowned higher education institutions, abundant opportunities for jobs/placements as well as internships/training, availability of cost-effective accommodation, affordable as well as safe transport facilities, availability of facilities for sports as well as cultural activities at both basic and professional level makes Bengaluru as one of the top educational hubs in India," Dr Murthy adds.



"I come from Raipur which does have many hospitals and colleges. But there is a lack of infrastructure and practical experience in the courses. I wanted admission in a government college with the option for research and Bengaluru worked for me. There are many options here. Unlike colleges in my city that are far, here everything is well connected so you can travel easily via metro and buses. There is more scope for research in almost all the fields one would want to specialise in. There is a growth vibe here. You won't feel left out. As an intern you get to attend a lot of patients where you learn, this scope is less in other places."

- DR MOHIT
second year MDS student



Career prospects aside, there's a certain positivity to the city that makes it a favored destination for students. It could be the large pool of educated and qualified professionals that promotes and supports intellectual growth. It could also be the city's deep rooted connect to its culture and heritage. It could be the largely broadminded and liberal population of Bengaluru that is equally welcoming of outside people and influences.

- RASHMI SINGH
student



For my parents it was the safety aspect of the city that played a key role in allowing me to move to Bengaluru to study. Bengaluru is much safer compared to other metro cities. Its beautiful climate almost all year round is another factor that makes it an extremely inviting place for people from other states.

- SIMI L
student

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16.66% Undivided share, right, title and interest of the said Mr. Sunil Narandas Godhwani in 5 (five) fully paid up shares of Mittal Tower Premises Cooperative Society Limited bearing distinctive Nos.1301 to 1305 (both inclusive) issued under Certificate No.261 dated 17th November 2008 together with the said share of the said Mr. Sunil Narandas Godhwani in the said Office Premises bearing nos.34B, 35B, 36B & 37B situated on the 3rd floor of the Mittal Tower, together with the open terrace attached to the said Office Premises at 210 Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 001, Dated this 21st day of April 2023.

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ADVOCATES AND
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6	101, 102, 11th	11th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
7	101, 102, 12th	12th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
8	101, 102, 13th	13th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
9	101, 102, 14th	14th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
10	101, 102, 15th	15th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
11	101, 102, 1st	1st C 1623.22 sq.ft.
12	201, 202, 2nd	2nd C 1623.22 sq.ft.
13	201, 202, 3rd	3rd C 1623.22 sq.ft.
14	401, 402, 4th	4th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
15	501, 502, 5th	5th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
16	901, 902, 9th	9th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
17	701, 702, 7th	7th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
18	801, 802, 8th	8th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
19	901, 902, 9th	9th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
20	1001, 1002, 10th	10th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
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22	1201, 1202, 12th	12th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
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25	1501, 1502, 15th	15th C 1623.22 sq.ft.
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NSA slapped as Amritpal seen as ISI pawn to revive militancy in Punjab

AMRITPAL SINGH: PAST & PRESENT

PTI Photo

Jan 17, 1993 | Amritpal Singh Sandhu born to Tarsem Singh and Balwinder Kaur of Jallupur Khera village in Baba Bakala tehsil of Punjab's Amritsar district. He is the youngest of three siblings

2012 Shifts to Dubai to join Harjinder Singh's transport business. Had enrolled in a polytechnic college in Kapurthala after passing class 10, but did not complete the diploma course

2019 Surfaces with comments backing the farmers' protest against three farm laws and in support of then **Waris Punjab De** (Heirs of Punjab) head and actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu

As for why Waaris Punjab De chief Amritpal was sent to the central jail in Dibrugarh, Assam, soon after his arrest, sources said this was done to rule out the possibility of a jailbreak with the support of like-minded Sikh prisoners or gangsters incarcerated in prisons across Punjab or other states in north India. Nine of Amritpal's aides arrested earlier have been packed off to Assam.

Security agencies and Punjab Police feared that had Amritpal or his aides been imprisoned in Punjab, they would have radicalised other jailed criminals and associated them with his private army, Anandpur Sahib.

Given the defiant protests in Ajnala, it was apprehended that Amritpal's supporters could create a law and order situation by mobilising support against his arrest. Last but not the least, Punjab Police and agencies felt that Amritpal and his aides, if left in Punjab's jails, would run their criminal activities from behind the bars, as many gangsters have been doing.

Dibrugarh central jail is considered one of safest prisons in northeast. Asam government has further beefed up jail security in view of the arrival of its latest high-profile inmate.

Sources said NSA was slapped against Amritpal as he is seen as a deliberate plant by Pakistan's ISI to whip up pro-Khalistan sentiments and revive militan-

cy in Punjab. He is said to have been trained by ISI in Georgia before landing in India from Dubai last year. Agencies here believe he was being funded by ISI to provide shelter to terrorists here and facilitate the supply of weapons by dro-

nes into Punjab. One of his speeches days before Punjab Police's crackdown, he had asserted that Sikhs involved in the murder of singer Sidhu Moose Wala were used by "tilak-dharis" to kill Sikhs. Amritpal is also involved in arms cases and faces charges of using youths for violence and promoting gun culture by maintaining a private militia, Anandpur Sahib or AKE He is accused of defying the orders of the government of Punjab not to display wea-

pons in open, many of which are sourced illegally. Also, Amritpal and his aides would allegedly beat up youths in the so-called drug de-addiction centres run by WPD if they did not toe the outfit's radical line.

Another factor that attracted NSA against Amritpal is that he is alleged link with proscribed outfit Sikhs for Justice, which has come in open support of WPD, and UK-based pro-Khalistan elements including Avtar Singh Khanda.

Amritpal Singh was taken into custody from Moga district

AAP convenor and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal said

that with the arrest of Amritpal, the Bhagwant Mann-led government has sent out a very strong message to those trying to disrupt law and order. "We are committed towards ensuring peace and security in Punjab. We are also ready to take tough decisions for this," tweeted Kejriwal.

He added that the Punjab Police achieved success without any bloodshed and firing. "Many thanks to the public for maintaining peace and supporting the Punjabi government during this

period," said Kejriwal.

Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma said Amritpal had been arrested lawfully and anyone who disturbed Punjab's peace and order will be punished. Sharma said BJP was committed to maintaining the state's peace, security and communal harmony along with the country's unity and integrity.

On the other hand, SAD welcomed Amritpal's decision to "hand himself to the law" on the advice of Akal Takht jathedar Giani Har-

'No one who left BJP has flourished'

BJP chief J P Nadda is confident his party will break the trend of no party winning two consecutive terms in Karnataka since 1985. In a conversation with TOI's Akhilesh Singh, he underplays rebellions. Excerpts:

Several senior BJP leaders have quit and joined Congress and JD(S). Seems like BJP is on a sticky wicket.

■ Since the Jan Sangh days, no leader who left the party has flourished. Secondly, leaving the party is one thing, what about the ideology? When you revolt ideologically, you are standing against a school of thought. So, surely the loss will always be yours.

BATTLEGROUND KARNATAKA

Lot of thought went into ticket distribution. Some people are bound to be replaced. However, the party is galvanised, enthused and most people liked the party's decisions.

Since 1985, no party has won twice in a row in Karnataka. What makes you believe you will defy history?

■ We came to power in Tripura and Nagaland twice for the first time. In Goa, we came to



TOI INTERVIEW

power for the third time. In Uttarakhand, we came to power for the second time running. In Uttar Pradesh, we won four consecutive elections. Our biggest advantage is Modi ji's personality. It has helped us earn people's respect and us the courage to achieve the unprecedented. People see Modi ji as the vehicle of their aspirations. Secondly, the party has also been growing.

There is a perception that a senior leader like Jagdish Shettar should have been obliged with a ticket considering his stature.

■ This was a conscious, considered opinion that we will give senior leaders different responsibilities. It is important that members understand this. However, he couldn't. They said they were informed very late.

■ That's the way it happens. I will say they didn't have the maturity to understand the party's decisions. Be it Anil Baluni or J P Nadda, we know

Last time, you projected B S

Yediyurappa as the CM candidate. This time, Basavaraj Bommai is the incumbent CM. But his name hasn't been properly announced.

■ These things are decided by the parliamentary board. However, Bommai sahab is the CM and we are fighting the election under his leadership. The quota rejig, taking away the 4% of Muslim community and giving 2% each to Lingayat and Vokaliga communities happened right before the elections. Was it done in view of possible anti-incumbency?

■ No, the demand had been pending for a long time. We were examining the issue. Such matters are resolved after intense consultations. The Muslim quota was unconstitutional. The decision has been laid across the board.

Congress has announced that it will reverse the decision if it is elected.

■ That has always been the Congress way divide and rule. Also, Constitution does not allow religion-based quotas. How will they bring it back?

Those who have left include Lingayats. Do you think that this will hurt your support among the community.

■ No, not at all. Lingayats or anyone else, the people's interest in the BJP is only increasing. No party could give the Lingayats what the BJP has done. What did the Congress do to the Lingayat leader, Venkendra Patil? They removed him in nine months.

Certain sections have condemned the decision to ban the PFI as vindictive.

■ You don't expect better from Congress. Congress patronised and indulged PFI and communal tensions grew under Siddaramaiah.

This campaign also marked Congress's determined bid to win over Lingayats, an important first.

■ Who will listen to them? These are crocodile tears. We have not disrespected anyone. We have a continuous process that senior leaders will move on to newer responsibilities. Eshwarappa's responsibilities will change.

You said the people have confidence in PM. Congress leaders said they will focus on state-specific issues.

■ Such plans are a testimony to Modiji's appeal in Karnataka. People have realised that the BJP under Modiji is the best option for them.

Seeking action against BJP not anti-party: Pilot

Jaipur: Congress's Rajasthan ache relapsed on Sunday when former deputy CM Sachin Pilot wondered how demanding action against alleged corruption of the erstwhile Vasundhara Raje-led BJP government could be termed "anti-party activity".

The Congress had used the phrase to tick off Pilot for a fast on April 11 against his own party's government led by Ashok Gehlot, with whom the ex-deputy CM has been locked in a long feud. On Sunday, the Congress leader also pointed out that no action had been taken on the alleged corruption cases even two weeks after his protest.

"If we all (in Congress) raise corruption issues of BJP or if I raise the corruption issues of the Raje government and demand action on them, I believe it is in the benefit of the party," Pilot said, and portrayed his fast as part of "the values of Congress to speak the truth, to raise one's voice against corruption". TNN

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Siddaramaiah's remarks give boost to BJP's Lingayat push

BJP will be reduced to 40 seats: Rahul

In Karnataka to campaign for Congress candidates, Rahul Gandhi on Sunday visited Kudalasangama, a prominent Lingayat Mutt in Bagalkot, reports **Sangamesh Menasinakai**. He also held a roadshow in Vijayapura and said BJP will not be able to purchase MLAs this time. "BJP will be reduced to 40 seats just like the 40% commission it collected," Rahul said.

There's already a Lingayat CM (B S Bommai). He is the root of all corruption in the state," Siddaramaiah had said when asked about the BJP's stance that a Lingayat should be the next CM.

The Congress leader's re-

marks were interpreted by the BJP as a bid to "demone" the entire Lingayat community, the most decisive electoral constituent in the state even as Siddaramaiah later clarified that the statement was about the current CM.

Bomma said.

Siddaramaiah lashed out at the BJP and said his comments with particular reference to Bommai were being deliberately misinterpreted.

The BJP was quick to launch a scathing attack against Siddaramaiah, saying he had insulted the entire Lingayat community, saying, "It is unforgivable that the person who once tried to divide the community is now implying the community is corrupt."

"It is not right for a former CM to make a statement like this. He has said that the entire Lingayat community is corrupt. The Brahmin community had been ridiculed in the past. Earlier, he had tried to break the Lingayat-Veerashaiva community when he was CM. The people of the state will teach Siddaramaiah a lesson," Bomma said.

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Sadhu's 'killing' linked to Mamata speech, says BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Sunday alleged the involvement of Trinamool Congress leaders in the murder and hanging of an Aghori sadhu in West Bengal's Birbhum district and also linked the incident to chief minister Mamata Banerjee's "communal" speech to a Muslim gathering on the day of Eid.

On Sunday, the body of an Aghori sadhu, identified as one Bhupan Mandal, was found hanging outside the Behira Kali Mandir in Birbhum. Mandal had been staying at the temple for over 10 years. Absent for the past 8-10 days, he had only returned to the temple on Saturday, locals said.

Leader of opposition in the state assembly **Suvendu Adhikari** called for a proper probe and videography of the post-mortem in the presence of a magistrate.

hu has been murdered and hung outside Behira Kali Mandir in Birbhum. TMC leaders are involved in the crime... Another day in Bengal," tweeted BJP's IT department head, Amit Malviya.

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"While Mamata Banerjee delivers a provocative communal speech to a Muslim gathering on Eid, urging them to fight imaginary ghosts, an Aghori panth Sad-

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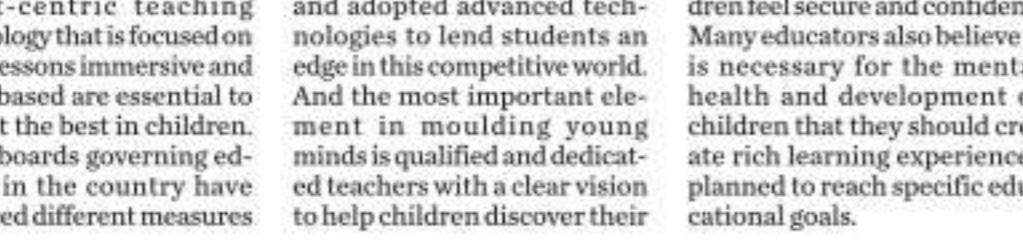
A student-centric teaching methodology focused on making lessons immersive and inquiry-based are essential to bring out the best in children

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The quality of education is an important prerequisite for every child especially in these modern times. Success for India in this competitive, worldwide digital economy will largely depend on how well we equip our students with quality education and latest skills such as technology and media literacy, effective communications, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration.

Education today is not about learning by rote and repeating it in the examination. The focus is on the all-round development of a child, giving emphasis on the development of Emotional Quotient (EQ), Social Quotient (SQ) and Intellectual Quotient (IQ). As per experts, schools must focus on holistic development of the students. Today, academics alone is not sufficient to lead a productive life. One must be good at creative arts, sports, public speaking, to name a few, to ensure proper career development and growth. Thus, schools that offer drama, music, sports, and arts as part of the curriculum are great examples to emulate as far as providing quality education to children is concerned. Also, learning has become more collaborative with the easy availability of the Internet and the multitude of devices that connect to it. Efficient use of technology is necessary to improve the quality of education imparted to students.

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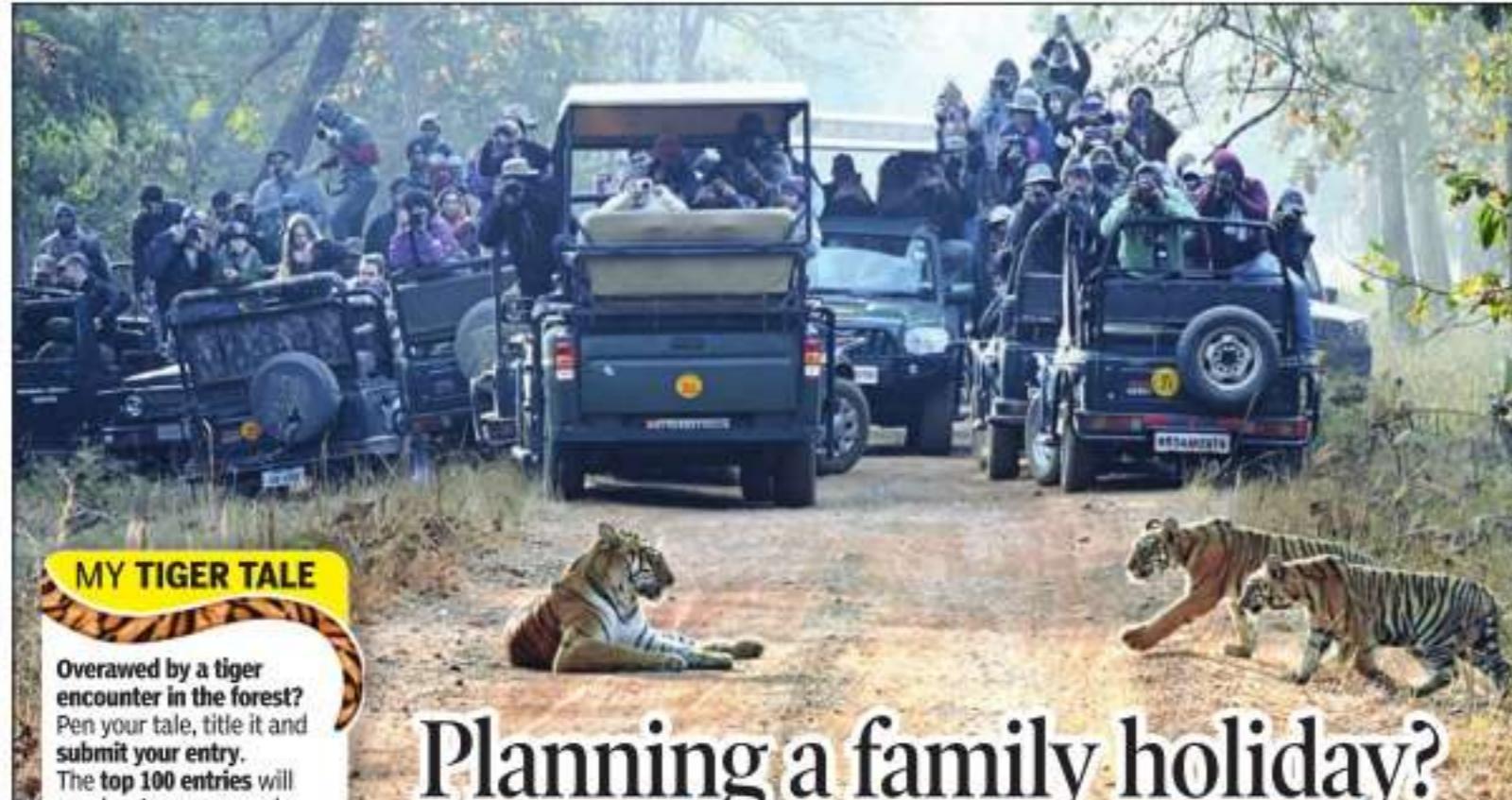
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A tiger sees you first, and decides whether or not to appear before you," says wildlife enthusiast from Nagpur, Ashok Naidu, who has been on hundreds of safaris since 2010.

His statement sums up the thrill which is pulling visitors like never before to India's tiger reserves for safaris, including families with children and elderly members.

"We have seen the popularity go up drastically over the last five to ten years," says Amit Wahale, a naturalist and guide to professional photographers from 2011.

Wahale says posts on social media are a big factor. "Every other person owns a DSLR, and one in every 10 people has a professional camera now. Road connectivity has improved, and every family has a four-wheeler," says Wahale.

Families from Gujarat and West Bengal are the most visible groups, while among professionals those from Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad

Planning a family holiday? Tiger safari seems best bet

The thrill of sighting a tiger in the wild is drawing more and more families to reserves. From elderly to kids, they have many stories to tell about spotting the big cat in its natural habitat



are in majority, according to guides.

The cost is also steep, with two to three safaris usually done per trip — each accommodating six persons — costing the traveler between Rs 10,000 and Rs 12,000 now. VIP or tatkali tickets cost even higher. Resort accommodation (usually preferred by families), food, tips to guides only add up.

But rarely do visitors mind shelling out some extra bucks for the thrill of sighting a tiger. "My first tiger sighting, I was half crying," says Nuruya Rao of Mumbai.

"Over 15 years, I have had around 100 tiger sightings, but the excitement is the same each time," says G Ramachandra Rao, a wildlife photographer. Families do it to escape from the city into the wild, with the comfort of resorts, choice of food on offer. This makes it an ideal escape."

Wildlife ecotourism in general, feels Saharsh Choudhary from Hyderabad, is becoming increasingly popular in India and tiger safaris are no exception "because the soothing views and a peaceful time in forest are a stress buster for all".

For naturalists and guides, first-time visitors can be a bit noisy, but most learn

the protocol after one or two safaris. "We have seen young boys, who came first with their families, return as conservationists," says a nature guide at Kanha Tiger Reserve.

Doreen D'Sa, 71, who went on her first safari in 1987, says that the rising popularity can be gauged from how difficult it is to book vehicles online.

"Around 1994, one could walk in the Tadoba core. Ten years later, in 2003, I noticed only two vehicles. In 2013, I had to start booking sharp at midnight, and everything was full," says D'Sa.

"Ninety percent of the visitors on safaris now only want to see the tiger. The forest itself in places like Jim Corbett National Park is so beautiful. There are also other large mammals," says D'Sa.

Ramachandra Rao said that at times such visitors can lead to pressure on the driver or guides to sight a tiger. "Drivers break rules for a small amount to 'show a tiger', and create traffic jams," he said.

But tiger safaris will only keep growing in popularity, feels Naidu, due to the variety of tiger reserves.

"From mangroves in the Sundarbans, to semi-deciduous in MP, to evergreen in Uttarakhand. The experiences are endless."

VIP tickets can cost much more for last-minute bookings

► Kind of tiger sightings depend on the 'gate' or area allotted to each safari gypsy, some gates

are known for better sightings

► Wildlife conservationists and professional wildlife photographers prefer homestays,

which are more affordable

► Families prefer resorts with buffet breakfasts, sky's the limit for luxury packages

► Researchers studied glucocorticoid stress responses of the reintroduced tigers in relation to human disturbance in Sariska from 2011 to 2013

► Researchers found human disturbance such as tiger encounter rates of livestock and humans, a distance of tiger reserve to roads and cattle kills associated with an elevation in FGC in tigers

► Female tigers are more sensitive

In a third study, LaCONES correlated physiological stress and habitat factors in the reintroduction-based recovery of tiger populations.

Umapathy said, "The reintroduction of tigers in Sariska and Panna resulted in contrasting outcomes and population growth. Panna population grew rapidly, while Sariska population struggled." As predicted, tigers in Sariska had higher FGC than Panna tigers. "We concluded large carnivore reintroductions should consider physiological stress and habitats at fine scale, for realistic projections."

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Allowing OCI candidates may not impact Indian medical students

These candidates could contribute to the Indian medical landscape

Sonali Srivastava
@timesgroup.com

The NTA had recently revised the eligibility criteria for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, making OCI, Persons with Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) eligible for admission to Indian medical, dental, ayurveda, siddha, unani and homoeopathy colleges. While this may not impact the total number of seats available for Indian students in the short term, medical practitioners say that if the OCI/NRI/PIO students avail a subsidised seat then they should spend a few years in India serving the country post the completion of their course.

In 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs through a notification had specified the rights to which an OCI cardholder shall be entitled under the Citizenship Act, 1955. It stated that the OCI cardholders shall not be eligible for admission against any seat reserved exclusively for Indian citizens. The notification explained that the OCI/PIO cardholder is a foreign national holding a passport of a foreign country and is not a citizen of India. After the OCI candidates petitioned the SC, it allowed them to be considered for all medical seats. In 2023, the NTA notified that the OCI/PIO will be eligible for admission to the UG medical/dental/ayurveda/unani/siddha/homoeopathy courses in India according to the rules/regulations/notifications issued from time to time by the respective regulatory authorities.

On whether allowing OCI/PIO/NRI students to seek admission to Indian medical seats will lead to reducing the number of seats av-



ailable for Indian students, a Health Ministry official, on the condition of anonymity, says that the Indian government seats are merit-bound and there are only a few OCI/NRI candidates, so it may not reduce the total number of seats for Indian students. "The court has said that those candidates who have been registered as OCI/PIO till the year 2021 only are eligible to seek admission to Indian medical seats so far (this may change if OCI candidates petition the Supreme Court). To discourage students from flying back to their countries immediately after completing their course, the MHA may make it conditional for those who take an Indian seat to pay the fee applicable for NRI seats," the official adds.

Dr Sanjay Teotia, joint director, Medical & Health, Lucknow says that there are fewer doctors in India and the OCI and PIOs may go back to their adoptive countries to practice and this may further impact the number of doctors in the country. "The government will have to bear in mind that the number of

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A thought for today

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

Less Drama Please

Making Amritpal a made-for-TV special captive risks turning him into a dangerous symbol

Videos of Amritpal Singh's address in a gurudwara in Punjab's Rode village, from where he was arrested, may look like a case of transformation – the 30-year-old goes from a gun-waving angry young Sikh to a mellowed preacher. But he's still a "radical", and his message is still deep distrust of the state. Post-arrest, there was a special flight from Bathinda to Dibrugarh, roads were cleared from the airport to the prison – all this made for breathless television coverage, further feeding the dangerous legend of Amritpal as a separatist to be feared.

A review of the period since Amritpal went underground on March 18 must start with the fact that the family of Deep Sidhu, whose outfit "Waris De" Amritpal took over, condemned Amritpal's so-called armed struggle and his followers' attempt to storm a jail. Police swept up in a dragnet Amritpal's friends and associates, charged nine under National Security Act and sent them to Dibrugarh jail,

and recently stopped his wife from travelling to the UK, cops briefed the media on numerous Amritpal "sightings", from Uttarakhand to Delhi and Nepal, and, of course, there was talk of Pakistan's hand in his rise.

But there was good sense too. Heads of multiple Sikh factions in Punjab, in a mature response, worked together to play peacemaker – and refused Amritpal's attempt to coerce them into calling a Sarbat Khalsa. They also urged authorities to stop deepening the trust deficit. Their demand that the Punjab government release those arrested in the Amritpal crackdown is more circumspect. Their attempts have segued into the political space too with the Jalandhar parliamentary bypoll slated for May 10. For instance, influential ex-SGPC chief Jagir Kaur has made it clear "excessive action" must be stopped.

Amritpal's reach is yet limited. But how events unfold in days ahead matters – will he become a symbol around which Punjab sees more trouble? The danger is to make him appear a hero for the disaffected. To avoid that authorities have to stop staging high drama and treat him fairly but also speed up the process.

Love's Crash Landing

Special Marriage Act's 30-day notice serves only to hurt personal liberties. End this cruelty

Even as the Supreme Court considers whether Indians should have the right to same-sex marriages, its deliberations have highlighted a peculiar impediment to the supposedly settled right to opposite-sex marriages. CJI Chandrachud has noted that the 30-day notice under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, is "patriarchal" and lays couples "open for invasion by the society". The common filmic trope of parental opposition to a young man and young woman choosing each other instead of abiding by the parental choice of marriage partner, unfortunately reflects a common mindset. An overwhelming majority of marriages in India indeed continue to be "arranged" and solemnised via religious personal laws. That too is a "choice". The question here is whether the SMA notice period is serving any purpose other than inconveniencing and endangering individuals making a different choice. It isn't.

The procedure of publishing a notice dates back to SMA's first incarnation in 1872, when it was rammed through against vehement opposition. When independent India's Parliament passed the Act of 1954 to enable marriage of any two Indians, whether professing the same or different religions or no religion at all, it was a very progressive measure for the times. But times have moved on, and the law must do the same. That marriage under personal laws is expeditious and does not require any publication of notice is an entitlement whose unfairness has grown glaring. Interfaith couples are caught between the increasing hazards around conversion and the increasing moral policing of SMA noticeboards. Of course, these boards also promote community persecution of inter-caste couples.

SC had underlined in the 2018 Hadiya case: "Our choices are respected because they are ours. Social approval for intimate personal decisions is not the basis for recognising them." It is bad enough that toxic ideas of religious, caste and even class "honour" continue to wreak brutalities on individuals in 21st century India. But constitutional courts can protect personal liberty from disapproving and dangerous busybodies and Parliament can amend SMA's 30-day notice period. At least public institutions must not facilitate medieval mindsets.

Sons and Lotuses

All unhappy families aren't alike. All despondent fathers aren't equally luckless

Kannan.Somasundaram@timesgroup.com



A K Antony (a former defence minister) and my father (a defenceless ex-manager) – in their paternal view – had to deal with sons who chose the wrong legacy and even went to a party to celebrate their waywardness.

When I told my father I did not wish to inherit his managerial briefcase and wanted to study literature, his voice darkened into filter-coffee decotion. He presaged a catastrophe, telling me that my academic road "less travelled by" (even flinty MBA grads are thawed by the Robert Frost line) would lead to a party offering something naughtier and maltier than payasam.

"You all will make a show of analysing the Wordsworthian flower but will slyly gossip about deflowerings. Poda, rascal!" my father said. Daffodils anguished my father. The lotus has reportedly hurt Antony, a Congress stalwart, whose son Anil has joined a rival party, BJP.

We will have to explain the botanical allusion only to people from another planet – the US, for example. No thornier matter, let's do it! The US yardstick flogs facts till they are familiar. Janakpuri will be a "West Delhi suburb, as large as 252 Superbowl stadiums put together, and served by three-wheeled cycle rickshaws that can seat three-quarters of Trump's ego or two full Obamas".

Sdear Americans: a crowd of golden lotuses has been blooming across our land since 2014 as the BJP insignia repeats poll victories like Mississippi repeats letters.

Anil says though BJP has won him over, his respect for his father will never change. I believe him. I cling to the memory of my late father the way choly sticks to kheer in a poorly packed "executive" thaali. "Executive" is loathsome, but love is a great manager of life.

I treat Antony, therefore, to accept filial loyalty regardless of Anil's political choice. Even if family members trash-tweet from opposing camps, what matters in the end is their union over an unjumbled thaali.

While on Twitter, Antony should remember that Anil did not go as far as Elon Musk's daughter. She wrote in a legal petition a couple of years ago that she no longer wished to be related to her biological father "in any way, shape or form". The disclaimer was neither a daffodil nor a lotus. It was a blue-ticked cactus.

When Law Creates Crimes

Instead of emergency use, police is deploying Section 144 to bring routine everyday situations under its purview, treating the entire population as potential criminals

Vrinda Bhandari, Abhinav Sekhri, Natasha Maheshwari, Madhav Aggarwal

Section 144, CrPC has been in the news recently – having been imposed in parts of Bihar and West Bengal amidst violence erupting during Ram Navami processions. The use of Section 144 has become commonplace, and is colloquially associated with orders passed by the local administration prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons in one place. But is this the reality of how Section 144 orders are passed?

We set out to answer this question in an empirical study, 'Use and Misuse of Section 144 CrPC'. This analyses all the orders passed by Delhi police during the one-year period from January 1 to December 31, 2021.

This law is being used to create a parallel surveillance network, with no legal accountability and zero oversight. We must rethink its place in our democratic polity

Section 144 has been a key component of public order policing in independent India and a favoured part of the toolkit for local law enforcement (district magistrates or police). It is broadly worded – allowing the local administration to direct "any person" to "abstain from a certain act" or "to take certain order with respect to certain property in his possession or management" in order to prevent public obstruction/annoyance/danger to human life or safety.

Usually, such orders must be issued to an individual, although in cases of emergency, the order may be passed *ex parte*. An order

issued under Section 144 is limited to two months, and can, in exceptional circumstances, be extended up till six months.

Given these limitations, we assumed while starting the study that there would be 500-1,000 orders passed during the year; mostly limited to regulating public assembly or prohibiting congregation as part of Covid-era restrictions. We could not have been further from the truth.

Based on detailed RTI responses, we found that over 6,100 orders were passed under Section 144 by Delhi police during the one-year period, of which we were able to inspect around 5,400. The scale of deployment of Section 144 thus seems far beyond what is anecdotally reported in media.

If the number of Section 144 orders passed was surprising, the purpose for which police issued such orders was beyond our wildest comprehension. Rather than being used as an emergency power to deal with unique threats that may arise from time to time – say, a threat of riots or even the Covid pandemic – it appears that Delhi police adopted Section 144 as a shorthand method to pass broad-based directives on every conceivable issue.

Worse still, these orders were cyclostyled and re-issued at the expiry of the two-month period, leading to a state of perpetual Section 144.

● 25% of the 5,400 orders analysed by us directed various private establishments to install CCTV cameras for surveillance purposes. The targets of these Section

144 orders were varied – (i) ATMs and banks; (ii) owners of girls' schools/PGs/hostels; (iii) liquor vending (directed to have "sufficient cameras" and recording and playback systems); (iv) private courier services and agents monitoring who was booking a courier; and (v) other corporate entities such as owners of parking lots, amusement parks, malls, and banquet halls.

Thus, Section 144 was being used to create a parallel surveillance network, with no legal account-

ability and zero oversight. As one order noted, given the large numbers of customers visiting ATMs and banks for day-to-day transactions it was "necessary to have quality surveillance on their day-to-day functioning".

● Apart from this, we found that 43% of the Section 144 orders analysed were issued to regulate a variety of businesses and services through a range of directives, often to compulsorily record and register documents. These orders mandated landlords/property owners/factory owners to furnish details regarding tenants/labourers/servants before providing them with accommodation.

Banks, ATMs, and BPOs had to maintain a database of all employees, security guards, cab drivers etc and follow KYC procedures. Owners of parking lots had to instruct their employees to wear uniform and ID card. Kabadi vendors and mobile sellers had to maintain a register recording purchasers of scrap items and second-hand phones. These orders treat the entire class of

population as potential criminals, who require constant monitoring and surveillance. Resultantly, routine everyday situations are brought under the purview of the state.

● The third category of orders we identified pertained to limiting public order threats and were of two types. A surprisingly minuscule 1.5% of the orders analysed were focused on imposing a blanket restriction on unlawful assembly (for example, during a protest march). More surprisingly, some of the orders issued under Section 144 regulated activities such as the use of "special manjhas" while flying kites, bursting crackers, taking tiffin boxes inside cinema halls, or selling tobacco to students.

● Finally, we found some orders that were outliers and did not fit neatly into any category. These included orders prohibiting the consumption of tobacco in hookah bars; requiring prescriptions to purchase two tubes of certain drugs/medicines such as Corex or Iodox; or prohibiting the sale of correction fluid (whiteners) to students.

Section 144 was conceived during colonial times, introduced first on the statute books in 1861. The almost unfettered powers given to district magistrates and police officers to prevent annoyance and ensure safety continued with the passage of the Constitution and the enactment of the new Criminal Procedure Code in 1973.

Supreme Court has passed a series of judgments emphasising that the use of Section 144 should be restricted and time-limited. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the reality on the ground, at least in Delhi. We think it is time for a change and a need to rethink the place of Section 144, CrPC in our democratic polity.

The writers are lawyers practising in Delhi and are co-authors of the study, 'Use and Misuse of Section 144 CrPC', which can be found at <https://bit.ly/3ZC1tV>

We Don't Get History. So, Let's Not Study It

India's liberals & rightwingers have a poor grasp on how to read the past. Why burden kids with the subject?

srijana.das@timesgroup.com



We live in richly ironic times and few moments have been more amusing than the controversy over NCERT lopping off large chunks of history from school books. The greatest outrage came over the dropping of Mughal history from prescribed readings for our E&Y (earnest and young). Liberal drawing rooms were ablaze over their cocktails while newspaper pages frothed passionately with 'Mughal-e-Azam'-type defences. Right-tilting types weren't to be left out of the fun either. The Mughals were no Hrithik Roshan, they sneered, they were Amrish Puri-esque. They captured India through perfidious torture and lorded over its suffering masses while dreaming of Samarkand (apparently, the road back was blocked). Nahin, yelled the liberals, the Mughals gave us ice-cream, poetry and fine pyjamas and taught us how to live nicely together in peace (their chopping off each other's limbs were just royal-peasant tantrums). With an awestruck salaam, we should learn more, not less, about the 'zille subhanis' of Mughlai Paratha fame.

Those fond of the inviting discipline of history find all this fervent arguing over its fragments frustrating. It was trying, for instance, to see how much press the now-banned Mughals got but how little the apparently deleted Industrial Revolution received. This phase of time shows us how a society, driven by science, innovation and markets, can break the chains of fatalistic feudalism and become a thriving and equitable economy. One would've thought that India, which aims to be a five-trillion-dollar power, would want its kids to learn more about this iconic era, where all that was solid, in Marshall Berman's words, melted into air. That air scattered the seeds of epochal



progress. But it also brewed the ill-winds of today's climate crisis. Altogether, the Industrial Revolution is key history and the relative lack of comment over its waning is surprising.

Perhaps the relative silence there – compared to the moaning over the Mughals – reflects how poorly India's liberals have actually fared at history.

Choosy about course correction

After all, the greatest lesson our own history teaches us is the travesty of caste. We know from our lessons of its architecture of cruelty, its sophistry of resource-grabbing, its psychological imprisonment into the realms of 'clean' and 'unclean' (and thus, rich and poor or honoured and reviled) from which even birth and death could not release a soul. We know of its everyday brutalities, of water and land denied, spaces cordoned off, the fevered rhetoric of 'impure' shadows even. We know how this superstructure broke countless human

beings and slowed our nation to a fraction of what it might have been without such elaborate social torture, its fruits reaching a 'clean' few.

Yet, we liberals read this history with less application than we give, say, a recipe for French bouillabaisse. We fail our own history for otherwise, how do we wear our surnames so unquestioningly? These adorn our given names like pennants of smug pride, stuck atop our liberal little castles of self. Their continuation shows much, including how badly we've flunked time. The whole point of learning the past is to correct the present and construct a better future.

Making history a burden

Sadly, despite India having many fine serious historians (and abundant history-chatters at every mohalla lit fest too), the integral point of the subject has eluded us. There are only two ways we see history – as with the Mughals, we use it as a magic carpet that weaves in and out of marbled monuments, landing us in the secularism we claim (bearing our caste names all the while). Or, we use history as a stick to beat the present with, breaking down hard-fought ideas of civility and sense. In either case, our failure lands our young with a burden they don't deserve. Why carry on with this charade?

History is a tapestry of time wretched and grand, composed of beauty and bathos, whispers and sighs, iron and dreams, borders and armies, brutalities and saints, peasants, philosophers and revolutionaries, impatient with the old, longing for the new. History is so much more than moth-balled kings and queens. If we can't give this subject – which in fact shows humanity our future possibilities – the seriousness it deserves, why study it at all? We're failing it anyway. Spare the kids this ride through humanity's Jurassic Park. Bring on the economics and science instead.

Sacredspace

Why Get Impatient?

Try to be even-minded in everything if thou wishes to attain Vishnuhood. The same all-forbearing Vishnu resides in thee, in me, and in others; therefore, why dost thou become impatient and get angry with me for nothing? Try to realise the same Atman in everything and renounce everywhere all ideas of differentiation.

Adi Shankara



A Sustainable Future Without Us Humans

Narayani Ganesh

My publisher once mentioned to me, during a conversation, a elephant he had seen, of cheetahs, gazelles, peacocks, and other wild animals and birds, wild flora, streams, and springs populating the India Gate area in New Delhi. The artist's vivid imagination translated on canvas with vibrant colours, creating a scenario where humans were absent, totally. Why don't you write about this, he smiled. I too smiled and forgot all about it for several years. Until now, when I read an article that raised the question, 'Is the human race hurtling toward extinction?' And if so, should we welcome our own demise, or the end of our world? It's not so difficult, really, to imagine a world without us, says Adam Kirsch, who has authored 'The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining A Future Without

Us'. There is one group that views humanity's presence on Earth as being irredeemably destructive. Members of this group could be called Anthropocene antihumanists, offers Kirsch. This would mean we look forward to a planet without people as the ultimate humane ambition. Then there is the other group, we could call them transhumanists, who view the loss of a conscious mind, meaning the human mind, as a disaster. But transhumanists also feel that you don't really need humans to ensure the survival of the conscious mind; we could replace ourselves with a more advanced kind of intelligence via artificial intelligence technology; that would be necessarily disembodied, virtual and perhaps far superior.

Although Anthropocene antihuma-

nists and transhumanists see technology, science, and environment through different lenses, they both do believe that "there's nothing essential about the existence of Homo sapiens." Kirsch says that the idea that one day humanity will disappear, is part of every religious system – an end-of-the-world scenario through God's will or simply via the natural cosmic cycle.

Why is it so important for human beings to survive as a species? How are we, as human beings, adding value to planet Earth and its constituents? And so here comes the existential question: What is the purpose of human life? Nietzsche said that the age of nihilism will be an age of disasters because, if no one believes in anything, then no one has any reason to exist. On the one hand, theists would say that God created us and,

therefore, we need to live up to God's expectations of us morally and spiritually, as beings created by Divine Will.

Non-believers, who see the current century as one of science rather than one of religion, may say that this is why we need to create a new kind of truth – what Kirsch refers to as a 'post religious religion'. But can science alone give us the purpose and meaning that religion once offered?

Sacrifice is a concept that is ubiquitous in religious annals. You give up something that is precious to you in order to attain

The global market for IPOs is showing signs of life as a rebound in the stock market has emboldened cos to test investor appetite for new listings, particularly in Asia. But a full-fledged recovery looks distant.

Source: Bloomberg



Roughly \$25 billion worth of IPOs priced globally in March and April, nearly twice the amount seen in the first two months

Deals on average were smaller, and the money raised so far is 51% below the same period last year

	IPO proceeds in 2023 (\$ billion)	
Asia	27.4	
Europe	3.9	
Americas	4.1	
Middle East & Africa	3.7	

Asia is busiest area for IPOs, while the US is falling behind

In a key change compared to 2022 when most large deals were in China, IPOs are coming from a broader swath this year. Indonesia has been the brightest spot

Govt asks banks for scheme to settle debt recovery cases

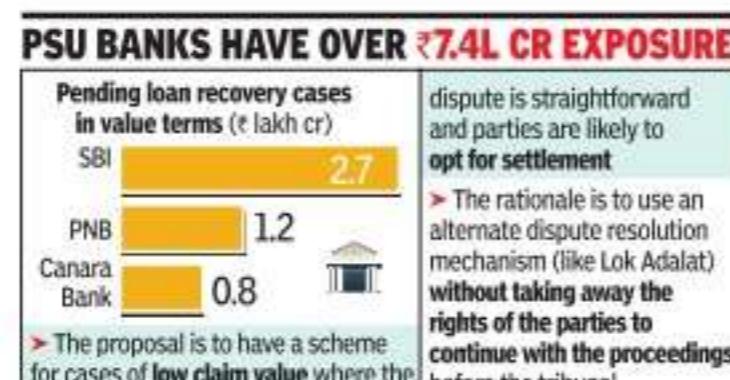
Suggests Alternatives Like Lok Adalat To Reduce DRT Burden

Mayur.Shetty@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The finance ministry has asked public sector banks to draw up a campaign for a one-time clean up strategy for clearing over 1 lakh bad loan recovery cases pending in debt recovery tribunals (DRTs). The ministry has asked banks to use an alternate dispute resolution platform like Lok Adalat to bring down the number of cases.

According to banking sources, there are over 2 lakh cases pending with debt recovery tribunals of which over 1.5 lakh are original applications for over Rs 12 lakh crore exposure. Of these, the 12 public sector banks have over 1 lakh pending cases where the original exposure is around Rs 7.4 crore.

The issue was discussed in



the finance ministry in the presence of law ministry officials. The proposal is to have a scheme for cases of low claim value where the dispute is straightforward and parties are likely to opt for settlement. The thinking is to use an resolution mechanism without taking away the rights of the parties to continue with the proceedings before the tribunal.

Besides running a campaign and inviting parties to the alternate platform, banks have been asked to provide the infrastructure for external judges. Currently, Lok Adalats are used for low-value recoveries. The ministry has suggested that for cases up to Rs 50 lakh, banks could look at developing an AI application, which can help come up with

the best economic outcome for both parties.

Since 2016, banks have been pursuing recovery against debtors under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). There has been some ambiguity on the jurisdiction of the two platforms under the insolvency law.

Banks have filed suits on multiple platforms, which has resulted in duplication of suits and cases bloating up. Banks say that many borrowers who have defaulted because of genuine reasons are keen to resolve their cases with the lenders. Lawyers say there are genuine grievances of assets being wrongly attached under securitisation law. Bank officials are not willing to take decisions on settlement as they can be subjective. This is where Lok Adalat can help.

UIDAI, NPCI to set up eKYC aggregator

Sidhartha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) are setting up an aggregator platform for eKYC (electronic know-your-customer) as part of a move that will benefit thousands of regulated entities in the financial sector.

The platform is expected to go online over the next few months, sources told TOI. The process of Aadhaar-based eKYC is used for paperless verification of a customer's credentials to get a mobile connection or open a bank account. The process



can be completed using biometrics or through the use of an OTP and is being used by financial services players, mobile operators and government agencies.

The new platform will enable entities that are regulated by the RBI, Sebi or the insurance and pension regulators to register on it.

This will do away with the need for these entities to individually register for undertaking eKYC using Aadhaar, while also ensuring that user data is not shared with the players using the platform. Sources said that the idea is to ensure that at best the last four digits are available to the financial services players and even the masked data of the consumers is not shared. Besides, users will not have to share physical copies of their documents, which often result in misuse and data theft.

Once implemented, the platform is expected to help several non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) reach out to consumers to offer loans apart from aiding fintech players and insurance intermediaries.

Bidders' woes: RCAP lenders to meet today

New Delhi: Lenders of debt-ridden Reliance Capital (RCAP) will meet on Monday to resolve concerns raised by bidders ahead of the second round of auction scheduled on April 26.

Both bidders, Torrent Investment and IndusInd International Holdings (IIHL) of Hinduja Group, have expressed multiple reservations on the proposed auction and its terms.

According to sources, both the bidders have made it clear to the committee of creditors (CoC) that unless the issues raised by them are resolved to their satisfaction, they are unlikely to participate in the second round of auction. Both bidders want finality, certainty, transparency, no negotiation in value or on terms, after the second round of auction is over, they said.

The two largest lenders of Reliance Capital—EPFO and LIC—are against giving any such undertaking in advance. AGENCIES

Govt eyes ₹35k cr from road projects

New Delhi: The road transport and highways ministry (MoRTH) plans to raise Rs 35,000 crore through various modes of asset monetisation in this financial year, against Rs 32,855-crore target in the last fiscal, a senior government official said on Sunday.

Currently, MoRTH monetises its assets under three different modes: toll-operate-transfer (TOT) model, infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) and project-based financing, in order to provide all categories of investors an opportunity to invest in assets pertaining to highways and associated infrastructure. AGENCIES

Beware of ponzi apps, finfluencers, says FM

'Working With RBI & IT Ministry To Clamp Down On Apps That Lure Investors With Huge Returns'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

there, she said. "But a very strong sense of caution is required in each one of us to make sure that you double check, talk to people, and don't just flock to something. We have to be careful. It's our hard-earned money."

Sitharaman also said that the government has taken se-

of putting a higher burden, but with an intent to reconcile this," the FM said.

While acknowledging that there are some non-salaried who paid the TDS but did not file returns, Sitharaman said there was greater tracking by the finance ministry along with the ministry of electronics & IT and the RBI.

"We are clamping down on them like never before. We don't want those ponzi apps taking away people's hard-earned money," she said.

Speaking at an event in Bengaluru, the FM said there was no proposal before her to regulate finfluencers, her statement comes months after Sebi's move to regulate social media influencers. Countries such as Australia and the UK are also cracking down on influencers advertising financial products on social media.

"If there are three or four people giving free objective good advice, there are seven others who are driven by other considerations," Sitharaman said.

Social influencers, financial influencers are all out

veral steps to widen the tax base, while ruling out any move to tax agricultural income.

"We are not increasing taxation but bringing it down. We are also giving a parallel scheme, where there are no exemptions and the rate is very low... Changes have been brought to encourage people to come into the tax fold. For a truly salaried person, tax gets deducted. But for some others, who spend on foreign travel or (undertake) a huge expense on buying a car or a property, we do have tax deduction (at source). The deduction is not with the intent

2019. It also did a buyback of Rs 2,500 crore in 2016 and Rs 11,000 crore in 2017.

APRIL 27 MEET

Wipro said on

Sunday that it will consider

a share buyback proposal on

April 27. Shares of Wipro

are down 6.3% so far this year after falling more than

45% in 2022. Wipro will also

report its fourth-quarter re-

sults on Thursday.

Wipro completed a Rs 9,500 crore share buyback in January 2021. The company did its largest share buyback, worth \$1.7 billion, in

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Sun Pharma, Hetero recall drugs in the US market

New Delhi: Drug makers Sun Pharma and Hetero are recalling products in the US market for manufacturing issues, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).

According to the US health regulator's latest enforcement report, the US-based arm of Sun Pharma is recalling a generic drug indicated to raise blood pressure in adult patients with acute hypertension. The Princeton, New Jersey-based arm is recalling 16,450 vials of Norepinephrine Bitartrate Injection for "failed impurities/degradation specifications", it said.

The affected lot has been manufactured by Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma and distributed in the US by Sun

The recalled drug lot distributed by Sun Pharma in the US was produced by Gland Pharma, the USFDA noted

Pharma, the USFDA stated, Sun Pharma initiated the Class III nationwide recall (US) on March 29 this year.

According to the USFDA, a Class III recall is initiated in a situation in which use of, or exposure to, a violative product is not likely to cause adverse health consequences".

In a separate disclosure, the USFDA said the US-based arm of Hetero Labs is recalling a drug used to treat stomach and esophagus problems. Hetero USA is recalling 2,352 bottles of Pantoprazole Sodium delayed release tablets for "CGMP deviations: discoloration", the USFDA stated. The affected lot was produced by Hetero Labs for New Jersey-based Camber Pharmaceuticals, it added.

Hetero USA initiated the Class II recall on March 14 this year. According to the USFDA, a Class II recall is initiated in a situation in which use of, or exposure to, a violative product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote.

The Indian pharma industry is the world's third-largest by volume and 14th-largest in terms of value. AGENCIES

'18% GST on Adani's staff cost dues to AAI'

AAR Ruling In Case Related To Jaipur Airport

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Mumbai: The Authority for Advance Rulings, Rajasthan (AAR), in the case of Airports Authority of India (AAI) relating to the transfer as a 'going concern' of the operations, management and development of the Jaipur International Airport to a special purpose vehicle (SPV) of Adani Enterprises, has held that the transaction is exempt from GST, owing to a specific notification.

However, the AAR held that reimbursement of staff costs by the Adani SPV to AAI would be towards supply of manpower and hence subject to GST at 18%.

AAI raised periodical invoices on the Adani SPV for reimbursement of salary/staff costs. Here, the Rajasthan GST-AAR bench noted that select employees are not part of the transfer of business as a whole, till the time they are absorbed by the new entity. Further, they have the option to accept or decline the employment offer.

"This ruling identifies a scenario in the overall sche-

me which will not enjoy exemption available to transfer of business as a going concern. In case the employees are retained during the joint operation period and the proposed buyer reimburses the salaries of such employees, then this transaction takes

gust 27, 2021 had held that the issue of reimbursement of staff cost has arisen pursuant to "the supply of transfer of going concern" and was thus exempt from GST. It will be open for AAI to file an appeal with the Appellate Authority for Advance Rulings.

This ruling is contrary to the stand taken by Gujarat and UP AAR benches, which covered the transfer as a going concern of Ahmedabad and Lucknow airport

the colour of manpower supply services. This is owing to lack of certainty on the date of transfer of business as to which employees shall finally be absorbed by the buyer," said Anita Rastogi, indirect tax partner, PwC.

This ruling is contrary to the stand taken by the Gujarat and UP AAR benches, which covered the transfer as a going concern of the Ahmedabad and Lucknow airport, respectively, to an Adani Group SPV.

To illustrate: The Gujarat bench in its ruling dated Au-

to the Rajasthani GST-AAR noted that there is a transfer of business of operation, managing and developing of the Jaipur airport for a period of 50 years.

While there is a "temporary" transfer of business, the notification does not specify that only permanent transfers are covered. It also ruled that the consideration for the transfer of a business as a going concern may be according to the terms of the agreement, it need not be an upfront or one-time payment.

MG looks to double biz, turn profitable this year

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: MG Motors expects its India operations to become profitable by the close of this year as the company is looking to nearly double its sales in the market, aiming to grow faster than the industry estimates of 5-6% growth.

MD Rajeev Chaba said that MG's business had been impacted last year by shortage of components, as well as pressure on fund-raising, but business is likely to move strongly this year as it is confident of tackling both the issues. "If everything goes as we have planned, we will break-even by the close of 2023 and make a small profit. Importantly, we will achieve this in only the fourth year of our operations here," Chaba told TOI.

MG, a British brand owned by Chinese giant SAIC, started its business in India on a strong note but soon faced tough times as its funding (from the parent) began to dry up, following to-

ugh measures against investments flowing from countries that share land border with India following Indo-China tensions.

The company has not been able to expand rapidly which also impacted its plans, though it is looking to induct partners soon to get funding. Chaba said that MG sold 48,000 units in 2022, which included models such as Hector, Gloster, Astor, and ZS SUVs. "We are confident that with improved supplies and launch of mini Comet electric, we will have sales that can go up to 1,00,000 units. While the market is also becoming challenging, we are confident that demand will remain strong in 2023."

The Rajasthani GST-AAR noted that there is a transfer of business of operation, managing and developing of the Jaipur airport for a period of 50 years.

Under this, Reliance Retail would have control over the entire aspects of the toy eco-system, right from designing and manufacturing to retailing of the product. This will also help Reliance reduce dependency on third-party manufacturers in phases.

This new venture will cater for toys brands Hamleys and Rowan, which are owned by Reliance

This new venture will cater for both the toys brands — Hamleys and Rowan, which Reliance Retail owns, the sources added. Reliance Retail is a major player in the B2B toy segment, where it operates through Rowan.

Circle E Retail has a specialisation in toy manufacturing. It has a modern manufacturing unit in Haryana and has a licence to manufacture and distribute a wide range of toys. An email sent to Reliance regarding the development remained unanswered till the time of going to the press.

Last year, Reliance Retail expanded its brand Rowan from the B2B wholesale to the normal retail market also. The idea was to tap the fast-growing affordable branded toy market with smaller shop floors. Reliance Retail acquired Hamleys, the world's oldest toy retailer, in 2019. This was the first acquisition of a global retail brand by Reliance Retail.

In India, Hamleys is the largest chain of toy stores operating over 100 stores in 36 cities. In June 2022, a Reliance unit had announced a joint venture with Italian company Plastic Legno. AGENCIES

Rel Retail to produce toys, forms JV with Haryana co

New Delhi: Reliance Retail, which owns iconic British toy brand Hamleys and home-grown toy brand Rowan, has entered into a joint venture (JV) with a Haryana-based firm for local manufacturing to meet the growing demand.

The company has entered into a joint venture with Sonipat, Haryana-based Circle E Retail to vertically integrate its toy business. The company is now working on a strategy of integrating processes from design to shelf, according to industry sources.

Under this, Reliance Retail would have control over the entire aspects of the toy eco-system, right from designing and manufacturing to retailing of the product. This will also help Reliance reduce dependency on third-party manufacturers in phases.

One of the biggest improvements is seen in case of the dwell time at ports, which was estimated at 2.6 days, compared to three for top-ranked Singapore. It is 4 for the UAE and South Africa, 7 for the US and 10 for Germany.

"One explanation could be that the period for these estimates coincides with the tail end of an unprecedented supply chain crisis. Not only did ships have to wait before being serviced, but containers had to wait for trucks to be removed. Furthermore, sanctions against Russia, which disconnected it from most container shipping services, explain the high

India up 6 places on WB's logistics index

Ranked 38th As Dwell Time At Ports Reduces Despite No Change In Customs Performance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

MOVING UP THE LADDER

World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, 2023

Rank	Country
1	Singapore
2	Finland
3	Denmark
4	Germany
5	Netherlands
19	China, South Africa
38	India, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Portugal, Lithuania
51	Brazil
88	Russian Fed

under a public-private partnership of a supply chain visibility platform, which contributed to remarkable reductions of delays," the latest report said.

It pointed to how the RFID tags had been deployed on containers for end-to-end tracking. "With the introduction of cargo tracking, dwell time at ports in the eastern port of Visakhapatnam fell from 32.4 days in 2015 to 5.3 days in 2019," it said.

The government cheered the development. "An encouraging trend, powered by our reforms and focus on improving logistics infrastructure. These gains will reduce costs and make our businesses more competitive," PM Narendra Modi said in a tweet responding to commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal.

"The government is working towards eliminating frictions among various modes of logistics and enable a multi modal transportation system which is equipped and enabled by modern infrastructure and technology resulting in optimisation of cost and boost economic efficiency," shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal said.

Fresher hiring will continue in FY24, says HCLTech CEO

Sree.Mani@timesgroup.com

The company added over 27,000 freshers in FY23. Vijayakumar said some of them are still undergoing training. HCLTech has said that 15,000 freshers will be hired in FY24, the only large IT services company to put a number for the year.

Vijayakumar said there are certain long-term projects in sectors like manufacturing and hi-tech where clients are ramping down on tech spend, forcing some employees on these projects to be on the bench. "They

companies are affected by inflation and are not getting the desired return on their investment. But short-term projects are not affected," Vijayakumar said.

The company said it has a strong pipeline of projects in the financial services sector, a segment where several of its peers have taken a beating following Silicon Valley Bank and Credit Suisse crises. The company last week announced FY23 Q4 revenue at \$3.2 billion, a 1.2% dip in constant currency compared to the December quarter.



Sagarmala facilitating 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' with cutting-edge technology

INAUGURATION OF

NTCPWC - DISCOVERY CAMPUS

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTRE FOR PORTS, WATERWAYS & COASTS

on Monday, 24th April, 2023

by

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

Hon'ble Union Minister, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH

at

Discovery Campus, Indian Institute of Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 670034

“

Innovation is critical and it has to be indigenous; Imported goods can't be a source of innovation

”

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Benefits of NTCPWC DISCOVERY CAMPUS

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- ▶ Highly reliable and cost effective consultancy and advisory services of International quality
- ▶ Aatmanirbhar solutions for coastal community development and port engineering

MAJOR STRENGTHS

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- ▶ Computer modeling for coastal and port development
- ▶ Wave and current action modelling
- ▶ Sediment transport modelling
- ▶ Ship Maneuvering studies
- ▶ Dredging and disposal studies
- ▶ Computer and Laboratory simulations
- ▶ Ship to ship interaction
- ▶ Clean and green energy in shipping





WORLD NO. 1 IGA SWIATEK BEATS SABALENKA IN STRAIGHT SETS TO WIN STUTTGART TITLE

AMERICAN GYMNASTICS STAR SIMONE BILES MARRIES NFL HOUSTON TEXANS PLAYER JONATHAN OWENS



TOP PERFORMERS

ORANGE CAP

FAF DU PLESSIS RCB | **405** RUNS

D CONWAY CSK	314
D WARNER DC	285
V KOHLI RCB	279
R GAIKWAD CSK	270

PURPLE CAP

MOHD SIRAJ RCB | **13** WICKETS

ARSHDEEP SINGH PBKS	13
RASHID KHAN GT	12
Y CHAHAL RR	12
T DESHPANDE CSK	12

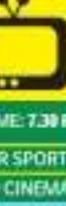
HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
CSK	7	5	2	0.662	10
RR	7	4	3	0.844	8
LSG	7	4	3	0.547	8
GT	6	4	2	0.212	8
RCB	7	4	3	-0.008	8
PBKS	7	4	3	-0.162	8
MI	6	3	3	-0.254	6
KKR	7	2	5	-0.186	4
SRH	6	2	4	-0.794	4
DC	6	1	5	-1.183	2

HE WILL LEARN FROM IT: BOUCHER ON TENDULKAR JR

Mumbai: Following his side's 13-run loss to Punjab Kings, Mumbai Indians head coach Mark Boucher backed medium-pacer Arjun Tendulkar, who was hit for 31 runs by the duo of Sam Curran and Harpreet Singh. "The conditions are good to bat on. He (Tendulkar) probably felt like he is under a bit of pressure towards the end. But yeah, he'll live and learn from it... Hopefully, he can come back stronger. It's how you get up the next morning to conquer those sorts of mishaps that you have and with the full support of not only the support staff but the team, one can try and get over this as quickly as possible and get back on the horse," said Boucher. AGENCIES

FACE-OFF



SRH VS DC

STAR SPORTS/JIO CINEMA

HEAD TO HEAD

SRH 11 | **DC** 10

VENUE: HYDERABAD

Good wicket, but it gets slower and helps spinners. Average first innings score here is 158. This season it is 179.

WEATHER ON MATCH DAY

Thunderstorms are predicted with the temperature remaining around 28°.

ODDS: SRH 7/10, DC 5/4

GALLERY

Lahiri finishes second in Adelaide LIV event

Anirban Lahiri made a big dash in the third and final round of the LIV Series event in Adelaide by finishing a creditable second again. Lahiri, nine-under after two rounds of three-under and six-under, closed with a seven-under to total 16-under. Talor Gooch, 31, held on to card of one-over 73 and win at 19-under by three shots. PTI

Editor fired for fake AI interview

The German publisher of Funke magazines has fired one of its magazine's editors and apologized to the family of Michael Schumacher for publishing a fake interview with the Formula One great that was generated by artificial intelligence. AP

Kiptum misses marathon record

Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum won the men's London Marathon on Sunday in the second-fastest time in history while Sifan Hassan staged a remarkable rally to win the women's event in the Olympic track champion's first race over the distance. The 23-year-old Kiptum broke the course record with an astonishing time of 2 hours, 1 minute and 25 seconds. Hassan, 30, won in a time of 2 hours, 18 minutes and 33 seconds. AFP

ACTION TODAY

CHESS: World Championship, Game 11, 2.30 pm (Fide, Chess24 YouTube channels)

CRICKET: IPL, Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Capitals, 7.30 pm (Star Sports, JioCinema); Pakistan vs New Zealand, 5th T20, 9.30 pm (Sony); Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 1, 10 am (Sony)

FOOTBALL: Serie A, 12.30 am Tuesday (JioCinema)

BIG GUNS FAF, GLENN FIRE FOR RCB

Hard-Hitting Duo Guides Bangalore To A Crucial 7-Run Win Over Rajasthan

Asim.Sunam@timesgroup.com



1067 Runs at an average of 36.79 by Maxwell (in pix above) in 34 innings to become the fifth batter to complete 1,000-plus runs for RCB in the IPL, joining Virat Kohli (6903), AB de Villiers (4491), Chris Gayle (3163) & Jacques Kallis (1132).

317 Number of innings taken by Faf du Plessis to complete 9000 runs in T20s - the 9th quickest in this format. The three quickest being Babar Azam (245 innings), Chris Gayle (249) and Virat Kohli (271).

100 Virat Kohli, with Devdutt Padikkal's catch, has become the third fielder to complete a century of catches in the IPL. With Yashasvi Jaiswal's catch, he has taken his tally to 101 after Suresh Raina (109) and Kieron Pollard (103).

-Rajesh Kumar

reducing the home team to 12/2. But what followed for the next 11 overs was a counterattack masterclass from the duo, — Du Plessis and Maxwell — who scored at the rate of knots.

They were involved in a third-wicket partnership which yielded 127 runs off 67 balls. The Australian took the aggressive aerial route while the South African played some good cricketing shots along the ground to put the visitors on the backfoot as RCB raced to 62/2 in the powerplay.

The two batters dealt in boundaries for the majority of their stay. Maxwell completed his fifty in 27 balls while Du Plessis brought up his fifth half-century of the season in 31 deliveries. However, both perished in a matter of 12 balls while trying to up the ante, exposing the brittle middle order, which managed an embarrassing 33 runs in the last five overs to limp towards 189, which eventually proved to be enough.

erplay – but poor show in the first six has hurt SRH's performance.

Delhi Capitals are sailing in a similar boat with just one win from six games. But the win in the previous game against Kolkata Knight Riders should have boosted their confidence.

Skipper David Warner is No.2 in the run-getters list this season with 285, a role familiar to him given his time at SRH, but that they struggled to cross KKR's 127 lrked him.

Prithvi Shaw (47 from 6 games), Sarfaraz Khan (34 from 2 games), Yash Dhull (3 from 2 games), Amarn Khan (30 from 4), Abhishek Porel (33 from 4 games) all added to Delhi's woes.

"I can't tell people how to bat. You must work it out. Technique is an individual aspect of anyone's game. If you have to face guys who are bowling 150 kmph, you got to have technique and method to score. If they keep coming at you and bowl into your ribcage, you must find a way to score. If you get one boundary, then they will start bowling into your areas," said Warner.

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Battle of laggards as SRH take on DC

JAC.Gladson@timesgroup.com

The league phase of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is nearing its halfway stage. The front-runners have set early pace but Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals, who will bat it out on Monday, are lagging way behind.

The Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium has seen mixed fortunes for the hosts with Rajasthan Royals winning the season-opener convincingly and the Sunrisers holding their nerve to win by eight wickets against Punjab Kings in a low-scoring encounter, where Shikhar Dhawan's unbeaten 99 was upstaged by Rahul Tripathi's unbeaten 74.

Tripathi's knock was followed by Harry Brook's hurricane hundred and skipper Ajmen Markram's half-century in a winning cause against Kolkata Knight Riders, but that only proved to be false as the Sunrisers faltered against Lucknow, Mumbai and Chennai Super Kings.

With coach Brian Lara later saying that Brook and Abhishek Sharma will be their first-choice openers, hopefully they would have sorted out their running between the wickets, the focus will be on them as much as the inconsistent middle order.

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Rahane, Dube fireworks help Chennai top table

Archiman.Bhaduri@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: It was Chennai Super Kings all the way here on Sunday. With the Eden Gardens wearing the colour yellow, it was a 'home away from home' for the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side which thrashed Kolkata Knight Riders by 49 runs. The visitors more or less sealed the tie in the first innings itself by setting up 442 for four, the highest score in this IPL, after being asked to bat first.

While KKR suffered their fourth straight defeat this season, the win took CSK to the top of the table with 10 points at the midway stage of the league. It was the usual picture for KKR this season. Their bowlers once again went for runs in the Powerplay and they lost both their openers — their fifth pair this season — inside the first six overs. In contrast, openers Ruturaj Gaikwad and Devon Conway once again built a solid foundation for Ajinkya Rahane and Shivaam Dube to launch an onslaught for CSK later in the innings

FERRAN FIRES BARCELONA CLOSER TO LA LIGA GLORY

Forward's 44th Minute Goal Is Enough To End Atletico's Run, Restore 11-Point Lead Over Real

Barcelona: Barcelona forward Ferran Torres struck late in the first half to secure a 1-0 victory over third-placed Atletico Madrid at Camp Nou on Sunday as the home side tightened their grip on top spot and moved a step closer to their 27th LaLiga title. With eight games remaining, Barca moved to 76 points and extended their lead to 11 points over second-placed Real Madrid, while Atletico remain third on 60 points. Barca ended Atleti's 13-game unbeaten league run thanks to a goal on the counter in the 44th minute and a fine performance by Marc Andre ter Stegen, who made spectacular reflex saves from point-blank strikes by Antoine Griezmann, one in each half.

"The team worked well, the fans supported us and we won, that's what matters," Torres told Movistar Plus. "This victory gives us a lot of confidence going forward. Atletico were on a good run and in good shape, so that makes this win even more important for us."

Barcelona, who had struggled in their last three matches in all competitions without scoring, were dominated by Atletico early in the game. The visitors, who were on a six-game winning streak, sent the first warning early as Griezmann took



BIG STEP: Ferran Torres celebrates with Barcelona teammate Gavi after scoring the game's decisive goal at Camp Nou

advantage of poor control by Sergio Busquets on the edge of the area and unleashed an angled shot that crashed against the crossbar. However, Barca gradually became more aggressive and took control of the game, with striker Robert Lewandowski wasting two great chances midway through the first half. Just as

We had to win however it was, it was important to take a big step forward in the hunt for LaLiga. The team worked very hard, the fans were with us from the first moment and the result fell our way. —Ferran Torres | BARCELONA FORWARD

Barcelona looked in full control, Atletico almost scored on a counter-attack led by Yannick Carrasco who ran down the left and put in a low cross for Griezmann, whose close-range strike was brilliantly stopped by Ter Stegen.

Barca got the winner when Raphinha controlled a long ball down the right channel and crossed to the edge of the area where Torres calmly slotted past goalkeeper Jan Oblak.

It was an entertaining match after the break with both teams missing several chances, including another outstanding save by Ter Stegen from a Griezmann strike and a sitter missed by Lewandowski when he was one-on-one with Oblak. Late on Saturday, Real Madrid had put pressure on Barcelona with a 2-0 win over Celta Vigo that had temporarily trimmed their rivals' lead to eight points.

Marco Asensio put Madrid ahead three minutes before halftime from a pass by Vinicius Junior after the winger sped clear on the flank. Centre back Eder Militao again showed his punch in attack by using a powerful header to turn in a corner kick by Asensio in the 48th. AGENCIES

LLORIS SAYS SORRY AFTER TOTTENHAM EMBARRASSED

Newcastle: Hugo Lloris apologised to Tottenham fans after his side's humiliating 6-1 defeat against top-four rivals Newcastle on Sunday.

Spurs goalkeeper Lloris conceded five goals in the 21 minutes at St James' Park as the north Londoners collapsed to their heaviest loss of a turbulent season. The defeat leaves fifth-placed Tottenham's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League via a top-four finish in tatters. They are six points behind fourth-placed Manchester United, who have two games in hand.

"It was very embarrassing. The first thing is we should apologise to the fans who travelled and who watched the game," said Lloris.

German match abandoned after referee doused in beer

A third-tier football game in Germany was abandoned on Sunday after the referee was doused in beer by an angry fan at halftime. Relegation-threatened Zwickau's match against visiting Rot-Weiss Essen did not continue for the second half because referee Nicolas Winter had a cup of beer thrown in his face by a fan, who was unhappy with his decision to send off a Zwickau player and award a penalty to Essen before halftime. AGENCIES

Wrestlers protest again, demand immediate arrest of WFI prez

Hindol.Basu@timesgroup.com



Wrestlers have accused WFI boss Brij Bhushan (above) of molesting and torturing 7 female wrestlers including a minor

Report (FIR) related to the complaint. "Brij Bhushan should be immediately arrested under the POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) and put behind the bars," said a teary-eyed Vinesh.

Talking to TOI, Bajrang, Sakshi and Vinesh said that they had filed a complaint at the Connaught Place police station on Friday stating seven female wrestlers, including one minor, were "molested and tortured" by Brij Bhushan in his capacity as WFI president. The wrestlers refused to reveal the names.

According to the wrestlers, it has been more than 48 hours but the police is yet to register a First Information

and proof against Brij Bhushan. There should be a Narco Test conducted on him, the truth will come out."

"We will continue our protest till our demands are met, most important of which is the arrest of the WFI president," said Sakshi.

After the wrestlers' protest in January this year, the Union sports ministry had appointed a six-member Oversight Committee, led by boxing legend MC Mary Kom, to look into the allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment and intimidation, financial irregularities, and administrative lapses levelled by the wrestlers.

According to sources in the sports ministry, the committee has submitted its report to the sports minister Anurag Thakur. The wrestlers are demanding the report to be made public. "We suspect the report has given a clean chit to the WFI president, and that's why it is not being made public yet," said Vinesh.

Archers sign off with four medals

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Dhiraj Bomma deva won a bronze in the individual category

Kolkata: India's search for a gold in recurve team event continued as the men's team of Atanu Das, Dhiraj Bomma deva and Tarundeep Rai had to settle for a silver

WORLD ARCHERY

after losing 4-5 to China in a shoot-off in the final of the season-opening Archery World Cup Stage 1 event at Antalya on Sunday.

With Bomma deva claiming a bronze in the individual category in his maiden World Cup appearance, India ended up with four medals including two gold, one silver and one bronze.

India, who have so far won five gold medals in the men's recurve team event, had last won a World Cup gold in men's recurve team event in Shanghai in 2010.

The India trio staged a

MCA looks to hire coaches & selectors

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Mumbai: The Mumbai Cricket Association on Friday invited applications for the post of coaches and selectors of all its age group teams, men and women, right from the senior side to the under-14 team, on its website.

Interestingly, the criteria to apply for the various posts hasn't been mentioned. The last date to apply is April 27. The candidates will be interviewed by the MCA's newly-appointed Cricket Improvement Committee, which is headed by former India opener Lalchand Rajput, and includes Sahil Kukreja and Preeti Dimri as its members.

Applications have also been invited for the posts of batting, fast bowling, spin bowling and fielding coaches at the MCA's academy in BKC.

United hold nerve to set up Manchester derby final

London: Manchester United beat Brighton & Hove Albion in a thrilling penalty shootout in their FA Cup semifinal at Wembley on Sunday after the game finished 0-0 after extra time to set up the first-ever all-Manchester clash in the final.

Solly March, Brighton's seventh player to step up to the spot in the shootout, launched the ball over the bar, before Victor Lindelof found the net to secure a 7-6 shootout victory for United.

The nail-biting finale was a fitting ending after 120 goalless minutes of wild swings in a game that careened from end to end all night. Treble-chasing Manchester City await in the final.



FA CUP SEMIFINAL

BACK UP: Marcus Rashford clears the danger after following a Brighton corner

1 This will be the first time ever Manchester United and Manchester City will meet in the FA Cup final

after they beat Sheffield United 3-0 in their semi on Saturday.

Sunday's semi was a rematch of the 1983 final, when Brighton lost to United in the south coast side's only appearance in the showcase game. Erik ten Hag's United,

12-times FA Cup winners, are chasing a cup double after winning the League Cup in February. The FA Cup final is on June 3 at Wembley.

"It's going to be a big game against one of the best teams in Europe, in the world. But we showed already when we played against them at home that we can beat them," said Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea on facing their city rivals in the title clash. AGENCIES

A day after ban overturned, Lukaku dazzles in Inter win

Rome: Inter Milan has been waiting all season for this version of Romelu Lukaku.

The big Belgium striker scored twice and set up the third goal in a 3-0 win at Empoli on Sunday to end Inter's five-match winless run in Serie A. The goals were Lukaku's first from open play in the Italian league since the opening round of the season in August.

The return to form couldn't have come at a better time for Lukaku, with the second leg of the Italian Cup semifinals coming up against Juventus on Wednesday, followed by the Champions League semifinals against city rivals AC Milan next month. "I'm getting my confidence back," Lukaku said. It's been a big 24

hours for Lukaku, who had his one-match suspension for the Cup match overturned by the Italian football federation on Saturday in what it called a statement against racism.

Lukaku had picked up a second yellow card in the opening leg for provoking Juventus fans by holding his finger to his lips as if to silence the crowd after converting a stoppage-time penalty equalizer.

However, Lukaku had been subjected to repeated discriminatory chants. Empoli beat Inter 1-0 at the San Siro in January and posed a threat in the first half. The victory moved Inter up to fifth place, two points from the Champions League spots. AP

Shuttler Raksha reigns supreme in Cyprus

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Sunday. She won 5 matches in three days, all in straight

CITY SPORT

games. Raksha beat UAE's Omer Mysha 25-23, 21-18 in the title clash.

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Nepo holds Ding with black, maintains lead

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

With 15 captures each in 45 moves by both players, the 10th game in the World Chess Championship match between Ian Nepomniachtchi and Ding

WORLD CHESS C'SHIPS

Liren in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Sunday ended in a draw. In the final position, only the kings remained on board.

The statement of 'disagreed draw' cannot be more emphatic.

Nepo leads the 14-game match 5.5-4.5. The 11th game on Monday will see the Russian, playing under the FIDE

flag due to the Ukraine war, playing with white pieces.

In a highly-entertaining game, Chinese Ding - playing white — didn't allow Nepo to short castle.

A new position on the board in the Botvinnik line of English opening was attained soon.

After a game of attack and counterplay where there was some tension on the kingside, the third successive draw of the match was reached.

World No. 3 Ding was aware that No. 2 Nepo had defeated Levon Aronian in

the same opening with "very powerful play". Nepo's ninth move Bc5 was a surprise which forced Ding to think for 11 minutes.

Ding reckoned that at some point he had a slight advantage and could consider a bishop retreat instead of a sequence that led to exchange of dark-squared bishops and queens. But pawn-down Nepo defended with quickness and clarity. He had a more powerful bishop controlling the rival pawns.

Experts felt that considering the match situation, leader Nepo didn't opt for a double-edged position and Ding didn't press too much with the possibility of falling behind by two points.

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Meghan Markle
slams UK media over
reports that letters
exchanged with King
Charles played a
part behind her call
not to attend his
coronation

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SCARLETT JOHANSSON & GWYNETH PALTROW REJECT RUMOURS OF THEM FIGHTING DURING 'IRON MAN 2'

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, MUMBAI | MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023

EITHER I WILL FIND A WAY, OR I WILL MAKE ONE — PHILIP SIDNEY



AL PACINO SAYS HE 'GAVE HARRISON FORD A CAREER' AFTER REJECTING ROLE OF HAN SOLO IN 'STAR WARS' BECAUSE HE 'DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPT'

Exodus Of Diplomats From Sudan

As Countries Scramble To Evacuate Their Nationals From Battle-Hit Khartoum, Millions Of Sudanese, Many Running Low On Water & Food, Hide Inside Homes



A video grab shows a convoy leaving the Sudanese capital of Khartoum



Desperate Sudanese flood out of Khartoum by whatever means they can

Khartoum: The US military evacuated American embassy officials from Sudan's capital early on Sunday, starting an exodus of foreign diplomats amid continuing violence as rival military leaders battled for control of Africa's third-largest country.

As gunfire again echoed through Khartoum and fighter jets roared above, foreigners also fled the capital in a long UN convoy while millions of frightened residents hunkered down inside their homes, many running low on water and food. Across the city of five million, army and paramilitary troops have fought ferocious street battles since April 15, leaving behind charred tanks, gutted buildings and shops that have been looted and torched. More than 420 people have been killed and thousands wounded, according to UN figures.

The White House announced extraction of its citizens

warring sides accused each other of attacking a French convoy, both saying one French soldier was wounded. France's foreign ministry did not comment.

A French diplomatic source said a French plane carrying around a hundred people including other nationalities had taken off and was due to land in Djibouti, and a second plane with a similar number was due to take off shortly. The risks were also evident in army accusations that the RSF paramilitary group looted a Qatari convoy heading to Port Sudan. In separate incidents, an Iraqi citizen was killed during clashes and Egypt said one of its diplomats had been wounded.

The efforts to extract foreign residents frustrated some Sudanese who felt the rival factions showed less concern for the safety of locals.

"Seeing the foreigners leave made me upset because I see there's some groups that were helped by the army and

RSF, meanwhile we keep getting hit," said a local.

Germany said it had landed a military plane in Khartoum but that the evacuation operation would take some time, while Italy said it was bringing out some nationals later on Sunday. The evacuation of the first EU diplomats from Sudan was also under way on Sunday with help from France, one of the bloc's top officials said.

Ghana, India and Libya said they were working to bring home their people. Canada suspended its consular services in Sudan on Sunday, saying a rapidly deteriorating situation has made it impossible to safeguard the safety and security of its staff in Khartoum. Canadian diplomats will temporarily work from a safe location outside of the country, Global Affairs Canada said. British PM Rishi Sunak said the country's armed forces had evacuated diplomatic staff and their family members. AGENCEs

Labour MP suggests Jews not subject to racism, suspended

London: Britain's main opposition Labour Party has suspended high-profile lawmaker Diane Abbott over a letter she wrote in which she said the prejudice experienced by Jewish people was similar to, but not the same as, racism.

Labour, which polls indicate is likely to form Britain's next government after an election expected next year, faced accusations of discrimination and harassment against Jews under its former leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The equalities watchdog found in 2020 Labour had serious failings in the party's handling of persistent antisemitism complaints. Abbott, 69, was responding to a writer's claims that Irish, Jewish and Traveller people suffered racism. She



said that their experiences were similar to racism but that there were differences.

"They experience prejudice. This is similar to racism and the two words are often used as if they are interchangeable," she wrote. Abbott, who has been a lawmaker since 1987, was the first black woman to be elected to parliament in Britain. In her letter to Observer, Abbott said that "in pre-civil rights America, Irish people, Jewish people and Travellers were not required to sit at the back of the bus. In apartheid South Africa, these groups were allowed to vote. And at the height of slavery, there were no white-seeming people manacled on the slave ships". She later apologised "unreservedly" and withdrew her remarks. REUTERS

Top poll official in Myanmar assassinated

Bangkok: A top election official in Myanmar was fatally shot in his car in Yangon, the country's commercial capital, in the latest attack attributed to militants opposed to military rule. Sai Kyaw Thu, deputy director-general of the military-appointed Union Election Commission, was shot multiple times on Saturday, according to the military's information office, media reports and a statement of responsibility from an urban guerrilla group.

The information office on Sunday said the attack was carried out by the People's Defense Force, the loosely organised armed wing of the pro-democracy National Unity Government. Sai Kyaw Thu is believed to be the senior official of the Election Commission to be shot since the army seized power on February 1, 2021, from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. AP

Chinese envoy questions sovereignty of ex-Soviet countries, triggers uproar

Paris: France, Ukraine and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania expressed dismay after China's ambassador in Paris questioned the sovereignty of former Soviet countries like Ukraine.

Asked about his position on whether Crimea is part of Ukraine or not, Chinese ambassador Lu Shaye said on Friday that historically it was part of Russia and had been offered to Ukraine by former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. "These ex-USSR countries don't have actual status in international law because there is no international agreement to materialise their sovereign status," Shaye added.

France responded on Sunday by stating its "full solidarity" with all the allied countries affected, which it said had acquired their independence

Fox's settlement with Dominion may not cost it \$787.5m

New York: Fox Corp's hefty \$787.5 million settlement with Dominion Voting Systems over defamation charges is eye-popping, but the ultimate cost to the media company is likely to be much lower. On Tuesday, Fox settled with Dominion over charges that Fox News baselessly accused the company of rigging its voting machines against former President Donald Trump in 2016. It was the most-watched media libel case in decades. Fox had about \$4 billion of cash on hand as of December 2022, and Moffett-Nathanson analyst Robert Fishman expects the company to pay the settlement during the current quarter. How much the lawsuit will actually end up costing Fox is unclear because there are ways it can defray some of the expense, primarily through insurance and the use of tax deductions. Fox chief communications officer Brian Nick has confirmed the deductibility of the settlement. AP

Abortion surges to the centre of the 2024 US presidential campaign

Nearly a year after the US Supreme Court turned abortion into a dominant issue of the 2022 midterms, the battle over abortion rights has catapulted to the center of the emerging 2024 election season, igniting Democrats, dividing Republicans and turbocharging sensitive debates over health care.

From North Carolina to Nevada, Democrats running at every level of government are vowing to make support for abortion rights a pillar of their cam-

paigns, and to paint their opponents as extremists on the issue. And as races intensify, Republicans are caught between the demands of their socially conservative base and a broader American public that generally supports abortion rights, exposing one of the party's biggest political liabilities as it tries to win back the White House, recapture the Senate and expand its narrow House majority.

All of those dynamics have crystallised over the last month. First, a liberal Wisconsin

judge won a crucial state SC race by a commanding margin after running on her support for abortion rights. A few days la-



A file photo of people marching for abortion rights in Los Angeles

ter, a judge in Texas took the step of moving to invalidate the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the abortion pill mifepristone. The SC on Friday said the pill would remain widely available for now, halting two separate rulings, including the Texas ruling, while an appeal moves forward.

Democrats cast the SC's order as a close call, and warned that many Republicans still want as many abortion restrictions as possible, including a national ban. At the same time,

Republican presidential hopefuls — whose teams generally did not respond to requests for comment on the SC's ruling on Friday — are straining to find their footing on the issue.

Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida recently signed a ban on abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, staking out a position that conservatives applauded, but one that could hurt them in a general election with moderate voters. Others, like Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, have struggled to articulate

firm positions. And former President Trump, whose choices for the SC helped overturn Roe vs Wade, recently angered anti-abortion leaders by emphasising state power over the issue rather than a national ban.

As President Biden moves toward announcing a reelection bid as soon as Tuesday, one of his advisers predicted that the issue of abortion rights would be more significant in 2024 than it was last year; as Americans experience the far-reaching results of overturning Roe. NYT

How Chinese censorship is quietly rewriting Covid story

Under Govt Pressure, Experts Retracted Studies, Deleted Data



MASKED & GUARDED

As international citizens fled Khartoum by helicopter, plane and road over the weekend, Sudanese nationals continued to flood out of the capital by whatever means they could, often at even greater risk to their safety than that faced by diplomats or aid workers. Some Sudanese nationals were taking buses north to the city of Wadi Halfa, near the Egyptian border, a 965-km journey that takes 12 hours. Others drove to the eastern city of Port Sudan, where boats have been crossing the Red Sea to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. A Western official said that some small convoys had reached Qadarif, a city in eastern Sudan near the border with Ethiopia. As violence spreads, the journeys are risky. There are WhatsApp groups dedicated to sharing information and tips about escaping Khartoum — how much it costs for a bus ticket to an international border, how easy it is to cross, and security conditions along the long roads. NYT

What is now clear is the study was not removed because of faulty research. Instead, it was withdrawn at the direction of Chinese health officials amid a crackdown on science. "It was so hard to get any information out of China," said one of the authors, Ira Longini, of University of Florida, who described the back story first time in a recent interview. "There was so much covered up, and so much hidden."

That the Chinese government muted scientists, hindered international investigations and censored online discussion of the pandemic is well documented. But Beijing's stranglehold on information goes far deeper than even many researchers are aware of, a NYT investigation found.

Under pressure from their government, Chinese scientists have withheld data, withdrawn genetic sequences from public databases and altered details in journal submissions. Western journal editors enabled those efforts by agreeing to those edits, a review of over a dozen retracted papers found. Groups, including the World Health Organization, have given credit to muddled data and inaccurate timelines.

The original version of the

2020 paper can still be found online with some digging. But the campaign starved doctors and policymakers of critical information about the virus. It bred mistrust of science in Europe and the US, as health officials cited papers from China that were then retracted.

Such censorship spilled into public view recently when an international group of scientists discovered genetic sequence data that Chinese researchers had collected from a Wuhan market in January 2020 but withheld for three years.

The sequences showed raccoon dogs had deposited genetic signatures in the same place that genetic material from the virus was left. At a news conference this month, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention called such criticism "intolerable."

Beijing controls and shapes information as a matter of course. But some of the censorship changed the timeline of early infections, as the government faced criticism over whether it responded to the outbreak quickly enough.

On February 6, 2020, the Chinese internet lit up with the death of Li Wenliang, a Wuhan doctor who had been

punished for warning about the outbreak before falling ill himself. People sensed that officials had withheld lifesaving information. Researchers confirmed that the virus had been spreading for weeks from human to human, a fact that Chinese officials had dismissed.

The Chinese government reacted by tightening online censorship and wresting control of research. Soon, Chinese researchers were asking journals to retract their work. On March 9, scientists from top Chinese laboratories published a paper about how the coronavirus might be mutating.

The following day, China's ministry of education ordered universities to submit research topics to the government task force for approval. The journal retractions continued.

The censorship helped the government tell a story. "China emerged from the pandemic as an early winner," said Yanzhong Huang, a global health expert. "They started to present a new narrative, in terms of not just the origin, but also of the government's role in responding to the pandemic."

Chinese scientists ignored requests for years to release information about swabs taken from surfaces at the Wuhan market. That refusal has hindered efforts to determine how the pandemic began.

The WHO has only added to confusion. After errors were found in a March 2021 report, an agency spokesman promised that officials would correct the mistakes. Two years later, they have not. The flawed report remains online, painting an inaccurate timeline of the earliest known cases. NYT

JUST LIKE THAT



Emperor Xi

2 Indian students drown in US state of Indiana

New York: Two Indian students who went missing last week while swimming at a lake in the US state of Indiana are dead, local authorities have confirmed.

Siddhant Shah, 19, and Aryan Vaidya, 20, went swimming at Monroe Lake, roughly 102 km southwest of downtown Indianapolis, with a group of friends on April 15 but did not resurface, the USA Today newspaper reported.

After two days of searching, divers found their bodies 18 feet below the surface, investigators said on April 16. Both students attended Indiana University's Kelley School of Business.

Shah and Vaidya were boating on a pontoon on April 15 when their group anchored to swim. Both men did not resurface and friends attempted to help them but were unsuccessful, the Indiana department of natural resources was quoted as saying by the newspaper. One of the men was struggling in the water when others jumped in to help, officials said. Divers

searched using sonar and scuba divers on April 16 under windy conditions. Sycamore Schools confirmed that Vaidya is a 2021 graduate of Sycamore High School. PTI



UK TESTS ALERT SYSTEM ON PHONES: A cosplayer dressed as the Star Wars character Darth Vader (R) in Scarborough shows the government alert issued to all smartphones to test a system used to warn of life-threatening emergencies. UK on Sunday conducted its first test of a new emergency alert service, with millions of mobile phones emitting a loud alarm and vibration at 3pm (local time)

Meghan hits out at UK media over Charles letters

spokesperson for Meghan said.

Scottish island goes on sale for \$186,000: For sale: An uninhabited, 25-acre island with pristine views of the Scottish coastline, all for £150,000, or about \$186,000. The catch: Reaching the island is challenging, and staying there even more so. Barlocco Island was listed for sale on Thursday. The island is only accessible by boat or, at low tide, by all-terrain vehicle. There are no buildings on the island. It's also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The designation "will limit the possibility of obtaining permission to construct any permanent structure or dwelling," David Corrie, the listing agent, said. "The only possibility for anyone wishing to stay on the island would be off-grid solutions, such as solar power."

Despite its limitations, Barlocco is yielding inquiries. There are 50 interested parties so far, from Britain and from far away as Italy, Germany, Norway and US, said Corrie.



UK TESTS ALERT SYSTEM ON PHONES: A cosplayer dressed as the Star Wars character Darth Vader (R) in Scarborough shows the government alert issued to all smartphones to test a system used to warn of life-threatening emergencies. UK on Sunday conducted its first test of a new emergency alert service, with millions of mobile phones emitting a loud alarm and vibration at 3pm (local time)

AROUND THE WORLD

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THE TIMES

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NO LEADER WHO LEFT US HAS FLOURISHED, SAYS
BJP CHIEF NADDA ON DEFECTIONS IN KARNATAKA,
TELLS TOI HIS PARTY WILL RETURN TO OFFICE 9

Govt asks PSBs
for 1-time plan
to clean up bad
loans of ₹7.4L cr

The Union finance ministry has asked public sector banks to draw up a campaign for a one-time clean-up strategy for clearing over 1 lakh bad loan recovery cases pending in debt recovery tribunals (DRTs), reports Mayur Shetty. According to banking sources, there are

► Beware of ponzi apps, finfluencers: FM, P 13
► UIDAI, NPCI to set up eKYC aggregator, P 13
► India up 6 places in WB's logistics index, P 14

over 2 lakh cases pending with debt recovery tribunals; of these over 1.5 lakh are original applications for over Rs 12 lakh crore exposure. Of these, the 12 public sector banks have over 1 lakh pending cases where the original exposure is around Rs 7.4 lakh crore. P 13

2nd cheetah dies
in a mth at Kuno

One of the 12 cheetahs airlifted from South Africa to Kuno National Park in MP died of a mysterious ailment Sunday. Less than a month ago, cheetah Sasha, part of the eight translocated from Namibia, died at Kuno of a kidney ailment. Inside Flap

5 dead, 22 hurt in truck-bus crash

Five passengers, including a Kalyan man, were killed and 22 others injured after a truck rear-ended a private bus going from Kolhapur to Dombivli on Katraj bypass in Pune. The driver claimed he lost control over the truck due to brake failure. P 3

Will scrap Muslim quota in Telangana, says Shah

'Reservation Is Right Of Dalits, Tribals & OBCs'

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Hyderabad: Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday vowed a Karnataka re-run in Telangana by scrapping reservation for Muslims if BJP came to office in polls later this year, terming such quotas in the BRS-governed state "unconstitutional".

"We will put an end to Muslim reservations in educational institutions. Quotas are the constitutional right of Dalits, tribals and backward castes and we will ensure they benefit," Shah told a rally amid the K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR)-led government's move

to augment Muslim quotas from 4% to 12%.

The BJP-governed Karnataka last month decided to do away with the 4% OBC quota for Muslims and distributed it equally between two dominant communities, Veerashaiva-Lingayats and Vokkali-

gas. The move came ahead of the May 10 elections.

► Amit Shah warns Telangana CM KCR that BJP won't stop till BRS is dethrown, says his 'pink party's metamorphosis from TRS to BRS is a mere tactic to divert attention from neck-deep corruption'.

► Shah slams BRS expansion plans, saying PM's post is not vacant and Modi will 'easily' retain office in 2024

Hearing petitions against the scrapping over a week ago, the Supreme Court called the decision "prima facie shaky and flawed". Addressing the rally at Chevella, 46km from Hyderabad, Shah also ridiculed BRS's expansion plans, saying the PM's post was not vacant. Shah said the pink party's metamorphosis from TRS to BRS was a mere tactic to divert attention from neck-deep corruption". The CM's daughter, K Kavitha, was last month quizzed by the ED in Delhi's liquor policy case.

Shah appealed to the people to give BJP a full majority in the general elections next year. "There's a trailer coming soon: Please vote BJP to power in the assembly elections in Telangana," he said.

Post-tragedy, Kharghar to get IMD weather stn

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Mumbai: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has decided to set up an automatic weather station (AWS) in Kharghar, a week after 14 people succumbed to heat stroke, dehydration and other

► Govt depts' meet on heat, water shortage today, P 2

her health problems after attending a government-sponsored event in an open ground in the blazing afternoon.

At present, the IMD has observatories in Colaba and Santacruz.

The weather bureau had been criticised for not issuing

Doc, druggist among 20 held for bike racing

ing a heatwave warning for Kharghar on April 16, when lakhs thronged the Kharghar International Corporate Park grounds for the Maharashtra Bhushan award ceremony of social activist Dattatreya Narayan alias Appasaheb Dharmadhikari.

For Kharghar, the nearest IMD observatory is at Alibaug and at Thane-Belapur Industrial Association (TBIA) in Rabale which was set up in 2017. Sunil Kamble, scientist and chief at IMD Mumbai, said they hope to set up the AWS at Kharghar before monsoon.

► 2 minors on 2-wheelers killed in Sion, Malwani, P 3

boy, a construction supervisor and a real estate agent. "Those arrested are from different parts of the city and got in touch through social media and verbal communications and participated in the race," said a police officer. V Narayan reports. P 2



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- Structuring
- Demat & Trading
- and many more...



Pull back troops, says India ahead of China def min trip

**'Else, No War,
No Peace Limbo
Will Persist'**

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: India and China on Sunday held another round of top-level military talks in a bid to defuse the three-year-long troop confrontation in eastern Ladakh, ahead of Chinese defence minister Gen Li Shangfu's visit to Delhi for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meet this week.

There was no official word on the outcome of the 18th round of the corps commander-level talks, which began around 9.30am and ended late in the night at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point. The talks were held after a gap of over four



In Depsang, Indian troops have not been able to access patrolling points because China blocks their movement 18km inside the LAC

months, with no breakthrough being recorded in the 17th round on December 20.

Sources said the Indian side, led by 14 Corps commander Lt-General Rashi Bali, strongly pressed for troop disengagement at Depsang Bulge area and Charding Ninglung Nallah. "Let's see if there is any forward movement due to the Chinese defence minister's visit here on April 27-28. At the mi-

litary talks, it was made clear India wants disengagement, de-escalation and de-induction of the over 50,000 troops each forward deployed by both sides with heavy weaponry," a source said.

"It was stressed this is a prerequisite if China wants any improvement in the overall bilateral relations. Otherwise, this 'no war, no peace' situation will continue," he added.

**Poonch attack:
Terrorists took
jawans' arms**

Jammu: The terrorists who ambushed an Army truck in J&K's Poonch district on April 20, had taken with them the weapons of the five soldiers killed in the attack, said police. They added that they have picked up two more suspects for questioning, taking the total number of those in custody to 14, reports Sanjay Khajuria.

Security forces on Sunday continued to track the terrorists with drones and sniffer dogs. General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, while visiting the lone survivor, said the perpetrators would soon face consequences.

11 get 4 yrs' jail in ₹94cr Cosmos Bank online heist

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: A Pune court has convicted and sentenced 11 accused to four years and seven months imprisonment in the Rs 94 crore Cosmos Cooperative Bank online heist case.

In a recent ruling, the court convicted Fahim Shaikh and Mohammad Saeed Iqbal Hussain Jafarji of Bhiwandi, Fahim Khan and Shaikh Mohammed Abdul Jabbar of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Mahesh Rathod of Nanded, Naresh Maharanje of Palghar, U A Waz alias Anthony Bashir Ahmed and Feroz Shaikh of Mumbai, and Abdulla Shaikh and Salman Baig of Thane for charges of cheating and offences under Information Technology Act.

Police have identified the main hacker who is currently based in Dubai and an extradition process is going on. According to the police, the hackers stole the details of Cosmos Bank's VISA and RuPay Card customers through a malware and carried out an online attack on the SWIFT system and siphoned off over 94 crore on August 11 and 13, 2018. The hackers had attacked the banks' ATM switch server and withdrawn Rs 78 crore from various ATMs in 28 countries and another Rs 2.5 crore was taken out within India.

Court tells co to pay vehicle theft claim filed after 48-hr cap

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Vadodara: People who forgot or couldn't file a claim for vehicle theft insurance within 48 hours can take heart that they may still be entitled to a full or partial payment.

The Vadodara district consumer disputes redressal commission ordered an insurance firm to pay 70% of the claim amount in a case in which the petitioner had filed for it more than 100 days after the vehicle was stolen.

Ashish Gandhi filed a complaint with the forum against IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company in May 2022 after his insurance claim was rejected. Gandhi stated that he had bought the motorbike in 2016 and got it insured with IFFCO Tokio for the period February 2021 to February 2022.

Gandhi's bike was stolen in October 2021 and he filed an online complaint on the police app over three months. IFFCO Tokio argued that Gandhi had flouted the insurance policy rules by not informing the company about the theft within 48 hours. IFFCO Tokio said Gandhi informed police 97

'Rape case no way to enforce vow to marry'

Oberving that a rape case is not a mode of forcing a man to fulfil his promise of marriage, an Ahmedabad court acquitted a man accused of rape by a married woman. The accused did not marry the woman as his parents objected to the fact that she had two children from her first marriage.

The woman claimed he had asked her to get a divorce so that they could marry, and so she obtained a divorce by preparing a divorce deed on a Rs 100 stamp paper. The judge refused to accept that she was forced and lured into the relationship on a false promise of marriage. The court noted that her divorce was not valid and her marriage with the accused was not possible. TNN

days after the theft and the insurer after 103 days. It also said Gandhi was negligent and had forgotten to lock the vehicle, but the forum observed that there was no proof. Gandhi contended that he was searching for his bike for three months.

The forum ordered the firm to pay 70% of the bike's price on the day of theft—Rs 14,973 with 8% interest from the day of the plaint.

Kuno cheetah dies of mystery illness; second death in 1 mth

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Bhopal: In a major setback to India's ambitious cheetah re-introduction project, one of the 12 cheetahs airlifted from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh died of a mysterious ailment on Sunday. Cheetah Uday—a wild male captured close to the Matlabas River in the Waterberg region of South Africa—was around six years old. He was translocated in a batch of 12 on February 18.

The Cheetah Metapopulation Project—a non-profit, public benefit project dedicated to conserving this threatened species—that transported this cheetah to Kuno had said it was healthy. Experts, however, say some of these cheetahs are losing fitness, and suffering from chronic stress after months in captivity.

In the morning, as a team of wildlife experts made their



Uday had been deemed healthy in the previous day's monitoring

rounds, their keen eyes were drawn to a disturbing sight—Uday was sitting in a state of torpor, his head bowed low in exhaustion. Concerned, the team approached Uday with caution. Sensing their presence, the cheetah got to its feet and began to walk unsteadily, its neck bent low. This shocked the wildlife experts since Uday had been deemed healthy during the previous day's monitoring, said officials.

Alarmed by this sudden change in Uday's condition, the team immediately contacted vets who were overseeing the cheetahs in another part of the Boma. The doctors rushed to the scene, and decided that Uday was in need of urgent medical attention.

Around 11am, Uday was rendered unconscious and given treatment on the spot. Despite the best efforts of the medical team, Uday's health continued to deteriorate, and he died around 4pm. The autopsy report is awaited in order to identify the cause of death.

This is the second cheetah death at the park. About a month ago, cheetah Sasha, part of the eight translocated from Namibia, had died of a kidney ailment.

On opening day, 2 Char Dham pilgrims die of cardiac arrest

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Dehradun: Two Char Dham pilgrims—a 62-year-old from Gujarat and a 49-year-old from Madhya Pradesh—died due to cardiac arrests in Yamunotri on Saturday, the very day the yatra started, with opening of the Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines.

Kanak Singh, 62, from Gujarat, suffered a cardiac arrest while on the 6-km trek from Janki Chatti to the shrine. According to officials, Singh had a previous history of heart ailments and had undergone bypass surgery as well.

The other casualty, Di-



FAULTY SCREENING PROCESS?
Both died at Yamunotri. Not a single devotee was stopped at the 50 medical screening points

grims. After over 300 pilgrims died last year, most of them due to cardiac arrests, a screening mechanism was put in place wherein pilgrims over 55 years of age have to reveal their medical history. Fifty such "medical screening points" have been set up on the yatra routes. However, no pilgrim is being stopped.

Health officials say that despite warning, most pil-

grims proceed after signing a health undertaking decla-

raring they are going at their own risk.

Uttarakhand health minister Dhan Singh Rawat said "around 200 am-

bulances have been put on standby" on the route.

Mom's love 'sees' blind girl through college

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Mangaluru: A mother's kindness knows no bounds but Chandrakala Shetty went the extra mile to "see" her daughter finish pre-university. The resolve of this mom from Mangaluru in Karnataka has helped Shruti, her visually impaired daughter, clear PU (Pre-University) II exam with a first class in arts. The feat capped an arduous two years during which Chandrakala sat outside the teen's classes, making notes in the corridor, and helped her at home.

Chandrakala realised that Shruti, a student of Kitte Memorial PU College in

be (writer) to write the key examination, whose results were announced Friday.

Born premature, Shruti has 100% visual impairment. A correction might help her regain the vision, according to doctors. Her twin brother Shruti has no visual impairment and has cleared the PU exam as well.

Chandrakala said Shruti had "somehow cleared her SSLC (Class 10)" with help from scribes two years ago.

"But I knew it would not be easy for her in PU. Therefore, every day, my husband Jagannath, an autorickshaw driver, would drop Shruti and me off at the college. Initially, I carried an additional set of textbooks. Later, I wo-



THEY'VE GOT HER BACK:
1st-class holder Shruti (centre) with parents Chandrakala and Jagannath Shetty

Mangaluru, might find it difficult to attend classes and write exams without assistance. That's when Chandrakala decided to accompany her daughter to college. Shruti took help from a scri-

uld come home and teach her based on whatever I had learned," Chandrakala said.

This was the routine for two years. Chandrakala would also watch videos of classes uploaded online. Shruti's brother also helped her study economics, a common subject for the siblings. Chandrakala thanked the college management for cooperation and assistance.

The mother-daughter duo had prepared well for the exam, but they had trouble finding a scribe. "There were anxious moments when we couldn't find any scribes, with the exam barely days away. Finally, a first PU student, Sinchana, came to our rescue," said Chandrakala.