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The government plans to **remove toll plazas** across India's national highways



Government has planned to come up with automatic number plate reader cameras, which will read vehicle number plates and automatically deduct toll from the linked bank accounts of vehicle owners. A pilot of this scheme is underway and legal amendments to facilitate this transition are also being moved, Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin

Gadkari said. Currently, about 97 per cent of the total toll collection of nearly Rs 40,000 crore happens through FASTags — the remaining 3 per cent pay higher than normal toll rates for not using FASTags. With FASTags, it takes about 47 seconds per vehicle to cross a toll plaza and there's a marked through enhancement — over 260 vehicles can be processed per hour via electronic toll col-

lection lane as compared to 112 vehicles per hour via manual toll collection lane, according to government data.

While the use of FASTags has eased traffic at toll plazas across the country, they still reported congestion as there are toll gates that need to be crossed after authentication. Some issues with the FASTags, which were made mandatory from February 16, 2021, include us-

ers with low balance entering the fee plaza lane, which eventually results in longer processing time; internet connectivity issues at remote fee plazas due to which the plaza servers does not update the status of low-balance FASTag to active FASTag in time; wear-and-tear of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) reader and tag; and improper affiliation of FASTags by users. With the use of

the number plate reader cameras, also known as Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) cameras, the congestion at toll plazas is likely to reduce further, but much would depend on implementing the system. An industry insider, who did not want to be identified, said over one technology will be required to ensure the system is foolproof and there are no leakages.

The Congress has to elect a new chief by September 20

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

In India, no political party has any internal democracy, including BJP, AAP and TMC. The question is of accountability, we should appreciate Rahul Gandhi, who takes moral responsibility after the congress debacle, and he is an honest politician who cares about public sentiments in the current scenario. Congress is in re-vamp mode. They are trying to bring a party chief, who can be any other leader than the Gandhi family member.

In the meantime, Sonia Gandhi is going abroad for her medical treatment, as she is unwell for a long time. The news about Sonia Gandhi offering Congress Chief Post to Ashok Gehlot and his denial was rather interesting news. So why then did the other leaders

who are now have broken away and formed the G23 group didn't allow him to take up such a post? When Ashok Gehlot was given the Chance of a Non-Gandhi person to take over, he could have very well agreed would have avoided leaders such as Kapil Sibal, Anand Sharma, Ghulam NabTi Azad and others to have quit and formed the G23 party. However, it is never too late as the deadline is on the 20th August when the election is to be held, Ashok Gehlot should boldly agree to be willing for the post and bring back all those who had left the party and strengthen it before the 2024 elections.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Editoritis

The Congress has to elect a new chief by September 20

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Other than Gehlot, Congress has a list of good leaders like Pawan Khera, Siddaramaiah, Surjewala, Shashi Tharoor, P Chidambaram to take up bigger responsibility.

Rahul Gandhi has refused to return as Congress president after he quit over the party's abject defeat in the 2019 national election.

The news report about Sonia Gandhi heading abroad for Check-up, Rahul and Priyanka to accompany, was rather sad and disturbing news.



Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will travel with Sonia Gandhi. Rahul Gandhi will address the Congress' 'Mehangai Par Halla Bol' rally in New Delhi on September 4, 2022. Other than Gehlot, Congress has a list of good leaders like Pawan Khera, Siddaramaiah, Surjewala, Shashi Tharoor, P Chidambaram to take up bigger responsibility. If Congress has to make a comeback, then they should immediately look for some good 50 to 60 AGE, Dynamic, excellent orator as their President and probable candidate for PM otherwise. Gehlot is the front-runner for the post if all three Gandhis turn it down. But he reasserted today that there was no question of anyone other than Rahul Gandhi leading the party.

Rahul Gandhi has refused to return as Congress president after he quit over the party's abject defeat in the 2019 national election. He has reportedly asserted that it is time for a non-Gandhi to step up. Sonia Gandhi has said she can't continue in the role because of her poor health. Priyanka Gandhi has preferred to support the party but with no position. If Rahul Gandhi does not become the party president, it will be a disappointment for the congress representatives in the country. Many people will sit at home and we will suffer. Gehlot stated that Rahul Gandhi should accept this post by himself, understanding the sentiments

of the common Congress people in the country. The Congress is already running late on the start of its internal election. The schedule may be announced later this week after a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), which will be attended virtually by Sonia Gandhi. A member of the Gandhi family has led the Congress for much of its 136-year-old history.

Perhaps this is one reason many Congress leaders left the party. Recently Jaiveer Shergill resigned with sharp jabs at the Gandhis in a letter that said the "vision of the party's decision-makers is no longer in sync" with the aspirations of the youth. All three Gandhis had denied him a meeting for over a year. The primary reason for his move, he said in a resignation letter to Sonia Gandhi, was that the ideology and the vision of the current decision-makers of the Congress is no longer in sync with the aspirations of the youth and modern India. The 39-year-old lawyer was among the youngest and most prominent spokespersons of the Congress. He had not been seen at the party's media briefings for a while.

Gandhi family's visit abroad comes when the party is prepping for its Kanyakumari to Kashmir 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' starting September 7. It also comes ahead of the election of party president, the schedule for which is expected to be out this week. The news report about Sonia Gandhi heading abroad for Check-up, Rahul and Priyanka to accompany, was rather sad and disturbing news. In spite of her poor health yet she is so loyal and sincere to the Indian nation being a foreigner herself. I highly appreciated this. But she is going when there is a heavy schedule of the Congress party and we wish her all good health and that she returns perfectly fit to be ready for the election of the party president and that they will put a suitable person in her place.

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Voices



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN CASE OF CHILDREN

BMC has woken up from their slumber a few days before the festive season as potholes are being filled before Ganesh Chaturthi which sounds good. However, a thin layer of tar over potholes is temporary arrangement & would not last more than a fortnight. This is waste of public money as has been observed from experience & concrete solution is the need of the hour.

Laying a new tar or concrete road is cheaper than filling potholes now and then. Top infrastructure companies like L & T should be roped in for the job for better quality roads as well as accountability!

S.N. KABRA

Make a difference

We celebrate Independence Day on August 15, and it's just a celebration for most of us. Many people celebrate Independence Day by singing and uploading patriotic songs and quotations on social media. Even in schools, we do the same. We teach our children to sing patriotic songs and stage an emotional play that shows patriotism. Of course, it enhances patriotism in young minds, but what about the next day? We see the flags of our country on the floor and in dustbins. Is it our love for our country? We must focus on our country's needs. It does not need patriotic songs or only one-day celebrations. Be sincere and honest with your work. A common man cannot change the whole system but many common people together can do this. It is the best way to make a difference.

Seventy-five years ago, our great leaders struggled hard to bless us with a nation where we can practice our religion without fear of recrimination. Despite all the sacrifices and hardships we have endured, are we really an independent nation or one in name only? Seventy-five years on and we still struggle to hold free and fair elections, elect competent and honest leaders, provide justice and quality education to all, keep the press free and attain gender parity.

Jubel D'Cruz

Badru Banerjee deserves more

Former India football team captain Samar 'Badru' Banerjee, who led the country to a historic fourth-place finish in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics is no more. We should have football stadium or football league named after him. That's the only gratitude we can pay for him. The reason is Indian football teams have participated in three Olympics so far and till date, the Badru Banerjee-led 1956 side remains the best, when it finished fourth after losing to Bulgaria 0-3 in the bronze medal playoff, in what was known as the 'golden era' of football in the country. No football lover of the nation cannot forget the famous victory by 4-2 against Aussies in that Olympics.

Vijaykumar H K
Raichur

Child psychology and Behavioural Management is part and parcel of the present day parental duty as the children are more sensitive and react in the slightest pretext with new demands.

It is the duty of all parents and even grandparents, as well as teachers to tackle the ticklish issue and come out successful. By adopting certain unbelievably simple parenting ideas that work we can work wonders.

There is no doubt that the children need parental care and that requires a minimum of eight touches during a day to feel connected to a parent. If they are going through a particularly challenging time, it is a minimum of short time to improve upon the outlook of the children and that in a way paves way for better parent- children understanding. This does not have to be a big deal; it could be the straightening of a collar, a pat on the shoulder or a simple hug. Such personal care impacts the child in more than one way. The discipline inculcated at a young age will go a very long way in developing the character of the children.



This includes that the children need one meaningful eye-to-eye conversation with the parent. It is especially important for babies to have that eye contact, but children of all ages need us to slow down and look them in the eyes. There are nine minutes during the day that have the greatest impact on a child: the first three minutes right after they wake up, then three minutes after they come home from school and the last three minutes of the day before they go to bed.

We need to make those moments special and help our children feel loved and cared. These are very simple but the

children are more pleased when we offer them much needed help. Nothing really earth-shattering here. Try it.

Whenever you feel like scolding or beating your child, take a deep breath, or count 1-10 and then act. Let us ask them to study their favourite subject on their own. Send them to one exam without studying at all. He may fail to impress but will definitely realise the consequences.

Remember what our kids are learning in 5th standard is taught to 7th standard abroad. Lets keep our kids out of unwanted competition. Most probably 80% of what kids are learning won't be useful to them in future. Our kids can really afford to do whatever they want to do in future.

Higher degrees don't guarantee success and happiness. Not all the highly educated people do well professionally. And not all who do well professionally are the happiest ones. Kids are always in a party mood and so don't spoil their childhood. Support and let them be what they want to be. There lies the real development in moulding the child for better prospects.

- Er. Prabhat Kishore

Technocrat & Academician

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No postal letters will be entertained
(The views expressed are authors' own.)



Column

HIGHER EDUCATION IS VERY IMPORTANT IN SOCIETY

The development of any country is closely related to the development of its people. A country has progressed and progressed on the path of development only when it has adequate means of research and research at the level of higher education. It is worth mentioning that the medium of education, research and extension work is the medium of fulfilment of these three objectives, whereas the knowledge of mankind, culture and society is governed by research. According to UNESCO, the creative work done in a planned manner to increase the store of knowledge is called research and development. If seen, higher education is very important in a knowledge driven economy and learning society. As far as vocational education and vocational training is concerned, its demand has increased over the last few decades. The New Education Policy 2020 is also imbued with similar sentiments. One of the questions that emerges regarding higher education is whether the various institutions of higher education and knowledge are changing according to the situation in the midst of rapidly changing developments in the world scenario? And secondly, is the country able to reap the great benefits of education being a technology? Similar questions

have been emerging on the mind about research and research. So there are some questions that relevant in the context of India. For example, what is the status of India's research and development in today's scientifically competitive world? Why is India lagging behind countries like China and Japan in terms of research work? What is the obstacle in India's progress in research and development which is stopping the wheel of research? It is noteworthy that initially the transfer of knowledge creation in various universities was on the basis of global learning and global sharing. Due to marketism, education increased quantitatively and privately It also developed in institutions, but in terms of quality, it became weak. It was from here that the wheel of progress of higher education and the research involved in it began to slow down. In the case of women, it would not be irrational to say that access to higher education is the biggest achievement for them. Barring achievements in a few selected areas, India's position on the global stage in research and research does not appear to be strong. At present, the number of people pursuing higher education in the country is more than 40 million in all formats., The number of all types of universities is also more than a thousand.



There are more than forty thousand colleges. Apart from this, many government and private research institutions can also be seen. The sooner it is understood that research suggests such a scientific way of development in a proper, sure and estimating and predictable way, by which it is possible to strengthen not only the inclusive structure of the country, but also the face of self-reliant India. can be achieved. The development of any country is closely related to the development of its people. any country It has progressed on the path of development and can grow only when it has adequate means of research and research at the level of higher education. In research

and innovation, India spends only 0.7 percent of its total GDP, while the US has a comparative advantage with 2.8 percent and China with 2.1 percent. Not only this, countries like Israel and South Korea spend more than four percent of the total GDP on research related activities. If we look at the inclusive spending of America and China from the point of view of research, then fought the trade war and diplomatic Apart from this, there is also heavy competition in both the countries regarding research and higher education. China has overtaken the US in publishing research and in higher education. If we look at the report of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Japan, it is clear that China has the largest share in the number of research papers published all over the world. It is followed by America and Germany. Significantly, between 2018 and 2022, China published 27.2 percent of research papers, while the same figure in the US is 24.9 percent. The report also reflects that while China is doing the most research in engineering, mathematics, materials science, the US is doing the most research in basic life sciences and physical sciences. Due to lagging behind China, the US

has decided to spend two hundred US dollars in the next ten years to strengthen its research work. Now let's talk about India. India's global position in research is not good. This is the reason due to which the benefit of research is not available to the public. Unless research costs increase till then the ground reality will remain something else. Considering the global situation of knowledge and research, India also needs to increase efforts for research. However, talk of setting up a National Research Foundation has already been made. With its establishment, all the ministries need to cooperate more with IITs in the field of science and research. To put it bluntly, higher education and research are such shining words, if they are rubbed in better ways, then India's shine will never fade in the world. higher education and research They are the backbone of the progress of the nation. Research plays an important role in higher education.



Vijay Garg
Retired Principal Malout Punjab



World

China's tensions with Indonesia may spike over Natuna Islands

The joint combat exercise between Indonesia and US held this month has reminded China that it can't afford to ignore Jakarta which is strategically critical to the Indo-Pacific region.

Under the banners of 14 nations, the 16th annual Garuda Shield exercise, the cornerstone of the military partnership between the US and Indonesia, was held this month. Expanding from a bilateral training event between the Indonesian Army and the US Army, this year's "Super Garuda Shield" is now one of the biggest joint, multinational exercises in the Indo-Pacific region.

The strong and diverse Super Garuda Shield 2022 featured a number of "firsts," including the first-ever trilateral



airborne jump among the United States, Indonesia, and Japan, which concluded early today. The multinational exercise's planning, operations, exchanges, and activities increase all participating nations' military defence capabilities and work to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

More than 4,000 combined forces personnel, including first-time participants Australia,

Singapore, and Japan Ground Self Defense Force, are participating in support of the exercise. Other participating nations include Canada, France, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, and the United Kingdom.

"When we're together like this, we are stronger," said Commanding General of the U.S. Army Pacific, General

Charles Flynn. "Together as a multinational force, Garuda Shield is an important expression of our teamwork, our interoperability and our unity as a group of nations that seek to have a free and open IndoPacific and maintain a rules-based order."

Indonesia is seemingly taking the lead in stopping arrogant China's 'unstoppable' march decimating small and middle countries in and around the Indo-Pacific region, according to Global Strat View analysis.

While Indonesia and China enjoy generally positive ties, Jakarta has expressed concern about Chinese involvement in its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety.

Regional experts say that

Indonesia's ties to China seem to have taken a dip due to the Natuna Island issue. This has been exacerbated by reports of Jakarta's plan to turn the Natuna Regency into a special economic zone (SEZ)

This prospect has not gone well in China but for Indonesia, the designation will introduce an array of incentives to bolster the region's tourism, fishing, energy, and security sectors.

At the request of the Natuna Regency office, a government working group has conducted studies to convert the island group into an SEZ. Indonesian president Widodo Joko even signed an order to divide the Natuna marine area into regulated zones.

Protests erupt in Karachi after prolonged load shedding



Protests erupted in different parts of Pakistan's Karachi on Tuesday due to the unannounced and prolonged load shedding, local media reported.

In different areas of Karachi, residents participated in protests after an unannounced and prolonged load shedding in the city, ARY News reported.

Meanwhile, the resident also staged protests outside the K-Electric office and in Sir Syed Town Kalyana of the North Karachi area.

The residents of Quaidabad held a protest near Daud Chawangi and blocked a road for traffic. Earlier, on August 12, frustrated by prolonged and unannounced load shedding, angry residents of Sachal Goth had marched towards the K-Electric (KE) office and attacked it.

The protestors had pelted stones at the KE office and broke

the windows of its vehicles. On their way to the office, the protestors also burnt tyres against the prolonged load shedding, reported ARY News.

Earlier, numerous people took to the streets on Monday and gathered in front of the Peshawar Electric Supply Company office in Saidu Sharif, after the excessive rise in fuel cost adjustment (FCA) charges on electricity bills.

Due to the imposition of taxes on energy bills, residents of Amankot, Faizabad, Rahimabad, Saidu Sharif, Gul Kada, Panr and other suburbs of Mingora marched from their respective areas and held protests and subsequently marched towards the Swat Press Club where their leaders, including local government members, claimed the current month's bills were heavily laden with FCA and other taxes, reported Dawn.

India voices concern over situation at Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in UNSC

India on Tuesday said it remained concerned with the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in Ukraine, saying that any accident involving nuclear facilities could potentially have disastrous consequences.

Addressing a United Nations Security Council briefing, the country's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj said that India continues to carefully follow developments regarding the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities and it attaches high importance to ensuring the safety and security of these facilities.

The ambassador said India also accords high priority to the discharge by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its safeguards and monitoring activities, in accordance with its Statute in an effective, objective and efficient manner.

"India remains concerned over the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. We support the ongoing efforts including that of the IAEA to reduce tensions and steps to ensure nuclear safety and security at the facility," Kamboj said.

This concern comes as recent



weeks have seen an escalation in shelling in and around Europe's largest nuclear facility.

The UNSC meeting was requested by Russia, whose forces have occupied the plant since March, or shortly after the start of the war, while Ukrainian personnel continue to carry out their on-site operations.

"We have noted the latest information available with regard to the nuclear power plants and facilities in Ukraine, including the updates published on August 19 by the IAEA. We hope the proposed visit by a team from IAEA to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and its surrounding areas will be agreed by the two sides, as indicated in their recent statements," she added.

The Indian envoy to the UN said that New Delhi will continue

to reiterate that the global order is anchored on international law, the UN Charter and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.

Speaking at the same briefing, UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo said that an agreement is urgently needed to reestablish the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in Ukraine as purely civilian infrastructure and prevent a potentially "catastrophic" disaster.

DiCarlo reiterated the UN's ongoing grave concern over the dangerous situation, recalling the Secretary-General's appeals for common sense, reason and restraint, as well as dialogue. The UN has again called for the parties to provide the IAEA with immediate, secure, and unfettered access to the nuclear plant.

Nation

3,700 kg of explosives installed to raze Noida's Supertech twin towers

At least 3,700 kilogram of explosives have been installed to demolish Supertech's twin 40-storey towers in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on August 28. Explosives, installed on all the floors, will be connected with wires that will be completed in the next two to three days.

For the past several weeks, the work of installing explosives in the Twin Towers was going on. Explosives have already been installed in Ceyane Tower and now the work of explosive installation in Apex has also been completed. Supertech's illegal twin towers which are taller than Qutub Minar will become India's highest structures ever to be demolished in 9 seconds at 2.30 pm



on August 28.

Impact cushions have been designed to reduce vibration. "It will take nine to 10 seconds for

all the explosives to blast in a series making a loud noise," said Edifice Engineering partner Utkarsh Mehta. Noida DCP Traffic

Ganesh Shah on Monday visited Supertech Twin Towers.

"Traffic planning is in the final stages. A few days ago, the road in front of the twin towers was closed. All roads connected to it will be closed on the day of the demolition," he said. The demolition of the Apex (32 storeys) and Ceyane (29 storeys) would leave behind approximately 35,000 cubic metres of debris that would take at least three months to be cleared.

The Supreme Court has given a go-ahead for demolishing the twin towers with explosives. The exercise was supposed to start on August 21 but the court accepted the Noida Authority's request and extended the date of

the demolition to August 28.

The twin towers are set to be razed over grave violations of building norms. The Supreme Court had said that it was a result of "nefarious complicity" between the Noida Authority and Supertech and ordered that the company shall carry out the demolition at its own expense under the supervision of the Noida Authority and an expert body like the Central Building Research Institute.

The order had come on a batch of petitions filed by home-buyers for and against the April 11, 2014 verdict of the Allahabad High Court which had ordered razing of the two buildings within four months and the refund of money to apartment buyers.

Prisoner dead after brawl with inmates in Tihar jail



A 20-year-old prisoner of Tihar jail died after a brawl with the inmates, informed the officials on Wednesday. The brief scuffle took place between two inmates in a barrack in Central Jail number 5 on August 22. The deceased has been identified as Samir Khan who was lodged in a case of robbery.

"The two exchanged a few punches with each other, after which one of them viz. inmate Samir Khan suddenly collapsed, apparently due to injury suffered in the head, though there were no visible injuries. The whole incident is captured on CCTV," said prison official.

The other co-inmates called out for help after Samir collapsed and he was taken to the jail dispensary from where he was referred to DDU Hospital, where he was declared brought dead. The 20-year-old was a resident of

the Bhalaswa Dairy area.

The officials also informed that the inquest proceedings were being conducted by Metropolitan Magistrate.

Earlier on July 29, a Delhi Court recently directed the Director General (DG) of Prison Tihar to install CCTV cameras in the rooms of Jail Superintendents and Deputy Jail superintendents. The court has also directed the DG to file the compliance report.

While directing DG prison the court observed "Installation of CCTV Cameras in offices of Superintendent /Deputy Superintendent in Jails would rather dispel any false allegations against jail officials. It will further reflect transparency in the functioning of these offices."

This direction has been passed in view of allegations of the beating of an inmate in the room of the deputy jail superintendent on March 27, 2022.

Additional Sessions Judge Sonu Agnihotri of Saket Court said, "I direct DG, Prisons, Tihar Jail to get installed CCTV cameras inside offices of Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent and to preserve CCTV recording as done for other parts of the jail as per rules/procedures.

Mining lease case: Arjun Munda hits back at Hemant Soren, says EC's decision to come soon

Taking a jibe at Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, and Union Minister Arjun Munda said the Election Commission will soon make a decision regarding the stone mining case.

Speaking to ANI, Munda said, Jharkhand is going through a very poor time. I do not feel it appropriate to make political remarks on the matter which is under discussion with the Election Commission.

The system impacted the lives of people and the public work is not being handled. The state's economy is in extremely poor shape. Reacting to the stone mining case, the Union Minister said people are keeping an eye on it and the investigation is ongoing.

The Election Commission's decision will be revealed shortly.



The Election Commission will make a decision in this matter. The BJP had complained to the Governor that the stone mining concession had been granted by Chief Minister Hemant Soren. His membership in the assembly should be revoked because this is against the Representation of the People Act, Munda said.

Meanwhile, rumours that Chief Minister Soren may step down from the position have

grown more intense. The choices of CM are also being discussed at the same time.

There are speculations about Kalpana Soren perhaps succeeding her husband as Chief Minister. He further said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) charged Soren with abusing his position as Mining and Environment Minister to secure a 2021 stone mining lease in Ranchis Angara block.

Meanwhile, Nishikant Dubey, a BJP member, exacerbated the rumours in a tweet. Johar, Jai Shri Ram, finally, the work is done in Jharkhand, Dubey tweeted.

Munda commented on the present political commotion in Jharkhand by saying, I don't want to comment on Nishikant Dubey's Twitter, this is his personal tweet, but yes, it is a matter of truth that the situation in Jharkhand is really pitiful.

BJP leader found hanging from tree in Kathua

A missing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was found hanging from a tree in Hiranagar Town in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua on Tuesday. However, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to investigate the exact cause of the death.

As per police sources, a villager saw the body of BJP leader Som Raj hanging from a tree at some

distance from his house in Hiranagar town in the morning and informed the police.

The body, which had blood marks, was sent to a Sub District Hospital (SDH) Hiranagar hospital for post-mortem.

Sources said Raj was missing since yesterday and was found hanging from a tree on Tuesday under mysterious circumstances.

Mumbai Police registered an FIR against 4 persons and a firm for submitting fake documents to get COVID-19 centre contracts

The Mumbai Police registered an FIR on Wednesday against a hospital management firm and four persons for allegedly submitting fake documents to obtain contracts for COVID-19 care centres, an official said.

The FIR was registered at the Azad Maidan police station based on a complaint by former BJP MP Kirit Somaiya, the official said.

The case was registered against M/s Lifeline Hospital Management Service Firm, Dr Hemant Ramsharan Gupta, Sujit Mukund Patkar, Sanjay Madan-



lal Shah and Raju Nandkumar Salunkhe.

In his complaint, Somaiya alleged that these persons cheat-

ed the Mumbai civic body and people to obtain contracts of COVID-19 centres with the help of fake documents.

As per the FIR, in June 2020, the hospital management firm partners submitted an alleged fake partnership deed to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and obtained contracts for jumbo COVID-19 centres at NSEL, Worli, Mulund, Dahisar (in Mumbai) and Pune without having any experience in the medical field.

The firm had submitted bills of these centres to the BMC and collected Rs 38 crore, it said.

For their personal gains, these persons cheated the government machinery and common citizens. Many people lost their lives due

to the alleged negligence of these persons, the FIR said.

After verification it was found that staffers and doctors at these COVID-19 centres did not have medical certificates and allegedly failed to provide proper treatment due to which people suffered, the FIR said.

The case was registered under Indian Penal Code Sections 420 (cheating), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 304-A (causing death by negligence), 465, 467, 468, 471 (all for forgery) and 34 (common intention), the official said, adding that a probe into the case is on.

Maha Council clears bills on direct election of sarpanches, municipal council, Nagar panchayat heads



The Maharashtra Legislative Council on Tuesday passed two bills that will enable the election of gram panchayat sarpanches, presidents of municipal councils and Nagar panchayats directly by voters.

The bills were cleared by the Legislative Assembly on Monday. Tabling the Maharashtra Municipal Councils, Nagar Panchayats and Industrial Townships Act, 1965, in the Upper House, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the move was aimed at increasing accountability of these local bodies.

So far, members of gram panchayats, municipal councils and Nagar panchayats had been electing chiefs of these bodies.

Opposing the bills, Ambadas Danve, the Leader of Opposition and Shiv Sena legislator, asked what would be the situation if the president is elected from one party, while councillors of another party have a majority.

Danve and Eknath Khadse (NCP) asked Shinde the reason behind changing his stand as it was the Urban Development Department under him in the previous Uddhav Thackeray government that had taken a decision to indirectly elect presidents of municipal councils and Nagar panchayats.

Replying to the debate, the chief minister said the decision to elect presidents of municipal councils directly was a collective stand of the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

During a debate on the bill amending the Maharashtra Village Panchayat Act, introduced by Rural Development Minister Girish Mahajan, Danve said the move will lead to the concentration of power in the hands of one person.

The bill will enable direct election for the post of gram panchayat sarpanch.

Banned tobacco products worth Rs 8.93 lakh were seized in Navi Mumbai

The Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) has seized banned gutka and tobacco products worth Rs 8.93 lakh from a shop in Navi Mumbai, police said on Wednesday.

Based on a tip-off, the Navi Mumbai police's ANC on Monday raided the shop located in the Taloja area and seized the banned items, the police said in an official release.

The police also seized Rs 1.26 lakh in cash, it said. Two persons – Mohammad Hamza Mohammad Saheen Khan (26) and Arfan Siraz Ahmed Shaikh (22) – were arrested from the shop.

A case was registered against them under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the



Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the release said.

The police were trying to find out from where the accused got these goods and to whom they planned to sell them. The sale and consumption of gutka,

scented and flavoured tobacco has been banned in Maharashtra since 2012.

In 2018, the state government made the sale of gutka a non-bailable offence and enhanced the punishment for it from six months to three years.

Sujit Patkar, Dr Hemant Ramsharan Gupta, Sanjay Shah and Raju Nandkumar Salunkhe booked for 'illegal' contract to operate jumbo centres

The Azad Maidan police in Mumbai Wednesday registered a case of cheating, criminal breach of trust and causing death due to negligence against Lifeline Hospital Management Services and four of its co-partners over a complaint by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya that the company bagged a contract of operating jumbo centres during the Covid-19 outbreak by allegedly providing forged documents.

One of the co-partners, Sujit Patkar, is said to be a close aide of Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut. The three others have been identified as Dr Hemant Ramsharan

Gupta, Sanjay Shah and Raju Nandkumar Salunkhe

Somaiya has alleged that Lifeline Hospital Management Services does not have any experience in providing health or medical facilities.

The police are yet to make arrests in the case. Somaiya also alleged that the firm has been blacklisted by the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA), which has also issued a direction to not award any contract to the said firm in Maharashtra.

But still, the firm managed to fraudulently procure a contract

from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

A statement released by Somaiya read, "A partner of Lifeline Hospital Management Services firm falsely pretended to have experience in the medical field when the firm had no experience in providing medical services to P.M.R.D.A. and since it has been pointed out, the firm then submitted forged documents to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, through which the firm obtained the contract of Jumbo Covid Center and has defrauded the government for its own benefits."

Entertainment

Superstar Shahrukh Khan commenting on social media call his children as his "little Circus"



Superstar Shah Rukh Khan shares a strong bond of friendship with his children Aryan, Suhana and AbRam. He often treats his fans by giving a glimpse of his fun equation with his kids. Recently, the Khan family caught eyeballs with their banter on social media. On Tuesday, Suhana posted a picture with her siblings Aryan and AbRam and captioned it with three monkey emojis. Suhana's picture with her brothers has garnered several comments and likes. Father Shah Rukh, too, dropped a comment. Calling his kids his "little circus", he commented, "My little Circus - Big time FOMO!"

SRK's manager Pooja Dadlani wrote, "adorable monkeys." In the image, Suhana is seen wearing a denim strapless top that she teamed with denim shorts. While Aryan wore an olive green T-shirt, a jacket and black jeans, AbRam sported a black hoodie with denim jeans. All of them posed and smiled for the camera. Earlier, the image was shared by Aryan on his Instagram along with two other pictures. With the post, Aryan ended his year-long hiatus on Instagram since he was arrested for the drugs-on-cruise case in October 2021. SRK commented on Aryan's post as well, asking him to send him the pictures "Why don't I have these pictures? Give them to me now," the actor wrote with a bunch of exclamation marks. Aryan replied to him, "I'll send them to you the next time I post. So probably in a few years."

Robin Williams' death led Sarah Michelle Gellar to take a break from acting

Actor Sarah Michelle Gellar decided to put her acting career on hold after Robin Williams passed away.

According to Fox News, Gellar discussed her feelings over Williams' demise in a recent interview. On "The Crazy Ones," the two collaborated closely throughout 2013 and 2014. "I've been working my entire life," she told People magazine. "When I had kids — and it was right after Robin passed away — there was just so much going on in my life and I just said, 'I need to take a break.'"

Williams passed away on August 11, 2014, by suicide. The comedian battled addiction throughout his career and had just left rehab when he passed away. The actor had Lewy Body Dementia, which was discovered after his passing. "It is important to note that patients with diffuse Lewy Body Dementia frequently present with Parkinsonian motor symptoms and ... depression and hallucinations," the pathology report said at the time. Later, Gellar made the decision to stop performing so she could spend more time with her family.



Actor Ranbir Kapoor says "I really want to apologise if I have triggered anyone" on comments of Alia Bhatt pregnancy

Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor has apologised for his 'Phailod' comment on his pregnant wife Alia Bhatt in a recent promotional event for his upcoming film 'Brahmastra: Part 1-Shiva'. Ranbir, on Wednesday, arrived in Chennai for the promotion of his upcoming sci-fi action film 'Brahmastra' along with south director SS Rajamouli and actor Nagarjuna. The 'Sanju' actor during the media interaction apologised for his comment and said, "Yes, absolutely. Firstly, let me start with, I love my wife with everything that I have in my life. And what happened on that, I think it's a joke that didn't turn out to be funny. I really want to apologize if I have triggered anyone. It was not my intention. So I want to say sorry to people who got offended or triggered. I

spoke to Alia about it and she really laughed it off and she didn't mind it. But I do have a bad sense of humour and sometimes it falls flat on my own face. So I am sorry if I have hurt anyone about it." Recently, Ranbir and Alia along with director Ayan Mukerji started a YouTube live session for the promotion of their film. During the live session, when the duo was asked why they are not actively promoting 'Brahmastra' in the way they do for other movies, Alia replied, "We will promote the film, and we will be everywhere but if the question you are asking is why we are not 'phailod' everywhere, right now our focus is..." It was at this point that Ranbir cut her in between and pointed at his wife's baby bump saying, "Well I can say somebody has phailod (referencing her weight gain)."