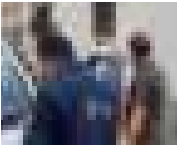




NIA conducts raids at several location at Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

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Two people arrested for allegedly circulating a morphed video of Shinde Sena leaders

In the video which was morphed, the Mhatre is allegedly seen kissing Surve on the cheek. Two people have been arrested for allegedly circulating a morphed offensive video on the internet of Shiv Sena MLA Prakash Surve (Shinde faction) and party spokesperson Sheetal Mhatre. The two accused have been identified as Tare Manas Kuwar (26) and Ashok Mishra (45), police officials said.

They were arrested after a complaint was lodged by Mhatre at the Dahisar Police station. Mhatre in her open statement said "Thackerayt group and Yuva Sena behind the video". After reports of the video went viral, Sheetal Mhatre alleged that the Thackeray group and Yuva Sena are behind the video.

In her tweet, Sheetal Mhatre said, "If there is nothing to talk about wom-

en in politics, is it the culture of Ud-dhav camp to defame her? Did you not remember Balasaheb's manners while uploading such a morphed video from a Facebook page called Matoshree?" She further said that it shocking that a woman can be treated in such a way in Shivaji Maharaj's Maharashtra.

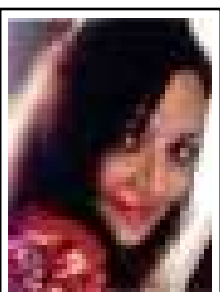
A case has been registered against the accused under IPC sections 354, 509, 500, 34 and 67. The video which

has been circulating on social media platforms shows Sheetal Mhatre kissing Prakash Surve on his cheek while the duo along other party members including Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde were waving to a crowd.

The footage was also shared by Bharat Rashtriya Samiti (BRS) leader Y Sathish Reddy on Twitter with the caption "What's happening here, right beside CM Eknath Shinde?"

Moral Policing is the ugly truth of modern India

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Until you learn self-worth, and find beauty in the things you already do have, you are always going to be terrorized by the moral police. You must know that you are somebody who is truly of value, correct? It does not matter how you look or act or think or what others think of you. Your parents should have taught this to you at a young age, but I guess they didn't, so let me spell it out for you. These moral cops can be anyone from family to unknown acquaintances. My male friend came to my house to assist me on a writing project, just because I stay alone and single. The agony aunts who always sit in the corridors gossiping with each other were not only curious to know who that guy was but they were

silently gossiping about all imaginary stuff. My friend is a smoker. He just finished smoking and entered the lift. All the aunts were staring at him as if he was some dreaded criminal. Well! We single girls have no right to invite anyone at home because society thinks it immoral to be at home with the opposite sex.

Our society right now is in a phase of transition, India is transitioning from a web of traditional values to a more liberal value system. There are patrons at both sides, and the general plebe population have apathy for change.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Moral Policing is the ugly truth of modern India

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Moral policing, anytime, anywhere, is wrong, it is repulsive, obnoxious. It is a set of self-styled cops trying to impose their own drive on others. It happens whenever religious forces try to impose their will on society

Taking charge of your thoughts, especially when it's an emotional state about yourself, can be one of the toughest things to do when you don't feel confident. Sometimes you critique yourself and feel shy around others when you can't find ways to feel comfortable in your own skin

India is in a very crucial stage of its growth now, young generations are finally freeing themselves from the clutches of age old traditions and orthodoxy. Politicians have been an integral part of the whole 'Moral Policing' drive which has been predominant in our country for quite some time now.

Young rebels would shun the traditional values and adopt the newer convenient values and the old sentinels will try to uphold the traditional system. I don't see anything inherently faulty with this, except the fact that people tend to become hypocritical.

Moral policing, anytime, anywhere, is wrong, it is repulsive, obnoxious. It is a set of self-styled cops trying to impose their own drive on others. It happens whenever religious forces try to impose their will on society, because they claim that they do not answer to the law, only to some god that they find acquiescent. Taking charge of your thoughts, especially when it's an emotional state about yourself, can be one of the toughest things to do when you don't feel confident. Sometimes you critique yourself and feel shy around others when you can't find ways to feel comfortable in your own skin, rather than embracing yourself for who you are. But why put yourself through that kind of stress when you're already perfect?

Their aim is to prevent a person from doing anything which is against our so called 'sanskaar'. There have been innumerable cases of politicians, especially those belonging to the Right wing, who have publicly made comments which suggest hostility towards people, who they think are immoral.

We, being independent and self-made individuals, should stop seeking validation from irrelevant People. Are you a perfectionist? There is no harm in living the life as you want and decide for yourselves, whatever is the outcome just face it. We are going to make mistakes. If other people think they can change you to get you to act in a certain way, well, that is an example of the other person making a serious mistake. Thank them for their opinion, and then move on; associate with people who can love you for who you are.

When you use force, violence or try to make someone feel bad about them using your own morals you are guilty of moral policing. What is right according to you or for you is not necessarily right for someone else. Hence we should abstain from forcing anyone to agree to our or society's terms of what is acceptable and what isn't.

We should build our Self-Worth. Become Self-Aware. This won't happen overnight. Become aware of who you really are. Be willing to see the good, the bad and the ugly, your strengths and weaknesses, and don't judge, but accept it. People come and go, no one is permanent in your life, but it's only you who can be with yourself until your last breath. Many lives are unnecessarily ruined in the name of do and don'ts.

We all are allowed to make mistakes. Instead of punishing yourself, brush it off and make fun of your actions whenever you can. The more easy-going you are with yourself, the better you may feel. Be kind to yourself. Do nice things for yourself. Be compassionate when you make a mistake and tell yourself 'it's okay.' Let others love you. When people see this person who is comfortable in their own skin (you), then they are going to want what you have. Surround Yourself With Positive People. While not everyone is perfect, surrounding yourself with people who put you down, or are constantly negative won't help with your self-esteem.

We should stop worrying about what other people think about us. If you place too much value on what others think you will feel more uncomfortable with who you are. As you work to develop self-worth and self-love, you will find you can let others' opinions go. You're using too much of your precious energy stressing out how others are viewing you. Just be yourself and the right people will be attracted to you for the right reasons. One of the defining characteristics of fascism is its unqualified contempt and hatred of free thought and liberalism. In moral policing we see the same trend.

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Letters to the Editor

Forced to remove hijab

High time to hike Representation of Women in Parliament & Assemblies too for Better India

We Indians respect women on paper. But it is not the case in reality. In our Lok Sabha 66 women are there out of 524 members which is 12.6 % only.

Ours is 149th position in 192 Countries. Rwanda stands first with more than 60 %, Cuba and Bolivia more than 50%. Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain etc countries having more than 40%. (These figures as on 2014, Parline DataBase.)

It is high time that Government of India to hike the representation of women to 50%, without losing time. It helps India to develop economically, socially and culturally. I am sure Modi ji will comply with my suggestion. All Political Parties should allot tickets to more women candidates, to establish Better India.

Kantamsetti LakshmanRao

Why contract recruitment?

Is contract recruitment in government jobs compliant with labor laws? An investigation should be done in this regard.

After recruiting a young man on a contract basis, what should the young man do when the contract ends? Highly educated youth are being cheated for government jobs.

Contract system in govt jobs should be stopped. Even youths should not work in this contract system. This can ruin their future.

If government needs people in various places then they should recruit permanently. The workers in many govt departments who are working on contract system do not get salary for many months. So government is doing this kind of recruitment only for its own benefit.

Youths should not fall prey to it and harm themselves. Instead they should go for permanent recruitment. In this way nothing will be done by acting contractually.

Uday Waghvankar

Eradicate the existence of PFI

Three suspected members banned terror group Popular Front of India (PFI) have been arrested from Vadodara by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

As per a Divya Bhaskar report, the three accused had been radicalised. A secret operation was carried out by the NIA along with Gujarat Police in a crowded part of the city from where three suspects were nabbed. About five months back, the Central Government had banned the Islamist group PFI over its ties with terror groups and indulging in radicalisation activities.

The NIA is carrying out raids at various locations across India and interrogating suspects who are involved in terror activities. But till now, there were nothing that tied PFI to Gujarat. The Anti-national activities of PFI are continuing unabated.

In order to eradicate the activities of jihadi terrorist groups, banning is not enough. It is also essential to take action against their ground-level members and this is now clear from the past few incidents. Government agencies must make persistent efforts to eradicate the existence of PFI.

Aparna Jagtap
Jubel D'Cruz

Indulged in harming themselves, and social-fabric too

A friend of mine came to me and asked, 'These days my shoulders continue to ache. What kind of Yoga should I do to get rid of the problem?' This suggestion was sought from me as I myself do Yogasana, skipping it in a very rare unavoidable condition. Instead of telling the remedy I asked back, 'Does these days your mobile go not out of use from your hands. First of all, keep it away as far as possible from yourself.' And on receiving his answer in 'yes', I later suggested, 'And, as for getting relief from the ailment only a 'Physiotherapist or an 'Yogacharya' can tell you what exactly should you do?'

That who is always seen with the mobile in the hands they not only inflict harm to themselves, but also social fabric making petty incident explosive by growing active to viral it. And how much? Just see an instance of that. As the forthcoming elections of Vidhan Sabha in MP drawing closer that the capital Bhopal hardly has the day without an agitation, rally and gathering of so-called different organizations hoping to have their demands met by the government. And Last days city first witnessed the demonstration of Karni sena, and then that of Bhim army. At the same time a video of a Bhim army's cadre against Karni sena had begun to go viral.

Later a news flashed that the president of Bhopal Karni sena lodged the complaint against the culprit in police station. What is notable is that the cadre of Bhim army,



Lokendra Singh, belongs to 'Gurjar community'.

As the people knew this the talk went round that "since when Gurjar 'community' got to have achieved the status of Schedule caste". And with what intention Lokendra Singh Gurjar had been there in Bhim Army that claims itself to be fighting the cause of Schedule caste communities. Later, though, it is revealed that, associated with Bahujan Samaj Party, Lokendra set his eyes for the Vidhansabha ticket from the constituency dominated by Schedule caste communities!

In Gurjar Gazeteer Mahakavi Rajshekhar addressed Gurjars as 'Raghukul Tilak'; and sociologists put them at par with Rajputs, calling them 'kshatriya'. And, notably, Rajasthan's Congress leader Sachin Pilot belongs to Gurjar

community. More facts, likewise, may be given but the venom that the incident could inject that had already been injected irretrievably.

Now obviously it may come into the mind lest these gatherings would be a part of greater conspiracy, or so-called toolkit, to drive the wedge in Hindu-community. What is required is to be vigilant against this, more particularly when mobile addict 'self-assigned' spokespersons around are always alert to take no time in poking themselves into making the news viral.

Er. Rajesh Pathak

Columnist

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Letters to the Editor only at
afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com
No postal letters will be entertained
(The views expressed are authors' own.)

NIA conducts raids at several location at Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in Islamic State- Khorasan Province case



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted raids at five places in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in Islamic State- Khorasan Province (ISKP) case.

The Central agency carried out these searches on Saturday at four locations in Seoni in Madhya Pradesh and one in Pune. Following up on leads, the NIA teams searched the houses of suspects, Talha Khan at Pune and Akram Khan at Seoni.

The case was initially registered by the Delhi Police Special cell after the arrest of a Kashmiri couple Jahanzaib Sami Wani and

his wife Hina Bashir Beigh from Okhla, Jamia in Delhi, said the NIA, adding "the couple was found to be affiliated with ISKP."

During investigations, the federal agency said, the role of another accused, Abdullah Basith emerged, who was already lodged in Tihar Jail in another case. On the same day, NIA carried out searches at three other locations in Seoni in Shivmogga IS Conspiracy case.

The places searched included the residential and commercial premises of the suspects, Abdul Aziz Salafi and Shoeb Khan. In the Shivammoga case, as part

of a conspiracy hatched from abroad, the accused persons Mohamed Shariq, Maaz Muneer Khan, Yasin and others, based on instructions of their handler based abroad, targeted public and private properties, such as warehouses, liquor shops, hardware shops, vehicles and other properties belonging to members of a particular community and committed over 25 incidents of arson and sabotage.

The group led by Maulana Aziz Salafi was in the process of radicalizing gullible Muslim youth of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and many southern States through provocative and inflammatory speeches on YouTube. "They were also trying to bring together such radicalized individuals in Seoni district." From the material seized during the searches, it has come to light that, this group was actively collecting information about ongoing activities and events in different Jihadi theatres, including Afghanistan," stated the NIA. ANI

Tramadol tablets worth Rs 21 crores in international market seized at Mumbai airport

Mumbai Customs seized an export consignment destined for South Sudan containing "Tramadol" tablets worth over Rs 21 crores in the international illicit market.

According to officials, based on intelligence gathered by Central Intelligence Unit (CIU), Mumbai Customs Zone III, one export consignment destined for South Sudan with declared description as TAMOL-X225 containing approximately 10 lakh tablets, was intercepted and examined.

The test results confirmed it to be "Tramadol" which is a psychotropic substance and export of tramadol is restricted under section 8(c) of NDPS Act, 1985. These contraband drugs worth US 2.6 million or over Rs 21 Crores in international illicit market were seized, the officials added.

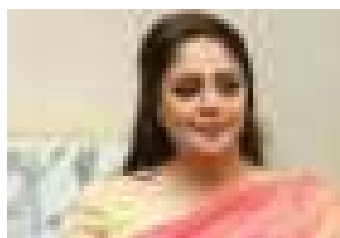
According to officials, searches were conducted at Bengaluru, Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) and Mumbai and three persons have been arrested so far. Fur-



ther investigation into the matter is underway. In another incident, gold worth Rs 1.40 crore concealed in undergarments and footwear, was seized from foreign nationals by the Mumbai Customs department.

The seizure was made from three foreign nationals, who had arrived from Addis Ababa to Mumbai on Friday. The gold weighs over 3 kilograms and is valued at around Rs 140 crores. As per the Mumbai Customs, the accused had concealed the gold in their undergarments and in the sole of the footwear. The information was given by the Mumbai Customs department in a statement. ANI

Actor Nagma Morarji registers FIR against unidentified persons after cyber fraud of Rs 1 Lakh



Actor and politician Nagma Morarji has registered an FIR against unidentified persons at the Bandra Police Station in Mumbai after a cyber fraud gang duped her of about Rs 1 lakh. According to Mumbai police, a case has been registered under sections 420,419,66c and 66D of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

On February 28, a message came on Nagma's mobile that her mobile net banking will be blocked tonight if she does not update her PAN. Nagma clicked on that link. An OTP was asked

and as soon as the OTP number was updated on mobile, Rs 99,998 was withdrawn from Nagma's account, Mumbai police said.

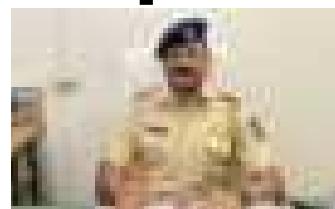
It is worth noting that many such cases have come to the fore in the last two weeks. Till last week, the Mumbai Cyber Cell had registered more than 70 FIRs in such cases. No one has been arrested yet, more than 300 SIM cards which are being used for such frauds have been identified, said Mumbai police.

The police said that more than 5,000 SIM cards are being used for such frauds. "This is an organized crime which is being operated by a gang. Such messages have been sent to lakh's of people and people need to be careful," said cyber DCP. Further details are awaited in the matter. ANI

ACP Nitin Bobde died after heart attack at Mumbai police station

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) of Yellow Gate Division, Nitin Bobde, died after suffering a heart attack at his office between 2 pm and 4 pm on Saturday.

The 55-year-old Bobde came on duty around 10 am, according to Mumbai police and rested in his room after having lunch around 2 pm. However, when staff of his officeknocked on the door, there was no answer from inside. Sensing that something was not quite right, the staff



went inside but found Bobde to be unresponsive.

The staff rushed him to St. George Hospital for treatment, but the officer could not be revived. The post-mortem is being conducted at St. George Hospital.

Bobde was a Senior Police

Inspector at Mankhurd Police Station before taking charge as Senior Police Inspector of Matunga Police Station. He was then promoted as ACP and posted at the Yellow Gate Division.

A few years ago, Bobde had to undergo angioplasty and was on medical leave for six months. An officer said that Bobde had not been well for the past few days and was also on sick leave for three days. The 1991 batch officer resided in Nerul with his wife and daughter.

MD declares heatwave as mercury levels soar

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared a heat wave in Mumbai on Saturday, as temperatures in the city soared.

The Santacruz observatory on Saturday recorded a temperature of 38.5 degrees Celsius, while the Colaba observatory recorded 37.4 degrees Celsius.

The IMD declares a heat-

wave over a coastal city when two weather stations record more than 37 degrees of daily maximum temperature on the same day.For areas in the plains to be declared as facing a heat wave, the maximum temperature should reach 40 degrees, while for hilly regions, the maximum needs to be 30 degrees or more. Mumbai has already crossed

the 39 degree mark on March 8, when it hit 39.3 degrees Celsius.

On Sunday morning, the city's temperature stood at 27°C while the humidity was 54%. According to the a recent IMD forecast, maximum and minimum temperatures in the city are expected to be around 37 degrees Celsius and 23 degrees Celsius, respectively on Sunday.

Nation

Satish Kaushik death case: Women claims his husband murdered for Rs 15 crore

The Delhi Police on Sunday said it will question the estranged wife of the owner of the farmhouse, where actor-filmmaker Satish Kaushik attended a party a day before his death, following her allegation that her husband "was planning to get rid" of him.

In a complaint addressed to the Delhi Police commissioner, the woman alleged that her husband had borrowed Rs 15 crore from Kaushik and did not wish to return it.

The Delhi Police issued a statement saying an inquiry has been initiated into the allegations of foul play levelled by



the woman. "An inspector-level officer from the South West district has been asked to probe the matter. The woman will be called for questioning and her statement will be recorded," it said. This comes a day after police denied any foul play in the actor's death.

According to them, the post-

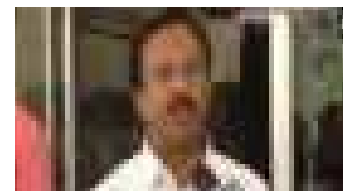
mortem report stated the preliminary cause of death was cardiac arrest caused by coronary artery blockage associated with coronary artery disease and that the manner of death appears to be natural. The woman claimed that she was introduced to Kaushik by her husband and added that on

August 23, 2022, the actor visited them in Dubai and demanded Rs 15 crore back from her husband. "I was present in the drawing room where both Kaushik and my husband got involved in an argument. My husband promised Kaushik that he would repay the money soon. When I asked my husband, he claimed that he lost Kaushik's money during the Covid pandemic. My husband also said that he was planning to get rid of Kaushik," she said in her complaint. Kaushik (66) died after suffering a heart attack while he was on his way to a Gurugram hospital in the early hours of Thursday. He felt dizzy late on

Wednesday night and was taken to the Fortis Hospital in Gurugram, where he was declared "brought dead on arrival".

An inquiry has revealed that Kaushik, along with his manager Santosh Rai, came to Delhi on Wednesday around 10 am and stayed at the residence of his friend at Bijwasan, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rajeev Kumar said on Saturday. A senior police officer earlier said that they have recovered some 'medicines' from the farmhouse in Delhi where the 66-year-old actor had attended a party before his death, reportedly due to cardiac arrest. ANI

Former DCW Shukla alleges, Swati Maliwal has lost her 'mental balance' over sexual harassment remark



balance, and sitting on the post of Chairperson of Delhi Commission for Women. Talking like this is shameful. This post is a dignified post. It should be respected."

"If they talk like this, then what message will be sent to the rest of the women of the society?" she added. Barkha Shukla said, "In the year 2016, Swati Maliwal had said that her father is a soldier and she is proud of him. He can even give his life for the country and the same father, when he is not alive today, Swati Maliwal is talking about him. She is accusing him of physically assaulting her when he is not in this world and is dead. I request the LG sir that she should be immediately dismissed from her post because it will create a lot of trouble in the society. This is a wrong message that will affect the women and daughters of Delhi. This is a wrong notion about the relationship between father and daughter." ANI

Former Chairperson of Delhi Commission for Women, Barkha Shukla reacted to Chairperson of Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), Swati Maliwal's allegations of sexual harassment against her father and said that Maliwal "has lost her mental balance" as she juggles between blaming her husband and father for the assault.

While talking to Agency, Shukla said, "I think Swati Maliwal has lost her mental balance. That's why she talks like this. First she made many serious allegations about her husband, after which she is now accusing her dead father.

She is making allegations in such a manner which does not exist in this world, it is absolutely wrong and extremely shameful." Swati Maliwal on Saturday narrated her childhood ordeal and said that she was sexually assaulted by her father when she was a child.

Demanding Swati Maliwal's resignation, she said, "Swati Maliwal, who calls Arvind Kejriwal a potato, should live with him because potatoes and chips are friends. She levelled many serious allegations against her husband that he used to beat her, and now she is accusing her father in this manner. She has lost her mental

Govt says priority to pass Finance Bill; second budget session to begin on Monday

The second leg of the Budget session will commence on Monday with the government asserting that its priority is to pass the Finance Bill and the Opposition planning to raise issues like the action of central agencies against the BJP's political rivals and allegations against the Adani group.

The opposition parties will meet on Monday morning to evolve their strategy in both Houses of Parliament after protests by them on the Hindenburg-Adani issue overshadowed most of the first half of the Budget session.

Congress leader K Suresh maintained that his party would continue to demand answers from the government on the Adani-Hindenburg issue as it has been keeping a studied silence. The principal opposition party has been pressing for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe.

The opposition parties are also likely to vociferously raise the issue of recent raids by the CBI and the ED against opposition leaders, some of whom were questioned and even arrested in various cases. They have accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of misusing the central



agencies to target leaders of the BJP's rival parties. Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjunram Meghwal told Agency on Sunday that the top-most priority for the government is the passage of the Financial Bill.

He said discussions will be held on demands for grants of ministries including Railways, Panchayati Raj, Tourism, Culture and Health.

On Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present Supplementary Demands for Grants - Second Batch for 2022-23. She will also table the budget for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2023-24 in Lok Sabha. The UT is at present under central rule. The two items are listed in the order paper of Lok Sabha for Monday. PTI

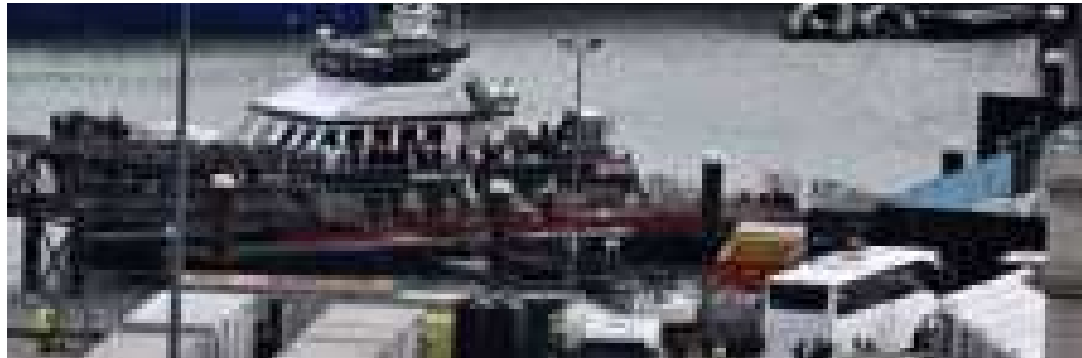
World

UK sees a spike in Indian crossing over illegally via small boats

Britain has recorded a spike in Indians crossing over illegally into the country across the English Channel last year, when a total of 683 largely Indian men were reported to have landed on its shores via small boats.

This figure, according to the latest U.K. Home Office "Irregular Migration to the U.K." statistics for the year ending December 2022, shows a progressive rise from the 67 Indian nationals recorded to have crossed over in small boats in 2021, 64 in 2020 and none in 2019 and 2018.

The U.K. has a returns agreement with India under the Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP), something which was referred to by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Parliament last week. "We have returns agreements with India, Pakistan, Serbia, Nigeria and — crucially



— now with Albania, where we are returning hundreds of people," Mr. Sunak told the Commons during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs).

"Our position is clear: if you arrive here illegally you will not be able to claim asylum here, you will not be able to access the modern slavery system and you will not be able to make spurious human rights claims. That is the right thing to do," said the British Indian leader.

It came during the week in which he struck a new enhanced agreement with neighbouring France to crack down on small boats illegal migration via the route used by people smugglers, from the French port of Calais to the English port of Dover.

Under the agreement, the U.K. will deploy funds towards a new migrant detention centre on the French border and additional officers, drones and surveillance technology to clamp down on

criminals facilitating unsafe small boat journeys. According to the Home Office data on irregular migration, there were also over 400 Indian nationals who fell under the category of "inadequately documented air arrivals" into the U.K. in 2022.

The majority of the "irregular arrivals" from India on small boats were made up of men between the ages of 25 and 40, out of a total of 45,755 in 2022 — largely dominated by nationals

from Albania and Afghanistan, followed by Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Other South Asian nationalities recorded on the list include Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, and Bangladeshis. It is believed that traffickers charge thousands of pounds to transport people illegally on small and often unsafe boats in the hope of claiming asylum in the U.K. Several deaths have occurred over the years as a result of such journeys but the number of migrants undertaking these treacherous journeys has continued to spike manifold.

Sunak has made "Stop the Boats" one of his government's top priorities, with Home Secretary Suella Braverman introducing a new Illegal Migration Bill in Parliament. The Bill would see anyone arriving illegally on "small boats" either returned to their home country or another "safe third country". PTI

Pakistan to procure Russian crude oil at USD 50 per barrel

Cash-strapped Pakistan is making concerted efforts to procure Russian crude oil at USD 50 per barrel, at least USD 10 per barrel less than the price cap imposed by the G7 countries due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, media reports said on Sunday. Crude oil is currently being sold globally at USD 82.78 per barrel. Pakistan, which is currently grappling with high external debt and a weak local currency, is desperate to purchase cheap crude at discounted rates from Russia.

Moscow will respond to Pakistan's request for discounted crude oil only after it completes formalities such as mode of payment, shipping cost with pre-

mium and insurance, according to The News. The first consignment of crude oil from Moscow is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan by the end of next month, paving the way for a bigger deal in the future, the paper said.

The shipping of crude oil from Russian ports will take 30 days, which would mean an increase of USD 10-15 per barrel due to the transportation costs, it added. Russia was initially concerned "over the seriousness of Pakistan to mature the oil deal," but in a recent meeting between officials from the two countries, Moscow asked Islamabad to import "one oil cargo" as a test case to bridge the trust deficit, according to The Express Tri-

bune newspaper. Pakistan will first import one Russian crude oil ship to test landed cost, The News reported.

Since Pakistan is facing a US dollar liquidity crunch, it would pay Russia in the currencies of friendly countries that include China, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, it said. In December last year, Russia refused to provide Pakistan with a 30 per cent discount on its crude oil after the Pakistani delegation asked for a reduction in price. Energy accounts for the biggest share of Pakistan's imports, and cheaper oil from Russia will help Pakistan in containing the ballooning trade deficit and balance-of-payments crisis. PTI

Philippines said, "South China Sea should not be viewed through prism of US-China rivalry"



Philippines has said that its protests over China's aggressive activities in its portion of the South China Sea are not meant to choose sides in the rising United States-China tensions, PhilStar reported. Philippines Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo Jr said that the country's concerns regarding recent incidents in the West Philippine Sea have a "decidedly human element to them."

Manalo said that their concerns are mainly from the national standpoint. "Our concerns are mainly from the national standpoint and should not be viewed through the prism of the US-China rivalry," Manalo said in a March 6 speech, a transcript of which was released Friday, as per the PhilStar report.

The statement came as more

than two dozen diplomatic protests have been lodged against China under the Marcos Jr. administration. The Philippines government has raised alarm over Chinese vessels encroaching on Philippine waters and instances of harassment of Filipinos in the West Philippine Sea, according to the news report.

China over the past decade has built artificial islands and positioned militarily in waters on reefs and shoals within the Philippines' jurisdiction, PhilStar reported. Manalo said that such reclamations pose "long-term economic costs" to important fishing ecosystems and livelihood of coastal communities in the Philippines. According to scientists, Chinese actions at sea have endangered seven natural water heritage areas so far. ANI

Over 1,000 people were brought to safety at two Italian ports from Mediterranean

Over 1,000 people were brought to safety at two Italian ports after the overcrowded boats they were on encountered problems in the Mediterranean, the Italian coastguard has said, almost two weeks after at least 74 people died in a shipwreck, Al Jazeera

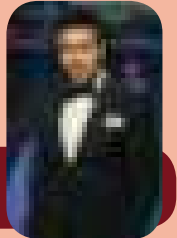
reported. The coastguard said on Saturday it was wrapping up a large rescue operation that began Friday after three boats were spotted drifting off Italy's coasts. One was south of the Calabrian city of Crotona and two further south, off Roccella Ionica.

Coastguard videos showed a large fishing boat pitching violently back and forth in nighttime rough seas with dozens of people visible on the deck. Other images showed inflatable rescue boats approaching another fishing vessel packed with people, Al Jazeera reported. ANI

Interview

Seychelles Swings to Sharmila's Tunes

Dance and travel go hand in hand, a dancer travels all over the world promoting his or her art and is said to be a true cultural ambassador of the country. Today I am talking about Odissi exponent Sharmila Mukerjee who has such kept the India flag flying high since she stepped on the dance floor. Through Indian Centre of Cultural Relations (ICCR) she has performed in every country possible. She recently performed at the sunny Seychelles and mesmerised her audience with her dance on a special occasion where the country was celebrating India. I spoke to the very excited Sharmila when she landed back into India, excerpts from the interview:



Interview by
Sandip Soparkkar

When and how did you take your first dancing step?

After completing her schooling in Loreto House, and graduating from Presidency College, Kolkata, I followed my one and only passion- dance. Initiated into the Uday Shankar style of dance, I, at the young age of sixteen played the main role of Chandaliika in Tagore's dance drama "Chandalika" during the poet's birth anniversary celebrations in Calcutta, and caught the attention of the critics who wrote about my inborn grace and amazing stage presence.

How did your dancing journey continue then?

I later started learning Odissi under the tutelage of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra from 1984 in Kolkata. Rigorous, intensive training in Odissi continued at my Guru's residence in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. I feel blessed that Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra himself accompanied me on the mardala for my Rangapravesh in 1988, and thereafter, I started performing Odissi as a solo artist and in some productions directed by Guruji. I also took lessons in Abhinay from Smt. Kalanidhi Narayan and attended workshops conducted by late Smt. Sanjukta Panigrahi, which helped me improve and polish my skills as a dancer.

You have worked closely with the hearing impaired, please tell me more about it?

For a long time, I taught dance and movement therapy at The Oral School for Deaf Children, Kolkata and choreographed and directed many productions with these children, the most notable among them, being "Ramayan" a full length dance drama in which more than 50 hearing impaired children participated. Later I moved to Bangalore and taught dance at the Sheila Kothwala Institute for the Deaf for a few years. In the year 2000, I was privileged to have won a scholarship to the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) where I trained in dance movement and composition. I also did intensive workshops learning dance movement and how to work with hearing impaired children, at the British Council Calcutta, under the guidance of visiting faculty members from Laban Centre, U.K. teaching dance to the deaf is extremely close to my heart.

How did the Seychelles show come about?

My Ensemble, Sanjali (based in Bangalore) was empanelled with ICCR in 2017 as a group. I was already empanelled as a soloist since 1990 and have travelled many times abroad to give performances and workshops. Since the group

's empanelment, I regularly kept updating ICCR regarding our programmes and performances. Recently, when I went to Delhi to visit the ICCR office, I was told that my group had been invited for 3 programs and a workshop in Seychelles on the occasion where there are celebrating India.

What was the theme of the performance and how did you execute it?

As the event was about celebrating India, we decided to perform one of my choreographies "Vande Mataram" for all the shows and traditional choreographies of my Guru Late Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and myself which would appeal to an international audience. Between each piece, I explained in detail the story and the theme and also about the dance style of Odissi which was much appreciated by the audience.

You have performed all over the world, what was special about performing in Seychelles?

Honestly, each country is different, being widely travelled, I found Seychelles truly a paradise on earth as it is known as. It is also extremely cultural, there dance and music traditions are very deeply rooted. The audience is absolutely wonderful and attentive and the "piece de resistance" was the concluding piece, which came as a surprise to the audience, a dance accompanied to a Creole song which I choreographed in Odissi. The song celebrates the Creole Festival and is a rhythmic piece which was much appreciated by the audience in all the shows. The idea behind presenting this piece was to give the message that dance is one, sans barriers, it is all about rhythm, beauty, joy and enjoyment.

Dance, Awards, rewards and travel, how does it all feel?

I am humbled to be Grade A artist of Doordarshan and an Established artist of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, I have performed at various prestigious festivals and conferences in India and abroad in countries like Fiji, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, U.S.A, Indonesia, U.A.E, Tunisia and more. I was humbled to receive "Singar Mani" title from the Sur Singar

Samsad and the prestigious Mahari award from Guru Pankaj Charan Das Foundation for my contribution in the field of Odissi dance.

What is next on your plate?

After a hectic Seychelles trip we had a performance in North Karnataka, now we are extensively preparing for our festival and will be presenting our own Festival "Pravaha" dedicated to my Guru on his death anniversary on 7th April and also busy working on a new production "A Dancer's Prayer" based on a story by Rabindranath Tagore, which will be premiered in July this year.

That's not all later this year we wish to revive and present my well known production "Hansika" based on the Russian ballet, Swan Lake which was presented and became very popular before the pandemic.



Entertainment

Priyanka Chopra hosts Ram Charan, his wife Upasana at her LA residence ahead of Oscars 2023

Actor Ram Charan's wife Upasana, on Saturday, shared several pictures from the annual South Asian Excellence. Taking to Instagram, Upasana shared a string of pictures from the event which she captioned, "LA familia #hollywood @priyankachopra thank u for always being there for us."

In one of the pictures, Ram Charan and his wife Upasana could be seen posing with Priyanka, her mom Madhu Chopra and her in-laws Denise Jonas and Paul Kevin Jonas. In the picture, everyone could be seen in casual outfits.

Priyanka and Upasana can be seen in white ensembles, while Charan looked dapper in a blue sweatshirt and white pants. Soon after she shared the pictures, fans flooded the comment section with red hearts and fire emoticons. "Aww Upsii!! Take that Oscar home," a fan commented. Another fan wrote, "Pc and ram make an amazing pair." "Atttt Zanzeer pair is back," a user wrote.

Priyanka and Charan earlier worked together in the film 'Zanzeer' which also starred Sanjay Dutt in the lead roles and also marked the 'RRR' actor's Bollywood debut. Helmed by Apoorva Lakhia, the film failed to impress the audience at the box office.

Ram has been in US for his Oscar-nominated movie 'RRR' since last month. The song 'Naatu Naatu' from the film is on the run for the trophy in the best original song category. The song 'Naatu Naatu' will be performed on the Oscar stage by singers Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava. The 95th Oscars, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, will broadcast live on March 13 in India. ANI



Cricketer KL Rahul reacted to his wife Athiya Shetty's ramp walk

Cricketer KL Rahul never misses a chance to compliment his wife and actress Athiya Shetty. As Athiya turned showstopper for designer Namrata Joshipura at the ongoing Lakme Fashion Week 2023, KL Rahul took to Instagram and showered love on her. Sharing a video of Athiya walking the ramp, KL Rahul dropped a pink heart emoji and tagged his wife.

Athiya shared KL Rahul's Instagram post on her story and expressed her gratitude. "Love you," she wrote in response to KL Rahul's story. Athiya slayed the ramp walk in a purple outfit.

KL Rahul and Athiya exchanged vows on January 23 at Suniel Shetty's (Suniel is Athiya's father) farmhouse in Khandala. The duo was in a relationship for three years before they got married. After tying the knot, in a joint post, the couple wrote, "In your light, I learn how to love..." Today, with our most loved ones, we got married in the home that's given us immense joy and serenity. With a heart full of gratitude and love, we seek your blessings on this journey of togetherness." ANI



Sushmita Sen believes in "celebrating life", see what actress said on resuming work post heart attack

Actress Sushmita Sen has been reminding all to never take life for granted ever since she suffered a heart attack. On Saturday, she surprised everyone by walking the ramp at a fashion show in Mumbai. Dressed in a yellow lehenga, Sushmita exuded elegance on the ramp. She left her hair open and had a bindi adorning her forehead. She walked carrying a flower bouquet and handed it over to the paparazzi who were stationed at the end point of the ramp.

On resuming work days after recovering from heart attack, Sushmita took to Instagram and wrote, "Tere Bas Mein Kujh Vi Nahi Ae...Dil Nu Eh Samjhawan...Tu Jhoom Jhoom Jhoom Jhoom..A Walk To Remember...I celebrate life...Jhoom!! Thank you @anushreeredydesign & team for this memorable walk back to life..your designs are as beautiful as your heart!!! #yours #showstopper To the live audience & the Media...THANK YOU for all the love & goodness."

Reacting to Sushmita's post, former Miss Universe Harnaaz Sandhu commented, "So graceful." "ou will never cease to be an inspiration... Also hats off and billion hearts to the designer to give you the opportunity at this time... this is empowerment and love..." a fan commented. ANI

