



**AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj demands apology from Union Minister**

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## BJP's Bavankule Brings

# Unrest in Alliance



**BJP to contest 240 seats while 48 seats will be given to Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena**

**M**aharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said that the seat-sharing formula between BJP and the CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena for the 2024 assembly polls had been already decided and BJP would contest around 240 seats and Sena 48. The assembly has 288 seats. By declaring this seat sharing numbers a political controversy broke out. Bawankule made the statement at a meeting of BJP office bearers late on Friday but on Saturday claimed that the seat sharing formula wasn't finalized.

With the intention to control the damage he said his statements are misinterpreted. Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad claimed the Sena will fight at least 130-140 seats. "As Shiv Sena, we are going to contest at least 130 to 140 seats. Since that party (BJP) is big-

ger than us, surely BJP will fight more seats. But we as Shiv Sena will not contest less than 125 seats. Party leaders should censure him (Bawankule) for making such statements," Gaikwad said.

Senior Shinde Shiv Sena leader said "I am sure BJP will dump Shinde Sahab in coming time. They are just waiting for the elections to happen, if by fluke they manage to win maximum seats they will bend Shinde to their terms. Shinde is not mass leader, he is known in Thane and Mumbai beyond Maharashtra no one knows him. BJP can easily side-line him."

BJP's veteran leader spoke to Afternoon Voice under the condition of anonymity that "the BJP has its typical way of functioning. Devendra is a tall leader with lot of administrative experiences, whereas Shinde is just

a rebel having no administrative experiences. He was need of time, what BJP needs is Thackeray name associated with them, gradually they will pitch in Raj but Shinde might become irrelevant".

Bawankule said he had made the statement that BJP was planning to contest 240 seats in the upcoming assembly elections while guiding office-bearers of the party in terms of election preparedness so that they could be ready. On Saturday, Bawankule said his speech had not been shown entirely. He clarified, "We will fight all 288 seats together in the assembly polls and 48 Lok Sabha seats as NDA. The seat sharing will be decided by the central and state leadership. There are so far no talks about this.

We are only preparing, no matter who gets the seats, if we have to fight and win, we

have to prepare for all the seats. In an alliance, we work for our party and alliance partners also. So they will benefit from our preparedness and vice versa." The Shinde-led Sena has 40 MLAs, while Sena (UBT) has 16. The BJP has 105 MLAs. The Sena and BJP in government have the support of around 20 independents and MLAs of smaller parties.

In the video released from the meeting, Bawankule was heard saying, "Hundred per cent we will get around 150 MLAs. Vidhan Sabha has 288 seats. Thus, in the 2024 assembly elections, BJP will contest 240 seats while 48 seats will be given to Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena. They don't have more than 50. So they will get 48-50 seats. So there will be tremendous work for all the teams, they will have to travel across all districts for two days each."

## Bhindranwale 2.0- Amritpal Singh to protect the rights of Punjab

**Editoritis**



**Dr. Vaidehi**

**2**8 years old Amritpal Singh, not only looks like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale but even speaks his motives. On 18 March, the Punjab Police launched a crackdown against Waris Punjab De, arresting 78 persons and detaining several others for questioning. Amritpal Singh was reported to be escaping. He has big fan-falls across Punjab and overseas countries. Some of the hard-core Punjabis believe that Amritpal Singh is fighting for the rights of Punjabis & Sikhs. His arrest is seen as deliberate propaganda to delegitimize & discredit his demands. A fight for justice & human rights is being deliberately coloured as a separatist movement.

Almost every Hindu who is radical on social media openly calls for Hindu nation so are they separatists and extremists for attacking secular principles and threatening minorities? Is India a Hindu nation just on perceiving the majority religion of people? The Constitution of India says one can support personal stance be it independent nation but shouldn't do any violence. The history of Kashmir, Sikkim, Punjab, Junagarh as a province is such that they justified separatism to some extent in past, present or future though separatism is never justified if it gets violent and can lead to bloodshed in particular society.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 02**

# Editoritis

# Bhindranwale 2.0- Amritpal Singh to protect the rights of Punjab

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*Before 1947, Sikhs proposed Sikhistan initially though it was rejected by Sikh leader Tara Singh Malhotra on heed of Nehru and Gandhi with Baldev Singh given defence ministry.*

*Amritpal Singh is new blood; he is still carried away with the concept of having a separate Khalistan. He believes that the Sikhs are still slaves in their own country.*

*They allegedly took anywhere between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 9 lakh from each candidate, held fake interviews inside Mantralaya, issued fake appointment letters and duped more than a dozen people of Rs 74 lakh.*

Before 1947, Sikhs proposed Sikhistan initially though it was rejected by Sikh leader Tara Singh Malhotra on heed of Nehru and Gandhi with Baldev Singh given defence ministry. The word Khalistan was itself coined by Jagjit Singh Chouhan (former Congress member who later resigned). Amritpal Singh is new blood; he is still carried away with the concept of having a separate Khalistan. He believes that the Sikhs are still slaves in their own country. There is anger, denial and dissident, these young Sikhs need to be given a sense of belonging and confidence. Just arresting them and hounding them will not solve the purpose.

He spoke against christian missionaries converting low class Sikhs and Hindus in villages which is a valid point. For this he got support from many Hindus as well though unlicensed Shiv Sena in Punjab particularly Amit Arora in Ludhiana objected to this as well. Many Sikh born Christians reconverted to Sikhism and came back to their roots. Nowadays villagers object to making churches in villages for creating superstitions like exorcisms, blind men having vision, dumb and deaf people speaking and hearing which is commonly used by pastors. More than 8% Sikhs came back to their roots and said they were lured and given money too or financial aid when Sikh committees failed

Later he spoke against Deras who not only lured backward Hindus but also backward Sikh classes which is also a valid point. He's against Dera saccha Sauda Sirsa and all those deras as Derawaad or priesthood is contradictory to Sikh ideology. He got support from many Sikhs and even some Hindus in this regard. He was vocal about Sikhs going into drug influence, he made many speeches and attempts to bring these drug addicts to main stream. For this he got support from many local Hindus

Then he started expressing his support to separate Khalistan, he got support from many Sikhs on social media but no Sikhs in real because he was labelled as separatist. Though directly he never commonly said so but when asked on Khalsa Raj he openly supported it. By Khalsa Raj he meant a Sikh nation or sovereignty. He uses the words like Hukumat for Government in power which is most common for him while addressing any policies of the government which he thinks are wrong against Sikhs. He toured many villages by telling people to leave drugs propagating Sikhism. This young man definitely has some good objectives for Sikhism.

T-shirts and even vehicles with Bhindranwale's photographs are a common sight in Punjab. Two ubiquitous photographs seen across Punjab are those of Bhindranwale and Bhagat Singh. Bhindranwale was declared a 'martyr' of the Sikh community by the Akal Takht in 2003 and his photograph is on display in the Central Sikh Museum, which is part of Darbar Sahib Complex in Amritsar. All is not in black and white, if some Sikhs remain critical of Bhindranwale, some Hindus too want a nuanced understanding. Kharar resident Navdeep Gupta even filed RTI applications to ask if Bhindranwale was mentioned as a 'terrorist' in police records or whether there was any FIR registered against him before Operation Blue Star. After getting the replies in negative, he made it a point. While some of his TV interviews are already available, Bhindranwale's supporters often refer to these to drive home their point, on April 23, 2016.

Sant Bhindranwale was born in the village of Rode, in the Faridkot District of Punjab. His father, Joginder Singh, was a farmer and a local Sikh leader who had one daughter Manjeet Kaur and seven sons, of which Jarnail Singh was the youngest. Jarnail Singh was brought up as a strict vegetarian. His six brothers were Jagir Singh, Jagjit Singh, Jugraj Singh, Harjeet Singh, Veer Singh and Captain Harcharan Singh.

Sant Gurbachan Singh Khalsa Bindrawale was the 12th Jathedar of the Taksal. Under his guidance, Sant Jarnail Singh began a year-long course in spiritual, scriptural, theological and Sikh historical studies. A year later, Sant Jarnail Singh went back to his village and returned to farming. In 1966 he was married to Bibi Pritam Kaur, daughter of Bhai Sucha Singh of Bilaspur. His wife bore him two sons, Ishar Singh and Inderjit Singh, in 1971 and 1975, respectively. The successor to Gurbachan Singh Khalsa, Kartar Singh Khalsa, who died in a road accident on August 16, 1977, mentioned Bhindranwale as being the new leader of the Damdami Taksal. Sant Bhindranwale was formally elected at a bhog ceremony at Mehta Chowk on August 25, 1977.

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## Voices



### Letters to the Editor

#### Eutrophication a threat

Eutrophication is a ailment of the ecosystem, response to the addition of artificial or natural nutrients such as nitrates, potassium and phosphates through fertilizer (sewage, industrial wastes etc) that fertilize the aquatic ecosystem. It is predominantly caused by the leaching of phosphate and nitrates containing fertilizers from agricultural lands and industries into lakes or rivers.

The growth of green algae on the lake surface layer is the physical identification of a eutrophication which not only makes aquatic plants and animals to perish but also makes water unfit for drinking therefore awareness and prevention of eutrophication is important and imperative therefore the awareness program on eutrophication has to be carried out by concerned regime swiftly.

Vijaykumar H K

#### Dealing with fake news

Fake news and sophisticated disinformation campaigns are especially problematic in democratic systems, and there is a growing debate on how to address these issues without undermining the benefits of digital media. In order to maintain an open, democratic system, it is important that government, business and consumers work together to solve these problems. Governments should promote news literacy and strong professional journalism in their societies. The news industry must provide high-quality journalism in order to build public trust and correct fake news and disinformation without legitimizing them. Technology companies should invest in tools that identify fake news, reduce financial incentives for those who profit from disinformation, and improve online accountability. Educational institutions should make informing people about news literacy a high priority. Finally, individuals should follow a diversity of news sources and be skeptical of what they read and watch.

Jubel D'Cruz

#### Turnishing reputation

India has considered as the biggest exporter of drugs, medical equipments and most importantly vaccines to other nations since the broke of deadliest corona pandemic. Which also added reputation to India globally. But this reputation is threatened to tarnish since past six months as the several incidents took place in which childrens are died after consuming those drugs which are manufactured by Indian companies. Centre and state should collectively take notice of it and made regulations which iron out deficiency in the system and propel the rise of the Indian Pharma industry.

Muzakkir Khan

# True Meaning of Democracy



When you claim and believe in democracy, playing the Princely act in a foreign land is most unwanted. If you truly do, stand up and fight and win elections. But that you can't and won't do. The Ruling party has just won elections in the Northeast, and you were virtually wiped out. There are elections coming up in five states in the next few months and the general elections in a year. If Raul Gandhi is a man enough, win these elections. Fair and square. But you won't. Live in India, eat in India with the tax money by poor people, and abuse India on foreign souls. This is the mindset of a traitor,

The star campaigner in the UK will hide behind some excuses. And go out and spew venom. Talked highly about Adani and loss of money for the Indian investors. The Sensex was at 60979 on January 24, before the Hindenburg report broke out and fell to 59330 on January 27. It saw the lowest level on March 2 at 58909 but has recovered to 60224. In the last 6 weeks the Sensex has lost 1.2%. However, the Adani group market capitalization has shrunk by more than

70%. And where is the free float in Adani? Less than 6%. Who has incurred losses? Institutional investors. But despite an Adani fall of 70%, the overall Sensex is down only 1.2%. Which means that the average Indian investor has only gained, and he has actually used the fall to shore up his holding. And yes, LIC which had invested Rs 30000 crores saw its investment show a marginal loss on March 2 but today at 39000 crores has a 30% gain. It is better to stop talking about issues you have no grasp of and without much knowledge.

Rahul Gandhi is thus adhering to this same old script, echoing this breaking-India crew because they have become his guides. And India as an independent, sovereign nation, cannot dismiss or take this lightly. Even the cheapest politician will not defame a country of one's origin. Hope you are aware that we have not been part of the British colony for the last 75 years. There is no use of spreading your India Hate mindset to the British any more. Public memory is not as short as yours.

Wonder how many Congress leaders will buy his

argument and stay in the party. Such speeches on foreign soil is enough to make a global pappu out of himself. The politicians and intellectuals in the west are smart enough to understand the realistic situation in India when it is growing into a superpower. If a Hitler is required to make this happen then so be it. 70% want this Hitler to fight corruption and strengthen the Indian image. The corrupt and worthless are disturbed and are reduced to hopeless critics. The same western countries are investing in India and selling their weapons to India too.

That's what they want and India has the ability to help the poor world also. The Congress is seeing themselves in a seamless pit and have nowhere to go. Those Congress workers relying on Rahul are becoming desperate with each election result

**C.K Subramaniam**

Columnist

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(The views expressed are authors' own.)

## Let's build the new India of Prime Minister Modi's dream, Statement by Guardian Minister Mangalprabhat Lodha



It is our duty to provide employment to every unemployed person in the state, to assist them in self-employment. Guardian Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha asserted that we will create the new India of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream only through this means. He was speaking at the inauguration of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Maharojgar Mela, organized under the leadership of MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar at Pramod Mahajan Maidan in Kandivali East.

MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar along with officials of skill development department was present on this occasion. Guardian Minister Lodha said, the link between various companies needing required manpower and students who have completed their education need jobs has been created through this employment fair in the form of MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar. He also said that similar gatherings will be held on behalf of the Maharashtra government in every assembly constituency.

MLA Bhatkhalkar said, in the background of this gathering, we organized their camps in every ward, provided online registration facility. Due to this, there have been a large number of registrations. Many times, after completion of education, one does not know which company to contact, so this gathering has provided a golden opportunity for the unemployed youth. Along with employment, financial assistance is available through schemes like Mudra for self-employment. MLA Bhatkhalkar also said that we will organize a meeting regarding this scheme soon. Initially, Guardian Minister Lodha was felicitated by MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar. MLA Bhatkhalkar felicitated by Skill Development Officer Shri. It was done by Pathak. Representatives of various reputed companies were present for this employment fair. Thousands of young men and women took advantage of this gathering.

## Many queries, BMC extends deadline to receive bids by 2 weeks



The BMC earlier this month extended the deadline of the tender it issued for the construction of the Dahisar Bhayander Link Road (DBLR) by two weeks.

The tender for the project was floated last October. As the six-month deadline to receive bids was to get over on March 10, the BMC extended the same by two weeks to March 24, said officials.

The DBLR aims to connect Dahisar, the northernmost tip of the western suburbs, with satellite town of Bhayander. The BMC is the planning and executing agency for this project, being taken up primarily to declutter traffic movement at Dahisar Check Naka from where vehicles move towards Vasai, Virar, Palghar, Gujarat and northwards to Delhi via the Western Express Highway. It is also known to be the last leg of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project, through which BMC intends to connect Nariman Point, the southernmost tip of island city, with the western suburbs.

## Mumbai woman who cut up mother's body used phenyl, air fresheners to mask stench

The 23-year-old Mumbai woman, arrested for allegedly murdering her 55-year-old mother, chopping her body and keeping them at their

house, used tea powder, 35-40 bottles of air fresheners and phenyl over a period of two months to suppress the foul smell, police said.

The accused, Rimple Jain, surfed the internet to learn about ways to chop the body and suppress the foul smell, police said.

## Gokhale Road gets mural to go with century-old Anand Vitthal Koli Pyau



Designed on the theme of old Mumbai, this mural on Gokhale Road in Dadar West depicts the long-abolished city tram service, Koli women selling fish, horse-drawn carriages popularly known as Victorias, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) headquarters, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus building, Rajabai Clock Tower, and Fort's Flora Fountain.

The mural has been designed as a backdrop for the century-old Anand Vitthal Koli Pyau, which has recently been restored by the civic body's heritage department.

A senior official said, "The mural was conceived with the thought of highlighting the pyau. Before the BMC started the restoration of the pyau, it was in a decrepit state. It was buried at least a foot into the ground owing to road and footpath resurfacing work over the years. This is among the few pyaus that also has a drinking water trough for animals..."

There are records in the hydraulics department that show the Anand Vitthal Koli Pyau was shifted to its present location in 1936. Earlier, it was located on the northbound side of Gokhale Road.

## Child Cancer Patients visit Raj Bhavan; meet Governor



Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais interacted with child cancer patients undergoing treatment at the Tata Memorial Hospital at Raj Bhavan Mumbai. The Governor witnessed a Magic Show with the children and distributed gifts. The Governor announced a donation of Rs.5 lakh to the organisations providing support to the cancer affected children and their parents. The children later visited the Raj Bhavan.

The visit of the cancer affected paediatric patients to Raj Bhavan was organised by the Impacct Foundation of the Tata Memorial Centre in association with Krish Foundation.

Shalini Jatia, Chief Officer of the Impacct Foundation of TMC, Navin Shetty, Founder of the Krish Foundation, Vandana Shetty, President of the Foundation, Dr Venkata Rama Mohan, Paediatric Oncologist were present.

Nation

# AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj demands apology from Union Minister Kiren Rijiju for "anti-India" remark

Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj on Sunday said that Union Law minister Kiren Rijiju should apologise over his remarks for calling some of the retired judges "anti-India". While speaking to ANI, Saurabh Bhardwaj said, "Now for him to say that judges are anti-India, it is very shameful. Kiren Rijiju should apologize to the whole country that he is calling the Supreme Court judges anti-India."

"Kiren Rijiju should not cross the 'Lakshman Rekha'. It is unfortunate that despite being a Law Minister, he crossed this 'Lakshman Rekha'. Today the country is proud of its Supreme Court. Get a survey done all over the country,



today there is only one institution in which people have faith, and that is the Supreme Court," he said.

Earlier Union Law minister Kiren Rijiju made the remark at a public event. "A few retired judges have now become activists and are part of the anti-India gang where they are trying to turn the judiciary

against the government," he had said. Saurabh Bhardwaj further stated that Kiren Rijiju and BJP ministers should learn from Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on how to speak about institutions on public platforms.

"Kiren Rijiju and the ministers of the central government should learn something from Mr Chand-

rachud. It is not the job of a judge to do public speaking, but still, the kind of balanced speech Mr Chandrachud is giving on the public forum, all the ministers and especially Kiren Rijiju should learn from him on how can you follow the limits," he said. "I have a lot of respect for the Chief Justice. Despite repeated provocations, the Chief Justice is not getting agitated and is keeping his point in front of the people in a simple way," he added. Saurabh Bhardwaj also pointed out how can central government appoint judges. He said, "Today, the governors of the central government are troubling the state governments, Adani's case is there so how can the central government appoint a judge in such cases, Cen-

tral Government is a party in these court matters". Saurabh Bhardwaj further stated that the BJP party is unnecessarily getting involved with the Chief Justice of India over conservative matters.

"I want to know whether the sexual orientation of the people who are given tickets by the BJP, made ministers, is checked. It is nonsense that even while making a judge, sexual orientation will be seen. The country is being taken away in a cheap debate. People who will be listening to this talk of ours abroad will laugh at the central government and the central ministers. These people are getting entangled with the Chief Justice of India in conservative matters," he added. (ANI)

## The Punjab Police's plan to arrest Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh



Days after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met with Home Minister Amit Shah. They reportedly discussed it during their meeting on March 2, people with direct knowledge of the matter said, asking not to be named. Amritpal Singh heads "Waris Punjab De", a radical organisation started by actor and activist Deep Sidhu, who died in a road accident in February last year.

Amritpal Singh claims to be a follower of the terrorist Bhindranwale and has made controversial speeches in the past few months. He is married to a UK-based non-resident Indian, Kirandeep Kaur. Amritpal Singh, who was at the centre of a massive protest against the arrest of his key aide last month, is on the run from the Punjab Police, sources said. The police followed him while he was being driven in a convoy to Jalandhar. A man who roams around with armed guards, his supporters call him "Bhindranwale 2.0", referring to the Khalistani separatist

and terrorist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Reports say Amritpal Singh the police are talking to his family to make him surrender in order to avoid any law and order issues. The centre sent extra forces to Punjab before the police went out to look for him on Saturday, sources said. The plan was to arrest the Khalistani leader after meetings of the G20 ended in the state, which was on Friday. A Lok Sabha by-election is also scheduled in Jalandhar, where Amritpal Singh was heading on Saturday, after the death of Congress MP Santokh Chaudhary.

On March 2, the Punjab Chief Minister had tweeted that he met the Home Minister and both the state and the centre agreed to work together on the issue of law and order. Amritpal Singh's case brings to national attention a festering problem in Punjab where Khalistani leaders like him, backed by a large supporter base, makes it difficult for law enforcers to do their duty.

## Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal say, "God tests those who pursue path of truth, He is testing Sisodia"

God tests those who pursue the path of truth and He is testing AAP leader Manish Sisodia also in this way, said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal here on Sunday. Kejriwal made these remarks while inaugurating a new School of Specialized Excellence in Rohini.

While addressing the public at the event he said, "King Harishchandra was a great king. So God tested him to see how truthful he was. His entire kingdom was snatched away, his son died and when his wife took him to the cremation ground, she didn't even have money to pay for the cre-



mation. This is how God tests. In the same way, God is also testing Manish Sisodia. Manish Sisodia will pass the test with 100 per cent and come back soon to you. Children, when you pray to God in the morning, pray for the health and well-being of Manish Sisodia." Kejriwal also said that children and teachers are missing Sisodia in the state.

"Manish Sisodia is not with us today. Just a few days ago some children came to me and said that they are missing Manish Sisodia a lot. So I told him that we were also missing him a lot, and many teachers say that they are also missing him. The children said that false cases have allegedly been filed against him and he has been falsely implicated. I said that the whole world knows this," he said. "Manish Sisodia has sent a message to children that he is fine and children should not worry. They should focus on their studies. He is worried about your studies and health even," he added. (ANI)

## Congress leader Jairam Ramesh slams Delhi Police over visit to Rahul Gandhi's residence

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh on Sunday hit out at Delhi Police after a team led by Special CP (Law and Order) visited Rahul Gandhi's residence to seek information on the 'sexual harassment' victims that he mentioned in his speech during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Talking to ANI, Jairam Ramesh said, "It has been 45 days since Bharat Jodo Yatra ended. They (Delhi police) are going for questioning after 45 days. If they are so much concerned why didn't they go to him



in February?"

He also added that Rahul Gandhi's legal team will respond to the matter as per law. The Special CP Law and Order Sagar Preet Hooda arrived at the residence of Congress MP Rahul

Gandhi early on Sunday in connection to a notice served to him by the police to seek information on the alleged sexual harassment victims that he mentioned in his speech during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Talking to the media, CP Hooda said, "We've come here to talk to him. Rahul Gandhi gave a statement in Srinagar on Jan 30 that during the Yatra he met several women and they told him that they had been raped. We're trying to get details from him so that justice can be given to victims". ANI

World

## North Korea launches missile towards sea amid US-South Korean military drills



North Korea launched a short-range ballistic missile toward the sea on Sunday, its neighbours said, ramping up testing activities in response to US-South Korean military drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal. The missile launched from the North's north-western region flew across the country before it landed in the waters off its east coast, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

It said South Korea's military has boosted its surveillance pos-

ture and maintains a readiness in close coordination with the United States. Japan's Defence Ministry said a suspected North Korean missile was launched on Sunday morning. It said the suspected weapon landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. There were no immediate reports of damage in the area.

The launch was the North's third round of weapons tests since the US and South Korean militaries began their joint military drills last Monday. The latest US-South Korean drills, which

include computer simulations and field exercises, are to continue until Thursday.

The field exercises are the biggest of their kind since 2018. The North views such US-South Korean military drills as a practice to launch an invasion, though Washington and Seoul have steadfastly said their training is defensive in nature.

The weapons North Korea recently tested include its longest-range Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the U.S. mainland. The North's state media quoted leader Kim Jong Un as saying the ICBM launch was meant to strike fear into the enemies.

A day before the start of the drills, North Korea also fired cruise missiles from a submarine. The North's state media said the submarine-launched missile was a demonstration of its resolve to respond with overwhelming powerful force to the intensifying military maneuvers by the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean puppet forces. PTI

## Afghanistan seeks UN help for wheat storage amid concerns of drought



Afghanistan has sought help from the United Nations (UN) amid rising concerns about drought in the war-stricken country, asking the UN to provide storage facilities for wheat, TOLO news reported. According to the Afghan news agency, the chamber of agriculture and livestock has called the UN to help the country regarding the same and said that it will in turn help Afghanistan boost its economy.

Notably, Afghanistan's economy turned upside down after the Taliban seized power in the coun-

try in August 2021. Since then, the nation is under a severe humanitarian crisis as the citizens continue to live miserable lives.

Quoting Mirwais Hajizada, the deputy head of Afghanistan's chamber of agriculture and livestock as saying, TOLO news reported, "The international community and other countries need to support Afghanistan under the current situation."

Regarding the ongoing food crisis, a spokesperson for the Taliban-led agriculture ministry, Musbahuddin Mustaeen said, "The ministry of agriculture has

sent the plan to the cabinet to allocate the purchase budget of 100,000 tons of wheat for emergency situations." Despite receiving humanitarian assistance from across the globe, Afghanistan's poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment rates are still at their peak in the country.

Highlighting Afghanistan's situation, an analyst, Qutbuddin Yaqubi said, "Afghanistan needs six to eight million metric tons of wheat every year. Fortunately, nearly five million metric tons of it is supplied from domestic sources and the rest is supplied from foreign sources," according to TOLO news. Continued discrimination against more than half the population of the country continues to affect the growth of Afghanistan as a country.

In August 2021, the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan and enacted laws severely curtailing the fundamental rights of the people, especially those of women and girls. (ANI)

## Death toll in Ecuador earthquake rises to 16



The death toll in the Ecuador earthquake has risen to 16, taking the toll of injured to 381, CNN reported citing authorities on Sunday. The quake hit on Saturday and measured 6.8 on the Richter scale near the southern town of Balao and was more than 65 km (nearly 41 miles) deep, according to the United States Geological Survey.

According to a tweet from the General Secretariat of Communication of the Ecuadorian Presidency's Twitter account, the earthquake injured an estimated 381 persons, CNN reported. At least 11 persons lost their lives in the province of El Oro.

The president of Ecuador's communications office stated that at least one further death has

been recorded in the province of Azuay. Authorities said that a person in Azuay died when a wall fell on top of a car and that at least three of the deceased in El Oro died when a security camera tower collapsed in an earlier statement, reported CNN. People who were injured were being treated at hospitals, the Presidency added, but did not provide further details.

The USGS gave the tremor an "orange alert", saying "significant casualties are likely and the disaster is potentially widespread." "Past events with this alert level have required a regional or national level response," the USGS added. It also estimated damage and economic losses were possible, as per the report in CNN. ANI

## Taliban targets ISIS hideouts in Mazar-e-Sharif calls it as substantial strike

Taliban security forces targeted ISIS hideouts in Mazar-e-Sharif and called it a substantial strike against insurgents, said Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid on Saturday, reported Khaama Press.

On Saturday, Mujahid wrote on Twitter that special operations by Taliban security forces against ISIS militants had begun in Mazar-e-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh.

According to Mujahid, the operation went on until late Friday night, and as a consequence, several ISIS militants were killed and one member of the Taliban security force was hurt.

Local sources, cited by Khaama Press, also reported a clash

between Taliban security troops and rebels in Mazar-e-Sharif's Dashte Shor area. Five Daesh militants killed in Friday night operations in Mazar-i-Sharif were Tajikistan and Uzbekistan nationals, according to an official statement, reported Pajhwok Afghan News.

Three Daesh 'Khawarej' hideouts were destroyed on Friday night during intelligence-based operations in Mazar-i-Sharif's 5th, 8th, and 10th Police Districts, Balkh Police Spokesperson Mohammad Asif Wazir told Pajhwok Afghan News. Five "Khawarej," who were nationals of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, he claimed, were killed in the operations. ANI

Column

# Impact of social media influencers on children



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It is important to make children aware of the impact of influencers on their lives as they can easily get carried away

A recent survey found that overall screen usage among teens increased by 17% from 2019 to 2021. Not only this, in terms of daily screen usage, it was found that for the children in the age group of 8-12 years, the average usage increased to almost five hours from four hours, and for teens in the age group 13 - 18 years, the average increased to almost eight hours from seven hours. What does this imply?? In the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "The children of today will make the India of tomorrow. The way we bring them up determines the future of the country."

However, the question remains are the parents, teachers, peers and all those responsible towards the well-being and development of the

so-called Generation Alpha (Gen alpha) determined to groom them for the future? Are they all a helping hand in making them realise their potential by teaching them values with their life examples, providing them with an environment that is safe to live in and above all giving their precious time to listen to them? The answer to all such questions won't be a cent per cent yes but rather a majority no.

Today, in this so-called technologically advanced, fast-moving world, where everyone is too engrossed in work and needs to be relieved from peer pressures, the best shortcut is media consumption on screens which is gradually turning out to be an addiction. Be it a five-year-old or a ninety-year-old, everyone needs a smartphone without realising its repercussions.

In simple terms, social media influencers refer to users on social media who has established credibility in a specific industry through their skills such as vloggers, bloggers, YouTubers, Podcasters or unboxes, thereby having access to the large audience

especially children for they tend to spend maximum time watching social media. The impact of such influencers on the lives of the young audience can be either positive or negative and is a matter of great concern. There is no doubt that the influencers have the best communication skills and engagement with their audience. Children often tend to get influenced by these influencers as they offer various online content containing humour, excitement, games and motivation so frequently that they can relate to it without realising that their precious time is being wasted by watching content that is not so relevant. Some influencers give the children the resources and inspiration to learn about their interests and explore them.

They use their social media platform to spread social awareness. However, at times these influencers end up promoting unrealistic standards. They present a clean and humorous version of their lives which results in a sense of comparison thereby leading to a negative impact on the lives of the

children, resulting in anxiety, low self-esteem, depression and in the worst case scenario may even lead to suicidal attempts. At times, food and beverage companies often turn to such media influencers to promote their product through sponsored posts so that when these posts are reflected, they get fixed into a child's brain as authentic, thereby promoting unhealthy food such as junk food, alcohol, etc.

What matters is how children critically think and respond to the contents viewed by them and that is where the role of the parents, teachers and peers come into play. It is important to make children aware of the positive and negative impact of social media influencers on their daily lives. Having regular and healthy conversations to find out what the child likes to watch on social media can be a good approach. In case the child wants to engage in social media parents need to be supportive at every level which will gradually avoid isolating the child and open the lines of communication about social media presence.



## Entertainment

### "Learned a lot from this incident": Sonali Kulkarni apologizes for her "women are lazy" remark

Actor Sonali Kulkarni, on Saturday, penned an apology letter for her "women are lazy" remark. The 'Singham' actor at a recent event said, "In India a lot of women are just lazy. They want a boyfriend or husband, who has a very good job, owns a house, and has assurance of getting regular increments. But, in the middle of this, women forget to make a stand for themselves. Women don't know what will they do."

She added, "I urge everyone to bring up such women in your houses that are able to and can earn for themselves. Who can say that yes, we want a new fridge in the house; you pay for half of it, I will pay the other half." While explaining her point, Kulkarni gave an example of her friend and said "I have a friend. I won't go into details but she was scouting a guy for marriage. She said she won't like to marry someone who earns under Rs 50,000. And it would be better if he stayed alone; who wants the fuss about in-laws? And he should have a four-wheeler. I asked her, 'Have you come to a mall? Do you want a human or an offer?' It is so humiliating." A video of her statement went viral on social media which divided netizens into two parts. While some people praised the actor for her statement, some of them felt offended.

On Sunday, Sonali took to her social media handle and shared an apology letter in which she wrote, "Dear All, I'm overwhelmed with the feedback I'm receiving. I would like to thank all of you, especially the entire press and media for the extremely mature conduct of connecting with me. Being a woman myself, my intention was not to hurt other women. In fact, I have extensively expressed myself time and again in support of us and what is it being a woman. I'm grateful to all of you for reaching out to me personally to appreciate or to criticize a Hope we will be able to have more open exchange of thoughts." ANI



### Actress Kareena Kapoor calls her son Jeh "ladies man"

Actress Kareena Kapoor shared a couple of pictures of her son surrounded by ladies from their South Africa diaries. Taking to Instagram stories, Kareena treated fans with new pictures.

In the first picture, Kareena can be seen clicking pictures of ladies from the Masai community and captioned it "With the wonderful ladies of the Masai community."

In the second image, Kareena could be seen standing with the woman and her son Jeh looking at them.

Sharing the picture, she wrote, "Jeh baba the ladies man." On Saturday, Kareena posted a super stylish picture of herself in which she is seen posing against a jeep. Style diva Bebo was dressed in a light-coloured kurta and pants. She completed her look with a black shade and boots. Kareena wrote in the caption, "It's called Safari Chic." Kareena often posts pictures from her vacation diary, which garners likes and shares in large numbers from netizens.

The star couple tied the knot on October 2012 in a private ceremony in Mumbai and was blessed with Taimur in 2016 and later in 2021 they became parents to Jeh. Meanwhile, on the work front, Kareena will be seen in Rhea Kapoor's 'The Crew', which also stars Kriti Sanon, Diljit Dosanjh and Tabu. She also has Sujoy Ghosh's next thriller film which is based on the book The Devotion Of Suspect X. It also stars Vijay Varma and Jaideep Ahlawat. (ANI)