



Delhi Excise Scam: cooperated with CBI in probe, no incriminating
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Consider reservation for transgenders in educational institutions and govt jobs : HC asks Maha govt



Brena soni

The Bombay High Court asked the Maharashtra government to consider granting reservation to transgenders in state-run educational institutions and government jobs. A division bench of Acting Chief Justice S V Gangapurwala and Justice Sandeep Marne asked a committee set up by the state government for the issue to consider and submit a report by June 7. When Advocate General Birendra Saraf sought more time, the court remarked, "If there is a hanging sword then things move faster."

Vinayak Kashid, a transgender who is a graduate in Electrical Engineering and post graduate in Technology (Electrical Power System Engineering), had filed a petition seeking modification to the advertisement issued by MahaTransco in May this year for mass recruitment to include transgender category.

Many transgender folks said that the third category should be present in the recruitment drives and work places, educational institutions should set up awareness campaigns for our community so that people can accept us in society. We also spoke to some Transgender activists regarding the recent decision of Bombay High Court to know about the challenges they are facing over this decision.

Gauri Sawant Transgender activists told Afternoon Voice, "We are struggling for the government jobs and even if the jobs are available still people of our society do not accept it and people from our community who are not willing to gain education or work in government offices then there should be a skill development for them".

Alpna Dange, consulting research director of Hamsafar trust said, "Many people of our community are still be afraid of in their professional jobs as they are being bullied,

some are told to get into sex work and There should various awareness events for these people which words or slangs should not be used in their work environment.

We also asked if people from transgender community are still having fear of being rejected for these jobs or even if they are into those professional jobs are able to work safely? So on this issue "It will take time to remove fear from the minds of the people of transgender community so that they can also work with other the set of people but awareness of this community can them as other in the society also if other people are not accepting us then they should talk about it to understand the myth and why transgender people have face different treatment unlike others" Dange further added.

Actress Navya Singh said, "Though there are job openings for transgender community but still there many of them are not given opportunities as 80 % of them are not

literate and if people who are not willing to jobs or educate our people then at least government should come up with skill development course so that we can survive."

Many trans people still face issues of them being recognized and if someone is applying for some job and if they identify themselves as women then they should be considered women apart people of our community mostly fear of rejection if they not selected for the job and how would others behave with them even if they are working" Singh further added.

Harish Iyer equal rights activists said, "Even if there are reservation but many people are still not aware of these community which makes people our community feel uncomfortable to work in the professional environment and people are also bullied even when they are applying for the interviews so there should be sensitization programmes set up for people".

It is possible for Trans couples to have their own child

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

In 2022, Reese, a transgender man, had seen friends lead healthy pregnancies as trans men, and he knew such a scenario was possible. The couple did their research, and in doing so, they realized transgender men can lead perfectly healthy pregnancies. And so that's exactly what Reese did: He gave birth to the couple's son, Leo. While Reese's hormonal therapy gave him a beard and a deeper voice, his uterus and ovaries continued to function. The process of getting off testosterone hormones wasn't so different from what most women face when they stop taking birth control before conception...and about five months later, Reese was pregnant. Reese insisted that he's not a pioneer

for this issue—that transgender men carry out successful pregnancies more often than people tend to think.

Many transgender individuals express specific desires for parenthood, such as biological relatedness and barriers to parenthood, such as physical limitations or lack of legal protections, which influence how transgender individuals choose to become parents in the future. Reproductive medicine has seen definitions of motherhood expand to embrace egg-donor mothers and adoptive mothers, in addition to the gestational, or birth, mother. Today there is a fourth category: the transgender mother.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

It is possible for Trans couples to have their own child

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This can mean, among a variety of possibilities, a man with a uterus who has transitioned from a woman, and who stops taking hormone-replacement therapy to conceive; or a woman who has transitioned from a man using frozen sperm with a surrogate.

Simply put, 'motherhood' and 'fatherhood' is no longer defined only by the chromosomes and sex organs with which we were assigned at birth but by the gender with which we choose to identify.

Even though there are no exact records, according to news reports collected by Rutgers University, nearly 30 percent of transgender men across the world have had unplanned pregnancies

This can mean, among a variety of possibilities, a man with a uterus who has transitioned from a woman, and who stops taking hormone-replacement therapy to conceive; or a woman who has transitioned from a man using frozen sperm with a surrogate. Simply put, 'motherhood' and 'fatherhood' is no longer defined only by the chromosomes and sex organs with which we were assigned at birth but by the gender with which we choose to identify.

In India as a first case in India, Ziya and Zahad, a transgender couple from Kerala, are expecting their baby in March, Ziya announced in an Instagram post claiming that this is the first case in India that a transman has conceived. Ziya, born as a man and changed into a woman and Zahad, born a woman and transformed into a man, have been living together for the last three years. Zahad conceived the baby amid his transition process from a woman into a man, which was stalled for the baby. The decision of the baby was taken when Zahad's breasts were already removed but doctors said as the uterus was there, it would be possible.

Zahad, an accountant from Thiruvananthapuram and Ziya, a professional classical dancer, both are excited to have a child in their life. Most transgender people giving birth are those born with a uterus — transgender men, non-binary people, gender fluid people, genderqueer people, two-spirit people, and others with uteruses who do not identify as women. According to health professionals, it is a misconception that taking testosterone will make transgenders "sterile" and potentially unable to conceive.

A recent study that researched female-to-male transgender people receiving in-vitro fertilization found

that egg quality and quantity were similar between transgender men and cisgender women. While taking testosterone, ovulation may stop but egg reserves continue to be there. So, if a transgender man stops taking his testosterone, his menstrual cycle often returns, reportedly within about six months.

Even though there are no exact records, according to news reports collected by Rutgers University, nearly 30 percent of transgender men across the world have had unplanned pregnancies. Transgender men, who take testosterone therapy do so to suppress the effects of estrogen while stimulating the development of masculine secondary sex characteristics, however, many doctors suggest that for transgenders, getting and carrying a pregnancy has to come with more care, as there are higher chances of placental abruption, preterm labor, anemia, and even hypertension. Transgender men and non-binary people assigned to females at birth may also be encouraged to freeze their eggs before any medical transition. However, some researchers and doctors are also exploring experimental cancer fertility techniques to retrieve gametes in individuals who transition early.

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Voices



Letters to the Editor

Jogging proves fatal for a health enthusiast as she is hit by a speeding vehicle at Worli!

Really unfortunate that 58-Yr-Old Rajalakhmi Vijay died in a road accident while on her jogging routine & sad that joggers have to run on roads due to lack of jogging tracks in the city. Most accidents happen on roads where there is very little traffic as motorists see an opportunity to accelerate & this usually happens early morning or late night in a city like Mumbai which otherwise is crowded most hours.

Back roads on most localities like Worli, Lokhandwala, Malad behind Inorbit etc should be closed for vehicles in the early hours for vehicles so that citizens can jog & walk peacefully. More jogging parks is the need of the hour in a city like Mumbai which has a mammoth population & stadium along with gymkhanas should be opened for public for their morning walks or jogging. Roads too should have proper barricades with jogging area alongside footpaths for health enthusiasts!

S.N. Kabra

Methanol economy may create wonders

Methanol is a low-carbon, hydrogen-carrying fuel made from high-ash coal agricultural residue, CO₂ from thermal power plants, and natural gas. It is the best way for India to meet its commitment to COP 21. The 'Methanol Economy' programme of the NITI Aayog on implementation leads, to reduce India's oil import bill, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the conversion of coal reserves and municipal solid waste into methanol. Despite having a slightly lower energy content than gasoline, methanol can be used in transportation (road, rail, and marine), energy (DG sets, boilers, process heating modules, tractors, and commercial vehicles), and retail cooking (replacing LPG kerosene and wood charcoal) Blending 15% methanol into gasoline can result in a 15% reduction in crude oil imports. Furthermore, this would reduce GHG emissions by 20% in terms of particulate matter, NO_x, and SO_x, improving urban air quality. Methanol Economy will also generate nearly 5 million jobs via methanol production/application and distribution services. Additionally, blending 20% DME (Di-methyl Ether, a methanol derivative) in LPG can save Rs 6000 crore per year, this will save the consumer between ₹50 and ₹100 per cylinder as per NITI Aayog speculation.

VijayKumar H K

Enough reasons

There are natural, historical and spiritual reasons to mark the start of the year on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada (Gudhipadawa). Deity Brahma created the Universe on this day, that marked the beginning of Satyayug; hence, the start of the New Year on this day. The cycle of the year that begins with Gudipadwa is related to the time that the Universe was first created and therefore, the nature is vibrant with life. On the contrary, the year beginning from the midnight of 31st December is related to the period of destruction. The New Year beginning on Gudipadwa can be compared to a radiant day brought by a new sunrise. Gudipadwa is one among the three and a half muhurts (Auspicious moments). There is no reason why 1st January is the start of the New Year, but there are enough reasons for Chaitra Shukla Pratipada to be its start!

Dr. Jyoti kale

At the door step of Europe

Jihadist incidents seems to have got to be a part of the life in Germany, France, Sweden and other European countries. In what a well-planned way this is being done is what is needed to be understood. Jihadist elements first bring into execution an incident, and then ran away into their locality on the arrival of the police-force on the scene. Where already trained in dealing with such kind of exigencies well organized residents force the chasing policemen to backtrack through stone pelting and such other combative tricks. Then comes the turn of so-called human right activists among them who mobilize shouting that being minorities their people are being categorically criminalized by the police and administration. On the other side journalists, writers, advocates and other intellectuals engaged in art and cultures set upon painting the story that Jihad is the brainchild of handful of misguided lots, which has nothing to do with the common 'Peace-loving' Muslims.

But the facts have different story to tell. Denmark had to put the ban on the funding of mosques. And behind this step all the political parties came stood united. The cause behind what Denmark did is said to be Turkey having given away the fund for the construction of 25 mosques in 6 cities of the country. Yet this is not an isolated case. Taliba mosque alone received whopping 57 crores from Saudi Arabia! The display of solo music by an individual on a corner of the street is the rare charm of the Denmark culture. As the Muslims grew in influence population wise this music has now begun to irritate fanatics among them due to their 'Sharia' forbidding that.

Where Muslims being 8% of the population in that France last year the Anti-separatism law has come to force. Interior minister, Gerald Dermanin, had put 24 mosques to closure in



last 2 years. And the the leader of opposition Marine Le Pen of Ressemblant party is not yet satisfied. She wants all the mosques nursing Jihad must be shut down uncategorically; and whatever be the amount of Jihadist elements they must be deported back to the country of their origin. Le Pen has demanded that the Muslims using headscarves in the public place should be fined.

Once refugees displaced due to 'Jihad' in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq were warmly received in Germany. This 'liberal' gesture fetched immense appreciation to Chancellor, Angela Morkel, worldwide. But later world also got to see the slogans demanding her to step down from the post of Head of the State inside the country because of her same step. As in the frenzy of 'Salafi' doctrine this has got to be common thing to see refugees shouting objectionable religious slogans; teasing women; making assault on Police, and in case of Police action putting children and ladies on the front as a counter tactic. And then spreading fabricated story and morphed videos to tell the world that how their children and women being treated brutally. But last of all this came with infamous Colon incident of sexual assault on the girls. The justification that Jihadists gave

in response to this incident is far more notable. They told that the clothes girls wore were too short, which were in contravention of 'Sharia'. And that how could they tolerate it!

Britain's condition is more alarming. It's because Jihadists have their open sympathizers in Labor party backed by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). British Prime Minister even referred BBC the Bolshevik Broadcasting Corporation due to its Marxist's leaning, and even called that she had fought three elections not against Labor party, but BBC. Increasing Muslim population in the country is obviously favorable to these two. BBC's broadcast on Lester riots had openly been a bias in favor of Muslims that entire world saw. Former foreign minister, Jack Straw, who put allegation on Narendra Modi regarding Gujarat riot in BBC documentary, himself relied on that Muslim population of his constituency that is 30% of the population.

Rajesh Pathak

Columnist

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

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

City

High-powered committee to implement OPS will submit report in three months: Dy CM



Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis said he is glad government employees have called off their strike. "The state government has in principle from day one reassured our

support to their concerns related to financial security and living with dignity post retirement," he said.

"A high-powered committee which has been constituted to look into various aspects and ramifications of implementing the old pension scheme has been given three months time to submit its report," Fadnavis said.

FIR lodged against members of Eknath Shinde Sena for assaulting former party worker



Police registered an FIR against seven members of the CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena for allegedly assaulting a former member who had switched

over to the BJP three months ago.

The accused allegedly assaulted the former member for displaying banners with Gudi Padwa wishes, at Ashokwan in Dahisar East, in the wee hours of Sunday. As per Dahisar police, who registered the FIR, complainant Bhibhishan Ware and his colleague Navnath Navadkar had joined BJP after an internal party dispute.

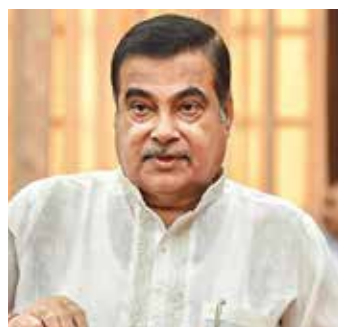
Sanjay Raut's loyalties are with Sharad Pawar, claims Maha minister Dada Bhuse



Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra minister Dada Bhuse on Tuesday claimed Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut's loyalties lie with NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Bhuse

dared Raut to resign saying he became a Rajya Sabha MP on votes of "gaddars" (traitors), the term Uddhav Thackeray led-Shiv Sena faction uses to taunt Eknath Shinde and 39 rebel MLAs. (PTI)

Three threat calls received at Nitin Gadkari's office in Nagpur



Three threat calls were received at the office of Nitin Gadkari, all by one man who identified himself as Jayesh Pujari. The number was found to be that of a woman who is in Mangaluru. We also communicated with her, she works in event mgmt. We are finding out if the call was placed by her friend or Jayesh Pujari, Nagpur DCP Rahul Madane said.

Heavy unseasonal rains lash Mumbai and satellite cities; transport services unaffected



Heavy unseasonal rains lashed Mumbai and satellite cities on Tuesday morning, bringing down the temperature. Officials said transport services like local trains and buses have remained unaffected. Satellite cities like Thane, Mira-Bhayander, and Vasai-Virar too received a spell of heavy showers in the morning. The city woke

up to a rainy morning as Mumbai witnessed a significant downpour on Tuesday. Some areas also witnessed intense but very short spells of rain. Adjoining areas like Thane, Navi Mumbai and Vasai-Virar too saw continuous rain activity. In Mumbai, the downpour was witnessed in parts of Girgaon, Powai, Lalbaug and Kurla.

Metro 3: More than 2,000 families rehabilitated so far

With the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) making steady progress on the city's first underground metro, a total of 2,125 families have been rehabilitated so far, officials said. The families have been relocated to SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority) buildings under the

Mumbai Urban Transport Project's policy for rehabilitation and resettlement.

The MMRCL is the implementing authority undertaking Mumbai's first underground metro called Line 3, which will connect Colaba to SEEPZ via the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC).

SC agrees to hear pleas seeking CBI probe in Palghar lynching case



The Supreme Court Monday agreed to list for hearing pleas seeking a CBI probe into the alleged lynching of three people in Palghar district in April 2020, after it was apprised that the Maharashtra government has consented to the investigation

by the agency.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala was told by a lawyer appearing for one of the petitioners that the state government has also agreed for a CBI inquiry. (PTI)

Nation

Chattisgarh lightning strikes, hailstorms and unseasonal showers kills eight people



At least eight persons were killed in lightning strikes and a hailstorm, as unseasonal showers lashed several parts of Chhattisgarh in the last couple of days, state Revenue Minister Jaisingh Agrawal told the Assembly on Tuesday. Damage to crops was reported in different districts and the compensation will be distributed to farmers after assessment, he said. The issue of losses suffered by farmers in several parts of the state due

to the untimely spell and hailstorm was raised by opposition BJP MLAs and a discussion was sought by moving an adjournment motion notice. Speaking in the zero hour, BJP legislator Shivratn Sharma said vegetables, wheat, and gram crops were damaged in several places, but the state government is yet to survey the losses.

Backing Sharma, BJP MLAs Ajay Chandrakar and Dharamlal Kaushik said farmers were bear-

ing the brunt of poor policies of the state government and they should be provided compensation immediately for the losses caused to crops.

They demanded a discussion on the adjournment motion notice. Deputy Speaker Santram Netam, however, rejected their notice and assured them that the issue will be taken up for discussion in any form later. Subsequently, Agrawal said his department has received reports of crop losses and a directive has been given to collectors to assess the crop damage in all districts including Raipur, Durg, Bemetara and Kabirdham. "The state witnessed 13.7 mm rainfall on March 19 and 6.2 mm on March 20. As per the information received, seven people died in lightning strikes and one due to a hailstorm. Besides, the rainfall-related incidents have also claimed the lives of 36 animals and partially damaged 209 houses," the minister said. PTI

Delhi Excise Scam: cooperated with CBI in probe, no incriminating evidence found, sisodia tells court



Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday told a Delhi court he has cooperated with the CBI investigation into the excise scam case and none of the searches have revealed any incriminating material against him. Sisodia's counsel, while making submissions on the bail plea of the AAP leader, said his custodial interrogation was no longer required and he was not a flight risk. "I am public servant but two other public servants, against

whom allegations are graver have not been arrested," his counsel contended.

The lawyer for Sisodia, who was arrested on February 26 by the CBI, further said there's no documentary evidence of receiving kickbacks against him and the change in the excise policy is purely in normal course. He said the matter of change in excise policy went to the Delhi LG and the finance secretary among others. PTI

CM Bhagwant Mann says, "strict action will be taken against people for disturbing peace and harmony of the state"



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Tuesday said his government will take strict action against anyone who tries to disturb the state's peace and harmony, days after the police crackdown against radical preacher Amritpal Singh. Police on Saturday launched a major crackdown against Singh and members of his outfit 'Waris Punjab De'.

The preacher, however, gave the police a slip and escaped their dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in Jalandhar district. In his first reaction to the police action, Mann said he received several calls from people prais-

ing his government. "People are telling me, you have done a good job. There should be peace and harmony in Punjab. In this matter, we will support you," Mann said in a video message. Mann said Punjab's peace, harmony, and the country's progress were his top priorities.

We will not spare any force working against the country, the CM said, adding people have given a responsibility to the AAP by giving it a huge mandate in the elections. "I thank 3 crore Punjabis for their cooperation in this operation (against Singh and 'Waris Punjab De'). There was not a single report of any untoward incident from the state. It has boosted my confidence that people want peace and progress," said Mann. He asserted that under the leadership of AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, the Aam Aadmi Party AAP is a "100 per cent secular party". "We never play politics in the name of religion, caste and hatred," he added. PTI

J-K terrorism conspiracy case: NIA reveals new name of handicrafts dealer and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen worker as 27th accused in new charge-sheet

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed the first supplementary chargesheet against one over ground worker of the proscribed terrorist organisation Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and a handicrafts dealer as a 27th accused in Jammu and Kashmir terrorism conspiracy case.

Identified as Md. Rafi Najar, a resident of Sopore in Jammu and Kashmir, the chargesheeted accused is a close associate of designated terrorist Imityaz Kundoo alias Fayaz Sopore. The accused has been charged under various

sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Najar, who is a dealer in handicrafts and was based out of Pokhra in Nepal, was arrested by the NIA earlier during the investigation of the case. "Najar was found to be channelizing funds for proscribed terrorist organisations in the garb of legitimate trade of Kashmiri handicrafts. The profits acquired from the sale of the handicrafts were then sent to Kashmir valley through Hawala channels and distributed amongst the terrorists operating

in the Valley through another chargesheeted over the ground worker," said the NIA.

The case pertains to the conspiracy hatched by the proscribed terrorist organisations, such as Lashkar-e-Toida (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), along with their frontal organisations, such as TRF and PAFF and they're Over Ground Workers operating in Jammu and Kashmir to undertake violent militant action in Kashmir valley and in other major cities of India, including Delhi. ANI

Oppn leaders staged a protest outside parliament demanding JPC probe into Adani case

Several opposition party leaders on Tuesday held a protest in the corridors of Parliament House and raised slogans demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue.

They also hung a banner that read "We want JPC" from the first floor of the Parliament building. TMC MPs held a separate protest in the Parliament complex and demanded that Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi break his silence on the Adani issue. Accusing the government of helping businessman Gautam Adani by not ordering a probe into allegations of fraud levelled against his group, the party demanded that Adani be arrested. "Adani should be arrested."

Modi is trying to protect Adani in the Rs 1 lakh crore scam. This is also the reason why they are not allowing any discussion in Parliament. The TMC leadership

has already demanded that the 10 non-BJP states should begin their own probe into this and ensure that public money is not misused," said TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien. TMC Lok Sabha MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay demanded an explanation from the prime minister on how public money was used by Adani. "PM Modi should explain this in the House. How LIC-SBI money ended up with Adani," he said. PTI

World

IMF approves \$3 billion in financial assistance for Sri Lanka



The IMF has approved a \$3 billion bailout programme to help debt-ridden Sri Lanka overcome its economic crisis and catalyse financial support from other development partners, a move welcomed by Colombo on Tuesday as a "historic milestone" in the critical period.

International Monetary Fund's Executive Board approved on Monday a 48-month extended arrangement under its Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with an amount of SDR 2.286 billion (about USD 3 billion), according to a statement.

Special Drawing Rights (SDR) are supplementary foreign exchange reserve assets defined

and maintained by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Sri Lanka has been hit hard by a catastrophic economic and humanitarian crisis. "The economy is facing significant challenges stemming from pre-existing vulnerabilities and policy missteps in the lead-up to the crisis, further aggravated by a series of external shocks," the IMF said.

"The EFF-supported programme aims to restore Sri Lanka's macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability, mitigate the economic impact on the poor and vulnerable, safeguard financial sector stability, and strengthen governance and growth potential," said the statement.

The Executive Board's deci-

sion will enable an immediate disbursement equivalent to SDR 254 million (about \$333 million) and catalyse financial support from other development partners, it said. Sri Lanka in April declared its first-ever debt default in its history as the worst economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1948 triggered by forex shortages sparked public protests.

Months-long street protests led to the ouster of the then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in mid-July. Rajapaksa had started the IMF negotiations after refusing to tap the global lender for support. Sri Lanka has introduced painful economic measures such as tax hikes and utility rate hikes to unlock the programme.

Trade unions and opposition groups have organised protests against such measures. President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Tuesday welcomed the decision announced by the IMF. "The programme will allow Sri Lanka to access financing of up to \$7 billion from the IMF, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and multilateral organisations," a statement said. PTI

US strongly condemned the attack on Indian consulate in San Francisco called it as 'Absolutely unacceptable'

The United States on Monday strongly condemned the attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco by a group of separatist Sikhs, terming it absolutely unacceptable. Raising pro-Khalistan slogans, the protesters on Sunday broke open the makeshift security barriers raised by the city police and installed two so-called Khalistani flags inside the Consulate premises.

Two consulate personnel soon removed these flags. Soon thereafter, a group of angry protesters entered the consulate premises and started hitting the door and windows with the iron rods. "That vandalism, it's just absolutely unacceptable," John Kirby, National Security Council Coordinator for strategic communications at the White House told reporters at a daily news conference, strongly condemning the incident.

"The State Department's diplo-

matic security service is working with local authorities. I can't speak for the San Francisco police, but I can say that the diplomatic security service is working with local authorities to properly investigate and obviously, the State Department is going to be working from an infrastructure perspective to repair the damage, but it's unacceptable," Kirby said in response to a question.

The State Department also issued a statement indicating that those behind the act would be held accountable. "The US condemns the attack on Sunday against the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. Violence against diplomatic facilities within the US is a punishable crime," it said. "It is our priority to defend the security and safety of these facilities and the diplomats who work within them," said the South and Central Asia Bureau of the State Department. PTI

Pakistan court reserves verdict on ex-PM Imran's exemption plea



An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Tuesday reserved the decision on ousted premier Imran Khan's plea for an exemption from hearing in a case registered against him under the provisions of terrorism. Khan's lawyer Sardar Masroof Khan appeared before the court.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief's legal team filed a request for exemption from Tuesday's attendance on his behalf. The lawyer appeared before the ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas and stated that 70-year-old Khan's previous appearance at the judicial complex in Islamabad was available for all to see, adding that he would have been assassinated at the complex. The lawyer said Khan himself wanted to go to the judicial complex, however, the current situation did

not permit it.

Intense clashes erupted outside the Islamabad Judicial Complex on Saturday when Khan arrived in Islamabad from Lahore to attend a much-awaited hearing in the Toshakhana case. During the confrontation between PTI workers and police, over 25 security personnel were injured, prompting Additional District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal to defer the court hearing till March 30.

The whole nation saw the action taken by the police against Imran Khan," his lawyer stated before the ATC. The judge remarked that the whole nation saw but the 'court could not because its cable was not working', the Express Tribune newspaper reported. The lawyer said Khan has to appear before the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday. PTI

Donald Trump case over hush money paid to porn star

A New York grand jury investigating Donald Trump over a hush money payment to a porn star appears poised to complete its work soon as law enforcement officials make preparations for possible unrest in the event of an indictment. Trump over the weekend claimed without any evidence that he would be arrested on Tuesday, with his representatives later saying he was citing media reports and leaks.

There was no indication that prediction would come true, though the grand jury appeared to take an important step forward by hearing Monday from a witness favourable to Trump, presumably so prosecutors could ensure the panel had a chance to consider any testimony that could be remotely seen as exculpatory.



The next steps in a grand jury process shrouded in secrecy remained unclear, and it was uncertain if additional witnesses might be summoned. But a city mindful of the riot by Trump loyalists at the U.S. Capitol more than two years ago took steps to gird itself from any violence that could accompany the unprecedented prosecution of a former president, while fellow Republicans eyeing the 2024 presidential nomination sized up how an indictment might upend the race.

The testimony from Robert Costello, a lawyer with close ties to numerous key Trump aides, appeared to be a final opportunity for allies of the former president to steer the grand jury away from an indictment. He was invited by prosecutors to appear after saying that he had information to undercut the credibility of Michael Cohen, a former lawyer and fixer for Trump who later turned against him and then became a key witness in the Manhattan district attorney's investigation. PTI

Column

Fun Frolic and Fashion during Gudi Padwa



C.K. Subramaniam

Columnist

In addition to the significance and the colors /rituals of the festival, there is a mythological story behind many of the festivals celebrated in the traditional style. As per Hindu belief, Brahma made the universe on this day. So it is celebrated as a new season or new year. On this same day, Rama has successfully and victoriously defeated Bali, so this is another reason that this day is celebrated. Every second of this day is very auspicious to the people who are celebrating this festival or observing the auspicious time. It is one of the three most important days within the Hindu calendar.

There is a traditional New Year festival celebrated in most of the states of India. The way this festival is celebrated differs depending on the state, regions and traditions. Just as the official new year is celebrated on January 1st of every year, similarly even various regions in India celebrate traditional New Year on different days of the calendar year. The date for the traditional New Year is set as per astronomical movements. The state of Maharashtra celebrates the advent of the Spring season which is also

known as the harvesting season in very high spirits. This is the time when the people of Maharashtra celebrate. It signifies the fulfillment of the wishes for prosperity among the people. It also signifies greater dreams of harvest and prosperity to be achieved.

This day has several colorful rituals and traditions and the people of Maharashtra celebrate this day with great dances and culture programs. The Gudi Padawa is considered to be a very auspicious festival. In some places, there are competitions held during the same festival. This can be either a Rangoli competition or dance competitions. Girls are seen dancing in merriment to loud music and they are also in colorful clothing. There are others who are seen drawing beautiful rangoli designs and filling it with colored powder.

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I really loved to see women play Lezim, Maharashtra tState's Traditional Folk Dance during the New Year of the State, Gudi Padwa Day in every nook and corner of the city. Even though it was somewhat politically motivated on the eve of Local Body Elections. It is good to

enjoy such a colorful extravaganza in the streets. However, to celebrate such a folk dance in the streets of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai with gay and gaiety is a great achievement.

The Lezim Phungadi dances and their specific gestures, movements have been adapted by cultists, their exercises in the drive for "Body Beautiful". In Lezim dance there are various types of movements like stepping, hopping, squatting and bending. Every movement of the dance is executed in perfect time with proper strikes, which are swung in four or eight counts. This provides a rhythmic accompaniment to the dance. In Phungadi dance the girls stand facing each other, crossing their arms they join their palms and lean back with their feet together, while doing so they outstretch their arms and whirl round as far and as long as they can and then parting ways to perfection. The statewide dance programme in colorful attire showed Maharashtra's tradition. Lezim on the streets created the awareness of the folk dance to the people, who otherwise generally think about Bollywood actors shaking their legs for top numbers, With Lezim around it was a great show on Gudi Padwa. Good wishes for Gudi Padwa.



Entertainment

Cricketer Virat Kohli's debatable on-field form in 2022 seems to have taken a toll on his brand value in 2022. The right-hand batsman witnessed a further decline in his overall brand value to \$176.9 million as against \$185.7 million in 2021 and \$237.7 million in 2020, as per a report by consulting firm Kroll. Actor Ranveer Singh, who had dislodged peer Akshay Kumar to become the second most valuable celebrity in 2021, emerged as the most valued Indian celebrity in 2022, racing ahead of Kohli with an overall value of \$181.7 million in 2022, up from \$158.3 million in 2021. "Ranveer became the most valued celebrity brand in India, given his mammoth endorsement portfolio and widening global presence," its managing director for valuation services, Aviral Jain, said.

With films from the south, like RRR doing handsomely well nationally and internationally, the brand values of celebrities from Tollywood had a northward journey in 2022 with Allu Arjun (\$31.4 million) and Rashmika Mandanna (\$25.3 million) breaking into top 25 celebrities by brand value. PTI

Ranveer Singh beats Kohli to become India's most valuable celebrity



Actor Anupam Kher pens down emotional tribute for Satish Kaushik stating "Jaa! Tujhe maaf kiya"

Anupam Kher penned another emotional tribute for his dear friend Satish Kaushik, who died following a cardiac arrest on March 8 in New Delhi. Taking to Instagram, Anupam posted a show-motion reel video from Satish Kaushik's prayer meet that was held on Monday in Mumbai. In the video, Anupam showered rose petals on Satish's picture and then the 'Kashmir Files' actor wrote in the caption in hindi, "Jaa!!! Tujhe maaf kiya! Mujhe Akela chod kar jane ke liye!! I will surely find you in people's laughter! But will miss our friendship on a day to day basis!! Alvida mere dost! Tera favourite gana lagaya hain background me! Tu bhi kya yaad karega!!" Anupam added 'Do Lafzo ki hai' in the background of the video. ANI



The Golden Globe winner actor Zendaya was spotted wearing a gold ring on her right index finger that appears to be engraved with her boyfriend Tom Holland's initials. Her nail artist Marina Dobyk posted a close-up video of Zendaya's glossy bubblegum pink manicure on Monday, which included the ring, sparking a speculation. Although the script initials appear to be "TH" for the Uncharted star's name, others on social media argued that it looks like "ZH," a combination of her first and his last initial, reported People, a US-based media company.

A source previously told PEOPLE that she and Holland "started seeing each other" while shooting Spider-Man: Homecoming in 2016, their first movie together in the Marvel trilogy. "They've been super careful to keep it private and out of the public eye but they've gone on vacations with each other and try and spend as much time as possible with one another," the insider said at the time. The pair made their relationship Instagram official in September 2021 with a behind-the-scenes photo in which Holland calls her "My MJ" as part of a birthday tribute. ANI

Actor Zendaya appears to wear her boyfriend Tom Holland's initials on gold ring

Harry potter Actor Paul Grant passes away at 56

Paul Grant, who acted in 'Star Wars: Return of the Jedi' and 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone', passed away at the age of 56 years. "I'm heartbroken... No girl deserves their dad to be taken away... He was so well known and loved [for his work]. He's gone too soon," Grant's daughter Sophie Jayne Grant told Sky News, reported Deadline, a US-based media company.

The actor was reportedly found unresponsive on Thursday, March 16 at a train station in London and was declared brain dead at the scene. Grant was taken off life support on Sunday, March 19. Grant played an Ewok in the George Lucas franchise and played a goblin in the Harry Potter franchise. In addition to 'Star Wars' and 'Harry Potter', the actor also had 'The Dead' (1987) and 'Labyrinth' (1986) to his credit. Grant is also acclaimed as a stunt performer in productions like 'Willow' (1988), 'Labyrinth' and 'Legend' (1985). ANI