



Govt doctors and faculty members of medical colleges goes on a day strike

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# Afternoon

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## 266 property tax defaulter's property sealed in MBMC



**MBMC need to recover ₹ 200 crore to receive grants under finance commission**

The MBMC's tax department has managed to recover a little over ₹171.50 crore till Monday evening which hovers around 77 per cent of the total amount billed by the civic body towards property tax collections. As per information sourced from the tax department, the target was set at ₹190 crore for the financial year 2021-22. 266 property tax defaulter's property sealed.

The MBMC is staring at the chances of being disqualified for receiving grants

under the 15th finance commission. With just three days left in the ongoing financial year, the MBMC is facing a titanic task of collecting at least ₹29 crore to keep itself qualified for the grants. However, the MBMC had managed to mop up just ₹161 crore. Against this year's demand of around ₹222 crore, the MBMC has so far managed to recover a little over ₹171.20 crore from 4.35 lakh taxpayers from 1 April 2022 to 27, March 2023. The collections were limited to

₹149.30 crore in the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, the MBMC has started sealing property of tax defaulters. 266 properties of tax defaulters who owe ₹4.5 crore have been sealed so far. Several properties have been sealed so far. Cumulative amounts have also piled up over the last few years, the outstanding and recoveries through penal tax are major components that occupy a lion's share in MBMC's revenue generation.

The shortfall in revenue generation is all set to put a negative effect on the ongoing developmental projects in the twin city.

While the actual target is ₹222 crore, the MBMC needs to recover at least ₹200 crore to keep itself qualified for receiving grants under the 15th finance commission. The assessed number of properties in the twin city is currently pegged at around 3,68,501 including 63,498 commercial and 3,05,003 residential units.

## Savarkar Vs Gandhi storms Maharashtra politics

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Maharashtra CM Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis took to the social media by changing their display pictures to "I am Savarkar" answering Rahul Gandhi's mindless statement "I am not Savarkar". Meanwhile BJP MPs also protested against Rahul Gandhi's comments on Savarkar. Rahul Gandhi during a press conference after his disqualification from the Lok Sabha said that his name is not Savarkar but Gandhi and Gandhi do not offer an apology to anyone. His statement came after repeated calls by the BJP seeking his apology over various issues, including in the 2019 criminal defamation case.

Rahul Gandhi's persistent attack on Savarkar looks shocking. Savarkar was never a competition to the Congress post-Independence. Rahul's great-grandfather, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, had a towering presence over Savarkar's, if any, on a newly Independent India's politics for the remaining years of the Hindutva icon's life. Nehru died in 1964, Savarkar in 1966. Even Mahatma Gandhi never scorns Savarkar. In fact, in one of his letters, Mahatma Gandhi addressed Savarkar with a polite term of "Bhai", meaning brother.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

# Editoritis

# Savarkar Vs Gandhi storms Maharashtra politics

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*After Savarkar's death in 1966, Late PM Smt. Indira Gandhi paid tribute to him saying that he was a great Indian patriot and the epitome of valour.*

*Two of the three savarkar brothers were sent for transportation of life to Andaman cellular jail. Third was working with congress.*

*Veer Savarkar was imprisoned from 1910 to 1937 in various prisons. He was arrested in 1910, sent to Andaman. He was sent to mainland India in 1923-24 and till 1936-37,*

After Savarkar's death in 1966, Late PM Smt. Indira Gandhi paid tribute to him saying that he was a great Indian patriot and the epitome of valour. She also donated Rs. 11,000 from her personal bank account to Savarkar National Memorial, Dadar. She issued a postal stamp in his name. The Govt of India published a documentary on his life, which earned various international awards. Above all, when she was writing letters, she wrote his name as Veer Savarkar, while today Rahul Gandhi has a problem calling him Veer Savarkar.

If there is any definition of Patriotism, the life of Veer Savarkar is. He was a patriot and the epitome of valour. Two of the three savarkar brothers were sent for transportation of life to Andaman cellular jail. Third was working with congress. In one of his poems, he says to the Bharat Mata that, "what three, if we were seven brothers, we would have laid our life for you. The whole family gave their lives for freedom of India.

Veer Savarkar was imprisoned from 1910 to 1937 in various prisons. He was arrested in 1910, sent to Andaman. He was sent to mainland India in 1923-24 and till 1936-37, he was imprisoned in Ratnagiri. Even in Ratnagiri, he was given harsh punishments, though may not be like Andaman but Britishers were never kind to India patriots. And he was not released till 1937. The British India Government imprisoned him for more than 13 years.

Savar was a leader of an espionage revolutionary agency called Abhinav Bharat. It was the greatest ever underground network pre-independence India had ever seen. He was of the opinion that, enemy should always be fooled, and victory should always be achieved by any way and at any cost. If mindless people are talking about Savarkar's petitions by ridiculing him, then they should know Savarkar filed 10-11 petitions in the span of 12-13 years. But not even a single one of them was only for him. In all of his petitions, he urged the British government of India for amnesty for all of his fellow Political Prisoners, not

only in the cellular jail of Andaman, but also incarcerated in England and other European countries.

In his petitions of 1914 and 1917, he had insisted to the Govt of British India that, "If my release has become an obstacle in the release of all of my fellow Political prisoners, then you can abandon my name and release them, which will give me the same satisfaction as of my own release. You can go through all the petitions, which can be easily available on the Internet. Savarkar's younger brother Narayan Savarkar was a congress activist. And he was advised by Mahatma Gandhi that he should tell his brothers, i. e., Savarkar brothers in Cellular Jail, to file a petition first for their release. It never seemed to be a cowardly act. Veer Savarkar was one of India's greatest revolutionaries, visionary, historian, linguist, social crusader. Then the pro-independence and post-independence Congress leaders knew his worth and vigour. The modern Gandhi and failed congress leader Rahul Gandhi really needs to ponder history.

However, Rahul Gandhi should know that Gandhi and Savarkar are different individuals. If you are an ardent follower of one, demeaning the other becomes a vital prerequisite. But in doing so, these disciples tend to forget that both these men of great accomplishments achieved unimaginable feats in comparison to all of us. Both of them went through unfathomable pain for the sake of winning freedom for their motherland. We surely have the right to say why we may not concur with either of them, but only after we make efforts to understand what each man stood for and actually did.

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## Voices



### Letters to the Editor

#### Dark clouds over the bourses are bound to clear in the near future!

Stock prices has gradually been grinding lower for a few months now which may be worrisome for day traders with short term outlook but is a buying opportunity for long term investors as valuations now look extremely attractive at the current prices. The dark clouds over the bourses are bound to clear in the days to come & situation in India are far better than globally. Our financial system is extremely sound & most top corporate houses have been performing extremely well which is visible in their quarterly numbers. Govt too has been spending heavily on infrastructure which is bound to boost business & economy.

India has one sixth of the world's population which means our consumption story will always be strong. Majority of our population is young & that is going to boost the manufacturing sector in a big way as many top global leaders are shifting their units in India. Equities over the years has given handsome returns & falling stock prices is a golden opportunity to nab great companies at mouthwatering valuations for those who want to invest for a long term horizon!

**S.N. Kabra.**

#### The Islamic month of Ramadan

Ramadan (or Ramzan) is when Muslims from all over the world keep fasting from dawn till dusk, as a mark of piety to Allah (PBUH) and His teachings. Even water is not drunk during this entire month, however hot the climate may be or however thirsty one may feel.

During this holy month, Muslims offer alms to the poor and recite the Holy Quran at home and in mosques. This holy month is very auspicious to Muslims all over the world. It is celebrated on the day after the crescent moon is sighted.

Coming to the new moon, the festival marks the end of Ramadan. Eid is celebrated in India with much enthusiasm and fervor by Muslims from all strata of life.

**Jubel D'Cruz**

#### This is the honor of the award

Veteran singer Asha Bhosle has been honored with the Maharashtra Bhushan Award. She is recognized as a versatile singer all over the world. So it was a must to honor such a singer. So far Asha Bhosle has received many honors. But it is very special because he got this award in his motherland.

**Uday Waghvankar**

# Relevance of Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram

Ram Navami is the birthday of Maryada Purushottam Prabhu Sri Ram, which falls on the 9th day of the Indian new year Chaitra Shukla Paksha of Vikrami Samvat. Ram is the seventh and most popular Avtar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu Dashavatar and has taken birth on earth in Treta Yuga to destroy the evil forces. The nine-day auspicious Chaitra Navratra festival also concludes on this day. Lord Surya is the ancestor of Ram, so devotees start this auspicious day by "Jal Arpan" (offering water) to the supreme God Surya in the morning.

In Treta Yuga, not only Prabhu Ram, but other personalities were also incarnations of Gods and Goddesses who played their specific role as ordinary human beings. Goddess Lakshmi has incarnated as Mother Sita, Sheshnag as Lakshman, God of Sudarshan Chakra as Bharat, God of Panchjanya Shankh as Shatrudhan. The entire Leela of God's Avtar was for the victory of goodness over evil forces and the establishment of Dharma on earth after the removal of Adharma.

Beloved by the people, adored by his Gurus and admired by the Rishis-Munis, Lord Ram is the epitome of courtesy and virtues. Lord Vishnu has incarnated on earth to demonstrate how an ideal human being should follow the path of Dharma. Prabhu Ram symbolizes a devoted son, an ideal husband, an ideal brother, a loyal friend, an ideal warrior and above all an ideal king. That is why an ideal and utopian democratic system in all ages on earth has been termed as "Ram Rajya". Ram Rajya is known as the period of happiness, peace, duty, justice and prosperity.

Shri Ram's life is full



of struggle and even in the toughest circumstances he did not deviate from the path of righteousness, compassion and wisdom. He set the highest standards of conduct and upheld the greatest of virtues and ethics in every walk of life. He was savior for the weak & the oppressed and was ruthless in penalizing the vicious forces.

The teachings of his life is guiding light for all sections of the society. The name, fame, wealth, physical charming all fade up with time, but the noble character, boundless compassion and magnanimous deeds endure for all the times. Some special characteristics of Ram- Being dutiful, Courageous, Intelligent, Justice, Kindheartedness, Obedience, Patience, Popularity, and Universal love are the torch bearer for the human world.

The story of Prabhu Ram has been scripted in various languages and by various authors in their own ways. Of these epics, "Ramayana" in Sanskrit by Maharshi Valmiki and "Ram Charit Manas" in Hindi by Goswami Tulsidas are most popular among devotees.

Prabhu Shri Ram has special significance in other

sects originating from Sanatan Dharma, particularly in Sikhism. In the Holy scripture of Sikhs Shri Guru Granth Sahibji, the name of Prabhu "Ram" have been chanted 2533 times.

Prabhu Ram is Nirgun as well as Shagun. His personality and teachings are not limited to a particular sect, belief or space, rather he is ideal for all human beings. He is present in soul of everyone and available each and every particle of the universe (Kan Kan mein Prabhu Shri Ram).

Ramnavami is celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion by people all over the world with special prayer, pujas, and processions of Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman.

Fasting on this day can help purify the body and mind and brings blessings and good fortune. Shri Ram creates the path to the devotees to reach the zones of liberation and immortality.

**- Er. Prabhat Kishore**

Technocrat & Academician

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.)

## NCB busts inter-state drug network; physician among 7 held



The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted an inter-state drug network by arresting seven persons from Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat, and also seized 3,195 bottles of codeine-based cough syrup (CBCS), officials said on Wednesday.

One of the accused is a physician based in Surat city of Gujarat. The syndicate was actively involved in illicit diversion of certain prescription drugs which are covered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Sub-

stances Act (NDPS Act), an official said.

Officials of the NCB Mumbai zonal unit had received specific information about active illegal sale of CBCS bottles along with other prescription drugs in Mumbai, Thane and adjoining areas, he said.

After working on the information, the NCB officials traced the network, which included a Bhiwandi (Thane district)-based person, who was procuring consignments of such illegally diverted prescription drugs and

sold to street-level peddlers, said the official.

The NCB officials gathered information about his locations and the modus operandi. They also got details about a Gujarat-based person, who was supplying the consignments to the Bhiwandi-based accused, he said.

The NCB officials laid a trap at Bhiwandi and intercepted a vehicle carrying the CBCS consignment, he said.

During preliminary questioning, the documents shown by the members of the syndicate looked fake and upon search, 32 cartons containing 3,195 CBCS bottles were recovered, he said.

The NCB arrested both the prime accused along with other members of the syndicate. Among the prime accused is a Gujarat-based MD-Physician who has a medical facility in Surat, he said.

The physician had set up a firm for procurement of such drugs from manufacturing units based in North India, said the official.

## Veteran BJP leader and MP Girish Bapat passes away due to liver ailment



BJP veteran leader and Member of Parliament from Pune, Girish Bapat, passed away on Wednesday due to a liver ailment.

"Girish Bapat is admitted to the ICU at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital. He is critically ill and presently on life support treatment. "A team of doctors is monitoring him very closely," a hospital release said, as quoted by PTI.

The 72-year-old BJP leader,

suffering from breathing problems for the past few months, has been undergoing dialysis at the hospital.

During the Kasba Peth Assembly bypoll held recently, Bapat had guided BJP workers. He had visited a polling booth to cast his vote sitting in a wheelchair with a nasal cannula. Bapat had served as the MLA five times from the Kasba Peth constituency. He became Pune MP in 2019.

## Covid cases in Maha double in a day, XBB 1.16 dominant



Daily detection of Covid-19 cases in the state more than doubled on Tuesday in comparison with Monday's tally, showing a steady rise in transmission. Experts said the recombinant subvariant XBB 1.16, which was isolated in the first week of March by genomic scientists from Maharashtra, is

responsible for 60% of the cases. The subvariant has also been linked with a death -though not with increased severity. On Tuesday, Maharashtra reported 450 new cases of coronavirus, the highest number in 152 days. The last time the state recorded such a high count was on October 27 at 972 cases.

## Bombay HC today dismissed WB CM Mamata Banerjee's application

The Bombay high court on Wednesday dismissed West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's application to quash the complaint against her for allegedly insulting the National anthem during her visit to Mumbai last year. The complaint was filed



against her by BJP leader Vivekanand Gupta

## 4 lakh marriage certificates issued by BMC since 2016 now available on DigiLocker app

Nearly 4 lakh marriage registration certificates issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) since 2016 are now accessible through the DigiLocker mobile app, the Mumbai civic body said on Tuesday.

Marriage registration certificate is considered as an important personal document for married people as it is required

for passports, visas and many other government papers.

The BMC said it started marriage registrations in 2010 and the online service for the same was made available to citizens from January 2016.

As of today, 3,80,494 marriages have been registered with the corporation, said the BMC in a release. These documents will be available on the DigiLocker mobile app, it said.

Several documents in DigiLocker have the same official and legal status as the original physical documents issued by various authorities. "Henceforth, there will be no need to carry the hard copy of marriage registration certificate," the release said, adding that it aims to reduce the burden on citizens and make it easier for them to easily access this important document.

## 18% hike in Mumbai-Pune Expressway toll from April 1

The toll for vehicles on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, the first access-controlled road of the country, will increase by 18 percent from April 1, officials of the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) said.

A senior MSRDC official said on Tuesday that though the toll increases by six percent annually, it is implemented cumulatively at 18 percent after every three years,



as laid down in a government notification of August 9, 2004.

The new toll will be Rs 320 for four-wheelers like cars and jeeps

instead of the current Rs 270, and Rs 495 for vehicles like mini-bus and tempos instead of the current Rs 420, another official said.

## Nation

# Govt doctors and faculty members of medical colleges goes on a day strike against Right to Health Bill



Medical services remained crippled in Rajasthan on Wednesday after government doctors and faculty members in medical colleges went on a one-day strike in solidarity with private doctors agitating against the Right to Health Bill. Emergency services have been exempted from the strike. General patients faced trouble in getting treatment in government as well as private institutes.

Ajay Chaudhary, president,

in-service doctors association, said government doctors have gone on a mass leave on Wednesday to boycott work in support of the movement against the Right to Health Bill (RTH). He said doctors are working in emergencies. In Rajasthan, private doctors are demanding withdrawal of the Bill passed in the state assembly last Tuesday.

According to the Bill, every resident of the state will have the right to emergency treatment and care "without prepayment" at any

"public health institution, health care establishment and designated health care centres".

Meanwhile, the state government has warned of strict action against the doctors and government staffers going on leave without prior approval. Iqbal Khan, joint secretary, health department, had on Tuesday issued an order to medical college principals directing them to ensure that medical services in OPD, IPD, ICU, emergency and maternity wards were not affected and to take disciplinary action against the doctors going on leave without approval.

Chaudhary, however, asserted that there was no impact of the order on the striking professionals. It is the duty of the state to issue such orders in order to make its own arrangements, but government doctors all over the state are on mass leave and have boycotted work, he said. Apart from them, resident doctors are also on strike. PTI

# NCP leader Mohammad Faizal P P membership has been restored after disqualification for conviction in criminal case



The Lok Sabha Secretariat on Wednesday restored the membership of NCP leader Mohammad Faizal P P, who was disqualified from the lower house in January following his conviction in a criminal case with a 10-year jail term.

Faizal, who represents Lakshadweep, had moved the Kerala High Court against the sessions court order and obtained a suspension of his conviction and sentence. "In view of order dated 25.01.2023 of the High Court of Kerala, the disqualification of Shri Mohammed Faizal P. P., notified vide Gazette Notification no. 21/4(1)/2023/TO(B)

dated the 13th January, 2023 in terms of the provisions of Article 102(1)(e) of the Constitution of India read with Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, has ceased to operate subject to further judicial pronouncements," the Lok Sabha Secretariat notification said.

The restoration of Faizal's membership comes ahead of a Supreme Court hearing in the matter. Faizal had moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday seeking revocation of his disqualification from Lok Sabha contending that the Kerala HC stayed his conviction in the attempt-to-murder case. PTI

# India reports new 2151 Covid cases in last 24 hours across the country



A total of new 2151 Covid cases were recorded in the last 24 hours across the country with a daily positive rate of 1.51 per cent, an official statement said on Wednesday, adding that 11,336 doses of vaccines were administered in the last 24 hours.

According to the release, 1,42,497 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of tests conducted so far to 92.13 crores.

It stated further that a total of 1,222 recoveries were made from the virus in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 4,41,66,925. It stated that

120.65 cr total vaccine doses (95.20 cr Second Dose and 22.86 cr Precaution Dose) have been administered so far under Nationwide Vaccination Drive. Further, India's active caseload currently stands at 11,903 with a rate of 0.03 per cent per day and with a recovery rate currently standing at 98.78%.

"Antibiotics should not be used unless there is clinical suspicion of bacterial infection. The possibility of coinfection of COVID-19 with other endemic infections must be considered. Systemic corticosteroids are not indicated in mild disease," revised guidelines said. ANI

# SC refuses urgent hearing on plea against Calcutta HC order for not interfering in WB panchayat polls

The Supreme Court Wednesday refused urgent hearing on an appeal challenging the March 28 order of the Calcutta High Court declining to interfere with the West Bengal panchayat election process at this stage. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, and justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala took note of the submissions by senior advocate P S

Patwalia that the election notification may be out if the appeal is not heard urgently. The bench said as the matter was not in the day's mentioning list, it may be mentioned again later.

The apex court will resume functioning on April 5 after festival holidays and week-offs. The senior advocate said the high court passed the impugned order on Tuesday and the appeal is filed

on Wednesday. "Same rule for all (lawyers). No unlisted mentioning today," said the bench.

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday refused to interfere with the West Bengal panchayat election process at this stage, which is to be held by May, while holding that there is a substance in petitioner Suvendu Adhikari's contention over the seat reservation criteria used for the polls. PTI

# ECI announced schedule for the Karnataka Assembly polls

The Election Commission of India announced the schedule for the Karnataka Assembly elections. The polling would take place in a single phase on May 10, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Wednesday. The counting of votes will be done on May 13, the CEC said in a press conference here.

Detailing the data of the

electors, the CEC said that there are a total of 5.21 crores in the state and the number of 100 plus voters is 16,976. He informed that over 58,000 polling stations would be set up across the state.

"There are 224 Assembly constituencies of which 36 are reserved for the SCs and 15 for the STs. The total electorates in the state are 5,21,73,579 crores

of which males are 2.62 crores and females are 2.59 crores. The total number of 80 plus electors is 12.15 lakhs. It is an increase of 32 per cent from 2018. It also includes 16,976 proud electors who are 100 plus. The number of persons with disabilities (PWDs) has increased to 5.55 lakhs. This is an increase of close to 150 per cent," Kumar said. ANI.

World

# Myanmar military dissolves Aung San Suu Kyi's political party



Myanmar's military-controlled election commission said that the ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party will be dissolved for failing to re-register under a new electoral law, Al Jazeera reported citing state television.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) party was among 40 political parties that were unable to meet the ruling military's registration deadline for an election, Al Jazeera reported citing

Myawaddy TV. Earlier in January, the Myanmar military gave two months to political parties to register under a strict new electoral law before fresh elections which they have promised to hold. However, the opponents have said that the elections will neither be free nor fair.

The NLD has said it would not contest in the elections and called it illegitimate. Bo Bo Oo, one of the elected lawmakers from Suu Kyi's party, said, "We

absolutely do not accept that an election will be held at a time when many political leaders and political activists have been arrested and the people are being tortured by the military."

In November 2020, the NLD secured victory in Myanmar's parliamentary elections. However, less than three months later, the Myanmar military carried out a coup and imprisoned Aung San Suu Kyi.

Meanwhile, the Myanmar army justified the coup and said that there was massive poll fraud. However, the independent election observers did not find any major irregularities.

Aung San Suu Kyi is serving a prison sentence which totals 33 years. She has been convicted in a series of politically tainted prosecutions brought by the military, as per the Al Jazeera report.

# Ruling parties in Nepal agree on power sharing, Cabinet expansion likely on Thursday

Nepal's ruling coalition on Wednesday agreed on a power-sharing deal, paving the way for Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to expand his Cabinet.

The top leaders of the ten ruling parties held two rounds of meetings at the Prime Minister's official residence at Baluwatar to reach an agreement on the distribution of ministries among various political parties. Prachanda is likely to expand his Cabinet on Thursday following the deal.

Power sharing and the distribution of ministerial portfo-

lios had been major bottlenecks among the members of the ruling alliance as the demand for Cabinet posts was exceeding the number of ministries available, according to political observers.

Prime Minister Prachanda, Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba, and CPN-Unified Socialist president Madhav Kumar Nepal among others were present during the meeting.

"An agreement has been reached among the top leaders of the ten ruling parties in principle over the distribution of ministries," according to sources close

to the Prime Minister.

The ruling parties have also agreed on the common minimum programme presented by Prime Minister Prachanda, the sources said. Among the ten parties, which took part in the talks on Wednesday, nine are likely to join the council of ministers.

The Nepali Congress and CPN-Maoist Centre will get eight and five Cabinet positions respectively while CPN-Unified Socialist and Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal will get two posts each, as per the deal.

# Pakistan court issues non-bailable arrest warrant for Imran Khan in judge threat case

Pakistan's Islamabad court on Wednesday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan in the case of threatening a judge, Geo News reported. Islamabad court's civil judge announced the verdict rejecting Khan's petition seeking the exemption from today's hearing.

The case dates back to August 20, 2022 when the PTI chairman

had condemned the police as well as the judiciary over the alleged custodial torture of Shahbaz Gill and announced that his party would file cases against then-Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DIG and Additional District and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry.

Initially, Imran was booked under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Besides, Islamabad High Court

(IHC) also initiated contempt of court proceedings against him, according to Geo News.

Meanwhile, today in the hearing, Khan's lawyers requested to retain his bailable arrest warrant as he was facing security threats.

"Imran Khan has security concerns, his life is in danger, the Islamabad High Court has also issued notices for withdrawing security from him," the PTI chief's counsel said.

# Several injured in stampedes as free flour distribution goes awry in Pakistan's Punjab



The spike in inflation has left millions of people across Pakistan struggling to even get a meal for one day. In a bid to lift the burden off low-income families, the government started distributing free flour bags but the unorganised distributions led to stampedes, ultimately resulting in deaths and injuries to people, Dawn reported.

In Punjab province's Muzaffargarh, at least seven people were injured on Tuesday after a flour distribution centre collapsed due to the huge rush of people.

Among the seven, four were stated to be in critical condition. The poor management by the administration resulted in a stampede, prompting the police to take charge. Besides the wall collapse incident, there are reports of police personnel using batons on people at a free flour centre, according to Dawn. In the Jatoi area, protesting the poor management by the administration at the Point Moon Marriage Hall, people blocked

a road, raising slogans against the SHO, Jatoi, for his abusive behaviour towards them at the flour centre

Meanwhile, in the Okara region, four women were injured and two fell unconscious at the free flour supply point at Depalpur.

A stampede occurred due to the heavy rush of people at the centre. Four women fell to the ground and suffered injuries while others ran over them. The police rescued the injured women lying on the ground.

Later, rescuers provided them with first aid. In total, especially in Punjab province, an old woman and a man died while 56 people, including 45 women, were injured in stampedes at free flour centres in Sahiwal, Bahawalpur, Muzaffargarh and Okara districts of the province, as the mismanagement in distribution continues since the government announced free disbursement and people started scrambling to distribution points, reported Dawn.

# UK to house illegal migrants in disused military sites

The UK government on Wednesday unveiled new plans to house illegal migrants in disused military sites, with the first tranche of such locations tabled in the House of Commons as part of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's proposed "Stop the Boats" crackdown against dangerous crossings facilitated by people smugglers.

UK Immigration minister Robert Jenrick told MPs of plans to house migrants at former Royal Air Force (RAF) sites in Essex, Lincolnshire and East Sussex in

England. The move is intended to tackle the "eye-watering 2.3 billion pounds a year bill" for hotels used to house asylum seekers who land on UK shores.

"I have said before that we have to suffuse our entire system with deterrence, and this must include how we house illegal migrants. So today the government are announcing the first tranche of sites we will set up to provide basic accommodation at scale," Jenrick said in a Commons statement.

# CUET (UG): A massive step for Education



Dr Mohsin Uddin

Columnist

Uniformity is the most significant benefit of the Common University Entrance Test [CUET (Undergraduate) - 2023], which will be administered for undergraduate admission. It will provide a common platform and equal opportunities to students across the country, especially those from remote areas and help establish better connect with the Central Universities. A single examination will enable the students to cover a wide outreach and be part of the admissions process for various Central Universities. This step is very useful and beneficial for underprivileged students seeking admission to higher education.

This CUET is being held for admission to undergraduate programmes at Central Universities and many others state and deemed universities are also planning to adopt it for the forthcoming academic session. Students seeking admission to graduation will now get admission on the basis of marks obtained in the CUET and not on the basis of their 12th-class marks or grades. Earlier, admission to universities was done on the basis of 12th-class marks, grades or university entrance test.

The Common University Entrance Test will provide an equal opportunity to everyone to take admission anywhere in India at participating universities or those that adopt it. This will bring innovative change to the field of higher education. The CUET for the undergraduate programmes will be based on the domain subjects of the class 12th syllabus from this year. Currently, this entrance examination

is held once a year, but from the next academic session, it may be conducted twice a year.

The first part of the entrance test will be a general test, while the second part will test the knowledge of the subject concerned. The first part of the exam will be in 13 languages, and the candidate will be able to choose any one of them. Students who were earlier lagging behind in such examinations due to language will now get an opportunity to take the entrance test in their mother tongue. In the National Education Policy 2020, the most importance has been given to education in the mother tongue. As per Articles 344(1) and 351 of the Indian Constitution, apart from the 22 languages recorded in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, there are many other languages that meet the day-to-day needs of the concerned linguistic community at the local level.

The opportunity of a Common University Entrance Test in 13 languages is a big step towards fulfilling the option given by the Government of India in the National Education Policy 2020 for school education and higher education in many mother tongues of the country. These languages include Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The second part of the Common University Entrance Test will be elective, and students will be able to opt for a language other than the languages of the first part. These languages include Arabic, Bodo, Chinese, Dogri, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Persian, Russian, Santhali, Sindhi, Spanish, Tibetan and Sanskrit.

Like graduation, a CUET will be conducted for admission to postgraduate programmes as well. In



the previous system, neither a uniform curriculum nor equal educational opportunities were implemented in the country. The National Education Policy 2020 has taken concrete initiatives in this direction. The CUET is a part of that. The National Education Policy 2020 has been implemented, but its success will depend on how successful it is in implementing a uniform curriculum across the country and providing equal opportunities for education to all. When all the students are studying the same course, only then will they be able to move ahead at the same level.

The central government has to keep in mind that the students and learners from forest dwellers and remote areas studying in government schools are not getting the same opportunities for learning that are available to the students of convent, boarding, missionary, public, residential or other similar schools. This gap can be bridged by giving equal opportunity to all students and creating a common

curriculum. Almost all the central, state and deemed universities have implemented a Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS). There are two semesters in an academic year, and 30 hours per semester are prescribed for one credit. CBCS allows students to choose inter-disciplinary, intra-disciplinary, skill-oriented papers (even from other disciplines according to their learning needs, interests and aptitude) and provides more flexibility for students.

The National Policy on Education also provides for the freedom to join the programme or exit or reentry as well in any year, even in the five-year undergraduate programme. Four-year graduates will also be eligible for admission to a Ph.D. However, the candidate should have a minimum score of 75 percent in the aggregate or its equivalent grade on a point scale, wherever the grading system is followed. A uniform education system is the need of the hour. The Common University Entrance Test is the big step in higher education.

# Entertainment



Actor John Leguizamo, known for his roles in "Moulin Rouge!" and "Carlito's Way", believes his upcoming series "The Power" reflects the changing gender dynamics in Hollywood where more women are taking up leadership roles.

The actor said women in Hollywood have made huge strides despite the many obstacles they encounter every day. "I mean, look at the women who were nominated as directors this year at the Oscars, non-existent. And yet women are moving into areas of power, more directing, more executives," Leguizamo told Agency in an interview. It is beautiful to see when women are running things and we need more of it, more inclusion, the 62-year-old actor added.

"Hollywood is grappling with the fact that white people are only 59 per cent of the population of the US but they have 100 per cent of the roles and the executives. And now they have to start divvying up power and this series encapsulates that. "You see you teenage girls in South Africa, Atlanta, Seattle and London; white girls, black girls, Latin girls, Asian girls; getting power and being able to take charge of their lives in a way that needs to exist in the real world, but doesn't really exist in the real world yet." Leguizamo's character of Rob is a "new type of male", said the actor, known for featuring in movies such as "Romeo + Juliet", "Chef" and "John Wick" franchise.

"We all crafted this character to create this new type of male. What a lot of guys are going through and should be going through is being able to give up a little bit of power because men have had privilege. "Also to be a man who can support a woman who's more powerful than him, more ambitious than him, whose career is more important than his and still be okay with himself. I think that's a wonderful type of new masculinity that we all need to start embracing," he added.PTI

## Actor John Leguizamo says, "Upcoming series reflect changing gender dynamics in Hollywood"

### Hollywood star Jeremy Renner to make his first appearance after snow plow accident on April 11



Hollywood star Jeremy Renner is all set to appear in person at the 'Rennervations' world premiere, which will mark his first press event after the snow plow accident, reported Variety. The premiere will take place on April 11 at the Regency Village Theater in Los Angeles.

The actor met with an accident on January 1 after he tried to help remove a family member's car from being stuck in the snow. The actor's snow plow ended up running him over and critically injuring him. According to Variety, a US-based news outlet, Renner was hospitalized for blunt chest trauma and orthopedic injuries at the start of January after his Sno-Cat, a large snow plow that weighs at least 14,330 pounds, ran him over. The actor was trying to help a family member out of the snow near his home in Lake Tahoe when the Sno-Cat crushed him.

Renner later announced on Instagram that he damaged over 30 bones in the collision. Talking about the series, Renner said, "I've been on this journey for many years, and I started in my community by building vehicles for people in need. But a few years ago, I thought, 'How can I plus this up and create a bigger impact on a whole community?' And that's what this show does. This is one of my biggest passions and it's a driving force in my recovery, and I can't wait for the world to see it," reported Variety.ANI

### Actor Amitabh Bachchan treats his fans with new picture of rare view of sky with 5 planets aligned together



Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Tuesday beautifully captured the rare view of the sky with five planets aligned together. Taking to Instagram, Amitabh treated fans with a video of five planets in one frame.

In the video, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Uranus are all are beautifully aligned in a straight line. Sharing the video, he wrote, "What A Beautiful Sight...! 5 Planets Aligned Together Today... Beautiful And Rare... Hope You Witnessed It too."

As soon as the video was posted it garnered more than eight million views and 2 million likes. The members from the industry also chimed in the comment section.

Shilpa Shetty wrote, "Wow." Sanjay Dutt's wife Maanayata wrote, "Amazing!" Siddhanth Kapoor dropped a comment, "Amazing this was so so beautiful , captured this by Stellarium this amazing App. I posted this too sometime back." ANI

### Suhana Khan gets flying kiss from her rumoured boyfriend Agastya Nanda

What's brewing between Suhana Khan and Agastya Nanda is one question that has been on everyone's mind, especially those who actively follow Bollywood news. A video has been doing the rounds on the internet in which megastar Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya is seen blowing a kiss to superstar Shah Rukh Khan and wife Gauri Khan's daughter Suhana Khan.

Suhana and Agastya on Wednesday night attended Tania Shroff's birthday party in Mumbai. As Suhana was about to leave the venue, Agastya, Tania, and her boyfriend-actor Ahan Shetty came to drop her off in her car. Agastya gave Suhana a flying kiss while she was getting into her car. The particular moment was caught on camera by the paps.

Suhana wore a stunning dress, while Agastya was clad in a black T-shirt and blue denim. The rumours of the two dating started when their picture from a vacation went viral on social media. On Agastya's birthday, Suhana dropped an adorable picture with him. ANI

