



Ajit Pawar dismisses reports of planning meeting with MLAs on Apr 18

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Afternoon

VOIC E

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NEWS & VISION OF CITY

Volume: 15, Issue: 192

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023 MUMBAI

08 PAGES, ₹ 2/-

RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332

www.afternoonvoice.com

Shinde Govt faces Oppn heat over sunstroke deaths at Maha award event toll rises to 13

The Eknath Shinde-BJP government in Maharashtra on Monday faced criticism over the sunstroke-linked death of people at a mega award function in Navi Mumbai, held in an open ground under a scorching sun, with the Opposition demanding a probe into organisation of the programme as the toll rose to 13, while eight patients still remained hospitalised. While the Congress sought registration of a case of culpable homicide and said the govern-

ment should quit, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) sought a probe into the tragedy. Tens of thousands of people had gathered in a 306-acre ground in the Kharghar area in Raigad district on Sunday for presentation of the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' award to spiritual leader and social reformer Appasaheb Dharmadhikari. The nearest weather station to the spot had recorded a maximum temperature of 38 degrees Celsius. Eleven people attending the event died due to sunstroke

on Sunday, while two patients undergoing treatment succumbed later, taking the toll to 13, officials said on Monday. The deceased included nine women and four men, while eight people were still undergoing treatment after suffering from sunstroke at the award function, they said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, his deputy Devendra Fadnavis and Union minister Kapil Patil were among those present on the occasion. Shinde termed

the deaths as "very unfortunate" and said the kin of the deceased will be given a compensation of Rs 5 lakh. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ajit Pawar sought an inquiry into how the award event was organised during noon time when the temperature was very high. Pawar visited the MGM Hospital at Kamothe in Navi Mumbai late Sunday night and enquired about the health of people undergoing treatment after suffering from sunstroke.

Government should be made accountable for Pulwama attack and UP Gangster's killing

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Satya Pal Malik, the former governor of Kashmir, gave an explosive interview to a news channel and exposed the central government about the Pulwama attack in which 40 Indian soldiers were killed in February 2019. This attack was BJP's political agenda, Modi asked votes in the name of martyred jawans but sadly he let them come in casualty. This made headlines, though the mainstream media was quiet but the social media and other parallel media houses made a lot of noise. Indian educated people could not digest the injustice done to Indian soldiers. The nation was stunned and everyone was talking about the Pulwama attack. Mallik also mentioned how the Central Reserve Police Force asked for the jet

to transport its workforces, but the home minister deprived them of basic facilities. Besides Modi, Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval also told Malik not to speak, which forced him to understand that the intent was to put the blame on Pakistan for political gains. This is what Mallik told Karan Thapar.

The next day, we forgot this news because the mainstream media gave us big breaking news on Gangster Atiq Ahmed and his brother's live killing. The same media who was muted on Pulwama has a series of prime time debates on Atiq Ahmed's killing with all sorts of justification.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Government should be made accountable for Pulwama attack and UP Gangster's killing

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In presence of huge media and police personnel Atiq was shot at least nine times in his shocking murder on camera outside a hospital in Uttar Pradesh.

The past couple of months saw Atiq Ahmed being brought to Prayagraj for court hearings and then taken back to Gujarat, closely chased by mediapersons.

The MLA had repeatedly alleged that the Uttar Pradesh police planned to gun him down in a staged encounter. After a court date recently, he told the media, "It's because of you that I am safe."

In presence of huge media and police personnel Atiq was shot at least nine times in his shocking murder on camera outside a hospital in Uttar Pradesh. There was no counter firing from police, the shooters were silently waiting to be caught by UP police. There was big drama; on social media some people were celebrating the killings making Yogi a hero.

Five bullets were reportedly recovered from the body of Ashraf Ahmed, also shot dead outside the hospital in Prayagraj. Atiq Ahmed was shot once on the head and eight times on the chest and back, the autopsy has found. The headshot was captured on live TV as three shooters, all arrested now. Atiq Ahmed, a former MLA and MP, faced at least 100 criminal cases. He was in the headlines since February when Umesh Pal, a lawyer and a witness in the 2005 murder of BSP MLA Raju Pal, was gunned down outside his home in Prayagraj.

Atiq Ahmed, the prime accused in the BSP MLA's murder, was also named a suspect in Umesh Pal's murder. In 2019, Atiq Ahmed was at a Gujarat prison where he had been transferred after his alleged role in a businessman's kidnapping. The past couple of months saw Atiq Ahmed being brought to Prayagraj for court hearings and then taken back to Gujarat, closely chased by mediapersons. The gangster's 19-year-old son Asad, also an accused in the Umesh Pal murder case, was shot dead in an encounter by Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force before Atiq gets killed. The MLA had repeatedly alleged that the Uttar Pradesh police planned to gun him down in a staged encounter. After a court date recently, he told the media, "It's because of you that I am safe." Fatefully, the gangster was talking to the press when his killers, also camouflaged as journalists, opened fire. It was a message to the gangsters and media persons that no one can save anyone's life if someone decides to eliminate them.

The Uttar Pradesh government came under strong criticism over glaring lapses in the prisoners' security and the way police responded to the shooting. Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath has ordered a high-level probe into the incident. UP police have formed a three-member Special Investigation Team to probe the killings but what is the point when three key people of one family got killed in one go? Do we really need law and order and judiciary? If someone is declared as a gangster by the cops it's easy to gun them down in broad daylight.

And look at mainstream media, they do not have any remorse for Pulwama attack and Jawans killing but they are more interested in local gangster's killing. It looks like the notorious gangster Atiq and his brother are more important and newsworthy for this section of Medias than the lives of our 40 brave soldiers who lost their lives in Pulwama allegedly due to negligence by the government. Why are no media discussing the revelation made by former Kashmir governor and BJP leader Sathyapal Malik on Pulwama attack and why no media are asking why the government is silent on his revelation? Why did no media dare to speak to Mallik and dig for the truth? Why did the media give a cold shoulder to the Pulwama attack?

Atiq and Ashraf were handcuffed—presumably with due permission from the court and following standard operating procedures as laid out in DK Basu vs West Bengal case. In both the cases be it the shootout of gangsters and the negligence of the government in Pulwama attack, the state and central government should be made accountable.



Volume No. 15 | Issue No. 192

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Voices



Letters to the Editor

Eid is about sharing happiness and joy

Eid-ul-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan. All Muslim countries celebrate Eid as a sign of unity and values. Starting the day with namaaz and a sweet dish called 'sheer khurma', men, women and children wear new clothes, while women along with their new outfits, also wear bangles and apply mehendi. The children receive blessings and gifts from elders called Eidi. Being happy and thankful to the Almighty, we should not forget the people who are not celebrating Eid such as policemen, housemaids and gate keepers who do not get leave from their employers. We should share our happiness with them too, as Eid is all about sharing happiness and joy.

Jubel D'Cruz

80% rise in COVID cases in last two weeks is cause for concern

80% rise in COVID cases in Maharashtra in the last fortnight is not just cause for concern but ring alarm bells as far as the govt is concerned. Mumbai itself is reporting 200 cases daily but the actual numbers may be in thousands as only a small percentage of the population gets tested whenever the ailment gets serious.

Time for the Center in general & Maharashtra govt in particular to set up a war zone to deal with the alarming rise in virus cases & more so when COVID globally is threatening to revisit the old times when the pandemic was at its peak. Pulmonologist clinics too are flooded with chest & lung ailments which should not be taken lightly by the govt. Medicines, vaccines as well as covid Centers should be kept ready so that the situation is under control if cases rise exponentially as was the case the last time around!

S.N.Kabra

Uniform rules set by ICC

Former New Zealand captain and now head coach in England, Brendon Mccullum, who won 10 out of 12 Tests for New Zealand, is currently in the limelight for appearing in an online betting ad. The England and Wales Cricket Board will investigate whether Brendan Mccullum breached England's anti-corruption and anti-corruption laws or regulations.

An anti-betting organization in New Zealand has filed a complaint with the England and Wales Cricket Board against Brendan mccullum for his involvement in betting advertising. The England and Wales Cricket Board rules that directly or indirectly participating in the advertising of betting companies is an offence. Brendan Mccullum may be banned for that. Rules like Wales Cricket Board should be made by ICC or should be made stricter if they are. Because online betting is also rampant. Celebrity cricketers encourage cricket lovers to play card games like rummy in advertisements or encourage them to form teams. ICC should make strict rules like England and Wales Cricket Board.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Yoga is a healthy option to control aging

Every day after you wake up, the health of your body sets the tone for the day. Any ailment in the body can put a damper on your enthusiasm and become a hindrance in performing daily tasks. Many yoga asanas can help you stay physically healthy, but that's not the only prerequisite for holistic well-being. Your mental health is equally crucial. As you age you can find ageing is not becoming a burden for you.

Population ageing is occurring worldwide and presents challenges from a public health perspective, in terms of the increased risk of chronic disease and disability with increasing age. Yoga not only makes you fit and healthy physically but also makes your mind more active and strong. It improves your immunity, gives you a toned body, flushes out the toxins, improves circulation of blood and has many other health benefits. This low-impact practice stretches and strengthens your body. It is also effective in making your skin healthy and ease wrinkles. There are many yoga poses that will slow down the aging process and make your body look younger. So, here are some of the yoga asanas to turn back that clock.

It is said that aging is a privilege denied to many. Yet it can be challenging to gracefully acknowledge the many changes that accompany an increase in age, especially the changes that are difficult to see but easy to feel, including stiffness, aches, and lack of stability. The inevitable aging process affects each of us in various ways, yet regular movement, including the practice of yoga, can help slow the effects of time. And it doesn't matter where you're starting from or at what age you begin.

If we want to create lasting habits of health, wellness, happiness, and longevity, all we have to do is support the synaptic connections that will fix those habits as part of who we are. How do we do that? Not only by making choices



and setting intentions and goals, but also by identifying what is truly important in our lives and making those things our priority, and consciously remembering those priorities when it comes to decision making. Yoga, one of the world's oldest health systems, is receiving new attention for claims that it can contribute to healthy aging. Until recently, scientific evidence for its efficacy has relied heavily on small and poorly-designed research, but this is changing.

Multiple, well-designed studies provide data showing that yoga practice has positive effects on cellular aging, mobility, balance, mental health, and prevention of cognitive decline—all areas of concern for older adults. Since the cost of implementing yoga-based community and home-based interventions is low—policymakers are also eyeing yoga practice as a cost-effective way to reduce medical costs and improve outcomes among a growing aging population. This commentary reviews the evidence for both physical and mental health benefits from yoga, as well as concerns about injuries that have been associated with certain types of yoga practice. It reveals a surprising range of yoga programs and difficulty levels that provide opportunities for almost anyone to participate and gain health benefits with practice.

Yoga can provide benefits for

just about anyone. As for older adults, the benefits that come with yoga can improve how you feel, how well your muscles and joints work, and your overall health and well-being. If you're an older adult considering yoga, start slow and find a program that suits your fitness level. In today's busy society, yoga provides an escape from the chaos and allows you to reconnect with yourself. Yoga is a great way to exercise and stay healthy and is available for anyone whatever your capability and mobility. Yoga is especially important as our bodies age, helping maintain flexibility and muscle strength, as well as keeping our minds focused and sharp. If you're interested in yoga for those aged over 50, and are wondering about the health benefits of yoga, we've put together a guide to the 10 health benefits of yoga for the over 50s. Let us not bask in the past glory but continue to work hard on basics and do good in the world of ageing. And that is the best way to relieve tension. keep fit, help to get good sleep and hunger and lead a peaceful life.

- C K Subramaniam

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.)

Ajit Pawar dismisses reports of planning meeting with MLAs on Apr 18



Amid intense speculation in Maharashtra's political circles about his growing proximity with the ruling BJP, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar on Monday dismissed as false the reports that he has called a meeting of MLAs on Tuesday. Ajit Pawar also said he had no scheduled events to attend on Monday amid reports that he had called off his engagements in Pune. "I was present at MGM Hospital

in Kharagar, Navi Mumbai, on Monday to offer condolences to the families of the deceased and to provide comfort to those affected by heat during the 'Maharashtra Bhushan' Award ceremony on Sunday. I had no scheduled events (to attend) on Monday as I am still in Mumbai," the opposition leader said in a statement. The NCP leader said he will be in Mumbai on Tuesday. "I will be present at my office in Vidhan Bhavan for regular work. Reports are being circulated in a section of the media saying I have called a meeting of MLAs on Tuesday. These are completely false reports. I have not called any such meetings of MLAs or officials," he said.

Kharghar Sunstroke deaths: MNS chief slams Maha govt for 'political selfishness'

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray on Monday slammed the Eknath Shinde government over the deaths at the Maharashtra Bhushan award ceremony in Kharghar in Navi Mumbai a day earlier.

Thirteen people died and several others are hospitalised due to sunstroke and other health complications after several lakh people, mostly followers of awardee Appasaheb Dharmadhikari, attended the event under the scorching summer sun in the sprawling International Corporate Park on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters after

visiting patients from the event at a hospital in Navi Mumbai, Thackeray said the event was held in such an elaborate manner with a massive crowd due to "political selfishness".

The award could have been given to Appasaheb Dharmadhikari at Raj Bhavan considering the oppressive summer heat, he said.

The state government could have averted the deaths by not holding the event in such a manner, he said.

"The incident is unfortunate but who do you hold responsible for it? It was not done intentionally," the MNS chief added.

HC dismisses two pleas against Maha govt's reversal of BMC ward delimitation

The Bombay High Court on Monday dismissed petitions filed by two former councillors challenging the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government's ordinance reversing the delimitation of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) wards from 236 to 227.

A division bench of Justices S B Shukre and M W Chandwani said it found no substance in the petitions and hence, they stand dismissed.

In November 2021, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government led by Uddhav Thackeray had decided to increase the number of wards from 227 to 236.

However, the Shinde-led Shiv Sena-BJP government in August issued an ordinance bringing the

number back to 227.

Former BMC councillors Raju Pednekar and Sameer Desai in their petitions challenged the Shinde government's decision and claimed that it sought to put the clock back.

The petitioners claimed that the reversal of the delimitation from 236 to 227 was arbitrary and could lead to a delay in the civic elections.

The state government opposed the petitions alleging that they were filed with "ulterior motives" and ought to be dismissed with exemplary cost.

The government further said that it felt that the number of wards need not be increased, as the population rise was miniscule.

Aarey forest SC pulls up Mumbai Metro for trying to overreach court's jurisdiction imposes Rs 10 lakh fine



The Supreme Court on Monday came down heavily on Mumbai Metro for trying to overreach its earlier order that permitted felling of only 84 trees in Aarey forest for a car shed project and directed it to pay Rs 10 lakh as penalty. A bench comprising Chief Justice

D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala said it was improper on Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited's (MMRCL) part to move the tree authority for felling of any trees in excess of 84. The top court, however, permitted the company to remove 177 trees from Aarey

forest, saying a stay on tree felling would lead to the public project being brought to a standstill which is not desirable. "We are constrained to observe that MMRCL has made an attempt to overreach this court... It was improper on part of MMRCL to move tree authority to fell any trees in excess of 84. Instead, the correct course of action would have been to move this court. It would be necessary for us to penalise MMRCL for its conduct. "MMRCL within a period of two weeks should provide an amount of 10 lakh to the conservator of forests. The conservator shall ensure that all afforestation which has been directed is completed," the bench said.

Five bookies held for IPL betting at Wankhede stadium

Five persons were arrested on Monday for allegedly indulging in online betting during an IPL match at Wankhede stadium here, police said. The police apprehended the accused when a match between Mumbai Indians and Kolkata Knight Riders was underway at the stadium on Sunday, an official said. The accused were using

their smart phone to place bets and had procured a SIM card using forged documents, he said. The police also recovered cash, match tickets, a SIM card, nine mobile phones among other materials from their possession, the official said. A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Gambling Act has been registered, he added.

Maha sees 505 COVID-19 cases including 131 in Mumbai no death

Maharashtra on Monday reported 505 COVID-19 cases, which took the tally to 81,56,344, while the death toll stood unchanged at 1,48,479, a health department official said. On Sunday, Maharashtra had reported 650 COVID-19 cases and two fatalities, he pointed out. Mumbai circle led with 262 cases, followed by

90 in Pune circle, 86 in Aurangabad circle, 39 in Akola circle, 12 in Nashik circle, seven in Kolhapur circle, six in Latur circle and three in Aurangabad circle, he said. The addition to the state's tally included 131 cases in Mumbai, which took the infection count in the country's financial capital to 11,59,759, while the toll stood at 19,754. The recov-

ery count increased by 334 in the state to touch 80,01,778, leaving Maharashtra with an active caseload of 6,087, he said. So far, 8,68,01,628 coronavirus tests have been conducted in the state, including 9,616 in the last 24 hours, comprising 7,276 at government labs, 2,185 at private labs and 155 by self-testing kits.

Nation

NCPCR moves to SC on allowing adoption to same-sex couple is akin to 'endangering' children



couple. NCPCR apprehended that allowing the adoption of a same-sex couple is akin to endangering the children. Moreover, in the current batch of matters before the Court where first the validity of same-sex marriage needs to be considered, to bring up children and their adoption by same-sex couples is pre-mature, NCPCR submitted.

NCPCR further submitted that giving children to be raised by persons, who have issues would be like exposing children to struggle just for experimentation and the same is not in the interest of children as every individual has the same human rights and it applies to children for being raised safely. "It is most respectfully submitted that children may be saved by this Court from being subjected to experimentation or being treated as "subject", NCPCR said. ANI

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has moved an intervening application in the Supreme Court on the various petitions relating to marriage equality and said that allowing the adoption to same-sex couples is akin to endangering children and could impact kids understanding of gender roles and gender identity. NCPCR has urged

the top court to allow it to intervene and assist the court while hearing various petitions related to marriage equality.

NCPCR, in its application, urged the top court that first a proper legislative system needs to be adopted regarding same-sex couples and then bringing children into the equation would be beneficial for both children as well as members of the same-sex

Bathinda military station firing: Army jawan killed 4 soldiers over "personal enmity," says Punjab Police



Punjab Police on Monday said that a preliminary investigation into the April 12 incident at the Bhatinda Military Station indicated that the gunner who shot dead four jawans in their sleep did so due to "personal enmity." Addressing a press conference here, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Bathinda, Gulneet Khurana said that the Army gunner had on "sustained interrogation" confessed to stealing an INSAS rifle and to killing four of his colleagues.

"After sustained interrogation,

we found that one weapon has been stolen and that was used to kill the jawans. Later, one individual from the Artillery unit was detained and during interrogation, he confessed to the Police his involvement in stealing an INSAS rifle and killing four of his colleagues. Initial investigations indicate that this was due to personal enmity," said SSP Bathinda.

The police official said that further investigation will be conducted in the case after taking remand of the accused. The SSP also said no other individual's involvement has been detected till now. ANI

Kerala train firing incident: Accused highly radicalised, watched Zakir Naik's videos, says SIT head



The Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has been probing the train arson incident of Kerala that resulted in the loss of three lives, on Monday said the accused is a "highly radicalised" person who reached the state to commit the crime in a pre-planned manner. ADGP (Law and Order), M R Ajith Kumar, who heads the SIT, said the accused Shahrukh Saifi used to watch radicalised videos of controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik and said provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, have been invoked

against him based on the scientific evidence collected.

The investigation team has invoked Section 16 of the UAPA which deals with punishment for terrorist acts. "We went to various states and based on scientific, documentary and oral evidence collected, conducted a comprehensive probe and decided to invoke the concerned provisions of UAPA. He is highly radicalised. He saw radicalised videos of Zakir Naik and others. He came here in a pre-planned manner to commit the crime," Kumar told the media here. PTI

Bihar hooch tragedy: Death toll reaches 22, govt announces compensation with caveat

After the death toll in the Motihari Hooch tragedy rose to 22, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday said that the state government would provide Rs 4 lakhs each to the families of the deceased, provided that they give an undertaking in favour of alcohol ban and against drinking liquor. "This is a sad incident. We'll provide Rs 4 lakhs to the families of the deceased, from the CM Relief Fund but they should provide in writing that they are in favour of an alcohol ban in the state and that they're against drinking alcohol," Nitish told reporters here.

When asked about the caste-based census, Kumar said, "We have been demanding to conduct the caste-based census. All parties in Bihar had the same view when we decided to have a caste-based census, which is currently being conducted in the state. I have also taken part in this. It is highly beneficial."



He added, "If the family members of those who have died by consuming spurious liquor after 2016, apply to the government, then we will provide them with a compensation of Rs 4 lakhs from the CM Relief Fund." On being asked about the killings of gangster-

turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother, Kumar said, "Police should have taken care of their security. UP government should think about the law and order in the state. The Court is there to provide justice, killing the criminals is never a solution." ANI

World

SpaceX Starship launch called off at the last minute



The first launch of SpaceX Starship was called off at the last minute on Monday after a pressurization issue arose in the first stage, reported CNN. The scheduled launch of the most powerful rocket ever constructed has been scrubbed after engineers could not troubleshoot a pressurization issue with the massive Super Heavy booster in time.

Engineers tried to trouble-

shoot a pressurization issue with the massive Super Heavy booster. But they couldn't quite figure it out in time, and today's launch has been scrubbed, reported CNN. The countdown clock had less than 10 minutes on it, with SpaceX engineer John Insprucker saying they would work to determine when they can make the next attempt.

SpaceX is letting the countdown clock run down a bit more

and run through a bit of a rehearsal for what they will do on the next launch attempt. They do have a launch window reserved for Tuesday opening at 7 am CT (8 am ET), but recycling will force them to wait a bit longer, at least 48 hours, reported CNN. They will put the rocket through what's called a "recycle" -- taking out the super-chilled fuel and preparing for another attempt. It was SpaceX's first attempt to launch its Starship rocket after years of testing. CEO Elon Musk described Starship as the vehicle that underpins SpaceX's founding purpose: sending humans to Mars for the first time. The inaugural flight test will complete nearly one full lap of the planet, ending with a splashdown off Hawaii. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which licenses commercial rocket launches, granted the company's request for an uncrewed flight test of the rocket Friday.

Sudan death toll nears 100 as clashes continue



The death toll from fighting between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has risen to 97, according to The Washington Post citing the Sudanese Doctors Union. As of early Monday, 97 civilians had been killed and nearly 600 had been injured in the violence.

The Central Committee of Sudan Doctors said Monday morning that stray artillery struck a hospital in the southern part of the capital, creating "a state of terror and panic," but that patients and staff were unharmed. Eyewitnesses in the capital city of Khartoum told CNN that fighting intensified after Sunday morning prayers, with loud noises and explosions heard through-

out the night. There have also been reports of battles hundreds of miles away in the eastern city of Port Sudan.

The armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been competing for power as political factions negotiate on forming a transitional government after a 2021 military coup.

The tensions stem from a disagreement between the military, headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, about how the paramilitary force should be integrated into the armed forces and what authority should oversee that process, according to Al Jazeera.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister arrives in India for trade talks

Russia's deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, who is also the country's Minister of Industry and Trade on Monday arrived in the national capital to co-chair the Intergovernmental Russian-Indian Commission, which is aimed at enhancing trade ties between the two countries.

Taking to Twitter, the Russian Embassy in India posted, "Denis Manturov arrived in the Republic of India on a working trip. On

April 17, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation - Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation Denis Manturov arrived on a two-day working visit to the Republic of India, New Delhi."

On the first day of his visit, Manturov will co-chair the 24th India-Russia Inter-governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)

UK PM Sunak faces parliamentary probe over wife Akshata's business interest

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing a watchdog inquiry under his parliamentary declaration of interest obligations related to a Budget policy that could benefit his wife, Akshata Murty, through her business interest in a childcare firm, it emerged on Monday.

The inquiry has been opened by the UK's Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, an inde-

pendent officer of the House of Commons in charge of looking at evidence if individual British members of Parliament are feared to have broken a rule under the 'Code of Conduct'.

The active inquiries on the watchdog's list include one opened on Sunak, 42, last Thursday under Paragraph 6 of the rules of conduct, as Downing Street said ministerial interests were "transparently declared".

China's rocket launch sent debris into sea, say Taiwan authorities



China launched a satellite into orbit with some rockets debris falling into a "no-fly zone" off the coast of northern Taiwan, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said adding that it did not pose a safety threat, reported FocusTaiwan. In a statement, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said that the forces had monitored the whole process of the rocket launch through joint intelligence and surveillance.

Notably, China informed Taiwan that a no-fly zone will be implemented north of the country the following week, NHK World reported, citing Taiwan's transportation ministry on April 11. The no-fly zone, located 85 nautical miles

north of Taiwan and within the Taipei Flight Information Region, was marked out for a 27-minute period from 9:30 a.m. to 9:57 a.m. Sunday because of the possibility of falling rocket debris, according to FocusTaiwan.

Earlier, China reportedly warned Taiwan's northern flight information zone of the upcoming airspace closure, to conduct aerospace activities in the area. China said the duration would be five hours per day from April 16-18.

However, it will be reduced to about half an hour on only April 16, following the complaint lodged by Taiwan's ministry, NHK World reported. The transportation ministry cautioned that the shutdown was inappropriate

and would provide significant and unnecessary safety hazards in its complaint against China.

China intends to block airspace over the high seas north of Taiwan, according to Taiwan's defence minister, who stated that defence officials will closely monitor Beijing's aerospace actions, which may include a potential satellite launch, according to NHK World. As tensions between Taiwan and China continue to escalate, Taiwan recently tracked the People's Liberation Army's 18 aircraft and 4 naval ships from 6 am on Monday (April 10) to Tuesday (April 11).

In an official release, Taiwan's Defence Ministry stated, "18 PLA aircraft and 4 PLAN vessels around Taiwan were detected by 6 a.m.(UTC+8) today. 4 of the detected aircraft had entered Taiwan's southwest and southeast ADIZ. R.O.C. Armed Forces have monitored the situation and tasked CAP aircraft, Navy vessels, and land-based missile systems to respond to these activities."

Education

Knowledge of technical textiles to skill students in diversified areas



Vijay Garg

Retired Principal Educational Columnist Malout Punjab

The UGC has directed the institutions imparting textile education to develop a curriculum for technical textiles. This directive has been issued as part of the National Textiles Mission, an initiative by Ministry of Textiles which aims to promote the technical textiles sector. The Textile Ministry has also issued 'General guidelines for enabling of academic institutes in Technical Textiles'. The ministry will fund the HEIs to upgrade the labs and train the faculty to teach the subject. New courses on technical textiles will help students to boost their productivity in textiles industry, increase exports and sustainability.

Increasing demand

Technical textiles are engineered products with a definite functionality, which finds its use in industries such as automobiles, construction, healthcare, and geotextiles and more. In addition to this, there also exists a domain of smart textiles and such textile material can be used to make clothes that get adjusted as per the environmental and climatic conditions. Smart textiles can be used in designing the special clothing for the army personnel deployed in adverse climatic zones. As part of pursuing a course on technical textiles, students would be introduced to the concept of geotextiles. This type of textile material is used in providing the proper layering to roads which is essential to prevent the water seepage. The institutes will

introduce short courses offering credit of 1-2, at the UG and PG level. Engineering, Design, and Fashion Technology students are eligible for the courses.

Offering practical training

As per reports, the government has allotted a financial outlay of Rs, 1,480 crore for 2020-21 to 2023 -24 academic session to implement the National Textiles Mission. The course is being introduced with the aim to promote technical textiles. The government has announced four components – Research, Innovation and Development; Promotion and Market Development; Export Promotion and Education Training, and Skill Development, under education, training and skill development measures for promotion of technical textiles.

Speaking to Education Times, SR Shah, head, department of

Textile Chemistry, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara, says, "We would modify the existing curriculum of textile streams and include the concepts of technical textiles for textile processing technology and other functional textile courses. In addition to this, we are in the process of starting short-term courses on technical textiles once they get approval from the governing body of our university," says Shah. "The curriculum for these short-term courses would be decided by the expert committee of our department," he adds. The chemical modification of textile eventually enhances its usability. For instance, if cotton produced genetically acquires antimicrobial and absorbency properties, it becomes usable in the healthcare sector. The aim is to equip the students in chemical processing to increase the utility.

"Textile Engineering and Chemical textile students will have to study 60% theory and 40% of practical work, based on the revised curriculum," adds Shah.

Gujarat and several other southern states are a hub of textile industries. The new courses in the textile sector will boost productivity and sustainability by skilling the students.

Elangovan N, former director, NIFT Kannur (Kerala), says, "There is an urgent need to develop the curricula relating to technical textiles in the institutes that are located around the textile hubs of the country as students residing in these areas need to be skilled in this domain. It is also essential to upskill students in this emerging domain as the industry needs technically skilled manpower. The technical textiles should have been in focus much earlier. Students also need to be motivated to pursue courses related to technical textiles as it is an emerging field."



Entertainment



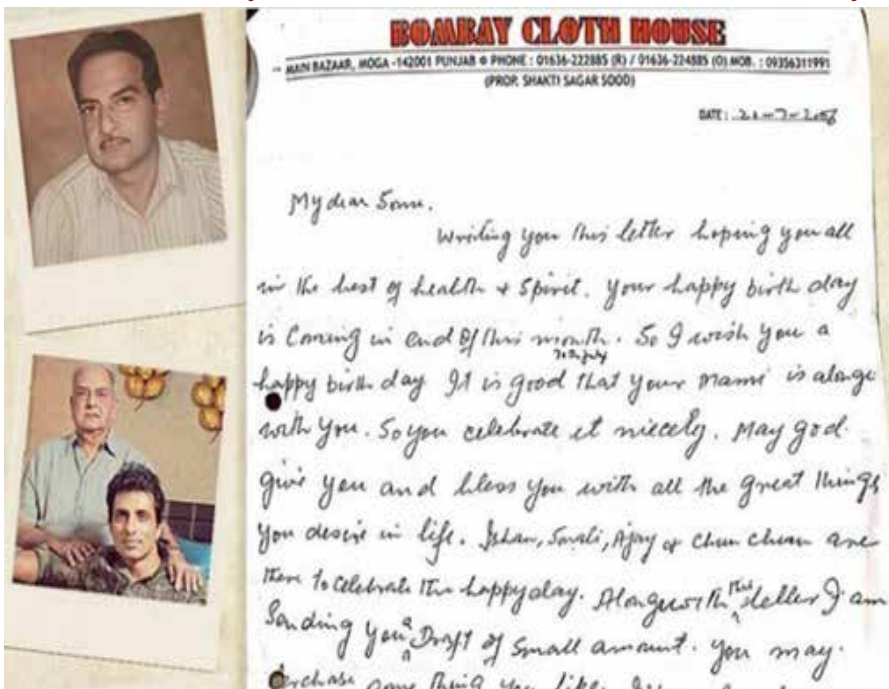
Actress Aditi Rao Hydari wishes rumoured boyfriend Siddharth on his birthday

As actor Siddharth turned a year older today, rumoured girlfriend and actor Aditi Rao Hydari shared an adorable video from their vacation to wish her "manicorn". Taking to Instagram, Aditi shared an unseen video where the duo can be seen dancing and jumping on streets on an undisclosed location.

Sharing the video, she wrote, "Happy birthday manicorn. To happiness always! movies, love, music, to always having the strongest purest heart, to magic, truckloads of laughter and to never never never growing up! Be magical, be you. Happiest siddu day." Aditi and Siddharth have remained tight-lipped about their relationship. If reports are to be believed, the two fell in love with each other on the sets of their film Maha Samundram in 2021.

Last year on Aditi's 36th birthday, Siddharth shared an unseen photo with her. Sharing the picture, Siddharth wrote, "Happy Happy. Happy Birthday Princess of Heart @aditiraohydari. I pray all your dreams. The big ones, the small ones. And the ones yet unseen. Always come true, always for you. Have the best trip around the sun yet. P.S- growing up is for squares. Don't! (red heart emoji)." Aditi and Siddharth have neither confirmed nor denied the rumours. Aditi was previously married to actor Satyadeep Mishra, who recently tied the knot with fashion designer Masaba. ANI

Actor Sonu Sood shares emotional note on social media for his father in memory of his birth anniversary



Actor Sonu Sood penned down an emotional note for his father Shakti Sood on his birth anniversary. Taking to Instagram story, Sonu shared an old picture with his dad along with a caption, "Happy birthday dad. Miss u always. Will see u someday to give you the tightest hug ever. Love u loads papa."

In the picture, young Sonu can be seen sitting in his father's lap all dressed in traditional attire. Meanwhile, Sonu is gearing up for his upcoming movie action thriller 'Fateh'. ANI



Alaya says, "I still consider pandemic as the biggest obstacle in her film career"

Alaya F, known for her films such as "Jawaani Jaaneman" and "Freddy", says the pandemic has changed the Hindi film industry as a whole and she finds it easier to adapt to it now. "The pandemic has changed the industry as a whole. It has changed approaches, it has changed people's viewing patterns, and what is being made. Luckily, this is the world that I know. This post-pandemic industry is easier for me to adapt to," the actor told PTI in an interview.

The 25-year-old actor, whose debut movie "Jawaani Jaaneman" came right before the pandemic in 2020, said she still considers the pandemic as the biggest "obstacle" in her four-film-old career. "My biggest challenge was the pandemic right after my first release. So far, it is my biggest obstacle. My film was released and a few weeks later the entire world stopped. What s***ed even more is that I got good reviews, it was a great time for me to capitalise on it. "You work for this moment and that moment goes well but before you make the most of it, everything stops. Two years and 11 months after that you don't have another release. It is not easy, the whole phase of the pandemic, I was like, 'Is my career over?'" PTI