



No data to back Centre's claim on same-sex marriage as 'urban-elitist' concept: SC

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# Afternoon

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## Shinde Sena Divided over NCP

### Ajit Pawar has not said anything which means he doesn't want to be in the NCP- Shirsat



Eknath Shinde's Party spokesperson Sanjay Shirsat has cautioned that if NCP leader Ajit Pawar joins BJP with a group of party leaders, then the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will not be part of the government in Maharashtra.

Sanjay Shirsat said "We opinion is very clear about NCP, they are betrayers. We will not be with the NCP even in power. If the BJP takes NCP with them, Maharashtra will not like it. We decided to move out (of the earlier undivided Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray) because people didn't like us going with the Congress and NCP. He said Ajit Pawar's displeasure is because his son Parth Pawar lost election earlier. His displeasure has no connection with the case of a plea seeking disqualification of 16 Shiv Sena MLAs pending before the

Supreme Court.

"We left the Congress-NCP the reason they were the part of previous Maha Vikas Aghadi government because we didn't want to be with them. Ajit Pawar doesn't have a free hand there. Therefore, if he leaves the NCP, we will welcome him. If he comes along with along with a group of NCP leaders, we will not be in the government," the Shiv Sena leader said.

Shirsat said Ajit Pawar has not clarified over the incident till date. The Devendra Fadnavis-Ajit Pawar government formed in a hush-hush ceremony in November 2019 had lasted for three days. Shirsat said Ajit Pawar is a big leader and he will not talk easily about what is going on in his mind. He also slammed the Maha Vikas Aghadi's move to hold rallies in parts of

the state, as a show of unity and strength.

Meanwhile, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar dismissed speculation about his nephew and senior party leader Ajit Pawar's next political move and said no meeting of NCP MLAs has been called by anyone. On Monday, Ajit Pawar also dismissed as false the reports that he has called a meeting of MLAs on Tuesday, amid intense speculation in Maharashtra's political circles about his growing proximity with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"...There is no importance of all these discussions. The reports have no meaning. I can say about NCP that all our colleagues are of one thinking of how to make the party stronger, and there is no other thought in anybody's mind," Pawar said.

Sharad Pawar, whose party is a constituent of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) which also comprises the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress, dismissed reports of a meeting of NCP MLAs being called in Mumbai and said no one has called such a meeting.

Speculation about Ajit Pawar's next political move started swirling last week when he suddenly cancelled his scheduled meetings and also made comments which were seen as being soft on the BJP and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's camp. The BJP is part of the Shinde government.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday added grist to the rumour mill claiming Sharad Pawar recently told Uddhav Thackeray that his party will never join hands with the BJP even if anyone takes an individual decision to do so.

## BJP may lose in Karnataka but can form the government

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

In Karnataka state, congress is the only party which has good organization strength in all parts of state, despite in the 2018 election BJP emerged as single largest party with 104 seats. BJP party has very poor organizational strength in Old Mysore region which accounts for 61 seats (excluding Bangalore city 28 seats), in this region main tussle is between Congress and JDS. In the previous election because of Siddaramaiah's anti-Vokkaliga sentiments and policy failures Congress was miffed. Many strong Congress leaders faced defeat against Kumaraswamy's JDS that belonged to Vokkaliga. In the coastal region, because of Siddaramaiah's anti-hindutva statements Congress had to pay

a huge price. In the Middle and Maharashtra-Karnataka border region, the issue of Lingayat separate religion and pro Yediyurappa sentiments made congress lose its seats. In Hyderabad Karnataka region, which is a stronghold of congress because of 371(J) special statuses granted to this region has continued to be handy for congress.

With the Assembly polls in Karnataka drawing close, BJP national president J P Nadda has launched a scathing attack on Congress during his rally in the state, and said the grand old party means commission, corruption and criminalization.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

# Editoritis

# BJP may lose in Karnataka but can form the government

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*The JD(S) move was being closely watched as the candidature from Hassan had become a point of contestation within the family of former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda.*

*former CM HD Kumaraswamy remarked that his sister-in-law would not be able to win the seat. The move to offer the ticket to Swaroop, the son of four-time Hassan MLA H S Prakash who passed away in 2018,*

*But who will form the Government? That depends on this man! You may have voted for X belonging to the Congress or JDS, but Mr. X may become part of the BJP after the elections.*

Three days before Preetham Gowda filed his nomination from Hassan, Karnataka, a massive crowd gathered on the streets of the city on April 14 to support incumbent BJP MLA. The same evening, in Bengaluru, top Janata Dal (Secular) leaders announced the party's second list for polls in which Swaroop Prakash found a place from the seat in south Karnataka.

The JD(S) move was being closely watched as the candidature from Hassan had become a point of contestation within the family of former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda. His daughter-in-law Bhavani Revanna, the wife of Holenarasipur MLA H D Revanna, had laid claim to the seat for her electoral debut. Opposed to the idea, former CM HD Kumaraswamy remarked that his sister-in-law would not be able to win the seat. The move to offer the ticket to Swaroop, the son of four-time Hassan MLA H S Prakash who passed away in 2018, was presented as giving preference to a party worker over a family member. The battle lines have thus been set, with the JD(S) aiming to wrest control of its stronghold from the ruling party.

In the meantime dissatisfaction towards BJP is growing in Karnataka because of incompetent governance of Yeddyurappa. So, Congress might benefit from this in 2023 and they may also get more seats I don't know. JDS has been restricted for many years. They always win around like only 30-40 seats. In terms of seats, the Congress will easily beat the BJP. I hope they do. Otherwise, it will look like performance does not matter and people don't care for efficient governance. The Bommai Government has not delivered. It has a very poor reputation. The earlier Siddaramaiah Government had its corruption issues, but was far superior to the current regime.

But who will form the Government? That depends on this man! You may have voted for X belonging to the Congress or JDS, but Mr. X may become part of the BJP after the elections. So, wait and watch for the washing machine to do its magic before you take a final bet on the outcome of the election!

JDS is somehow able to protect its 20-30 seat turf. I have no idea what hold the Gowda-duo have over their base, but it is very strong. They can arrange for transfers, poaching, trading - whatever - to ensure there is a 'stable', 'people-friendly' Government as they will call it. The increasing price per MLA election after election is the biggest proof that the Indian economy is soaring! The present BJP Govt. is not showing any progressive agenda towards the development of the State. Though the CM Basavaraj Bommai is an educated and humble person, tactically failing to run the Govt. on a commendable manner.

Infighting among the ministers, allegation of corruption charges against the ministers, allegation of 40% commission from contractors association against ministers, PSI recruitment scam, poor maintenance of roads in Bangalore, COVID mismanagement, poor flood management in parts of North Karnataka districts, ill treatment of B S Yediyurappa, ST reservation issue(which mentioned in their previous election manifesto), Lingayat reservation issue, lack of new facilities to middle class, inflation hurts the BJP's prospects in upcoming election. In the political history of Karnataka, no Incumbent Govt. since 1985 has been able to get a majority in assembly elections as the ruling Govt. will face the anti-incumbency against them. Considering the above facts BJP party has very less chance of getting majority. Some factors which might help BJP party are Hindutva, Narendra Modi public image, Vitamin-M, poll strategies, election management by RSS, infighting between D K Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah, JDS party losing its hold in Old Mysore region.



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Flat No. 2, J- Wing Ground floor, Sumer Nagar Building 3, S.V. Road,  
Near Gandhi Motors, Borivali - West, Mumbai - 400 092.

Editor

**Dr. Vaidehi**

Vaidehi has received several Awards like I Congo-karmavir chakra, Bedal Powell scout and guide awards 2021- best journalist, Newspaper Association of India award- best journalist. She received lot of awards for her contribution towards journalism.

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Email- afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com • SMS -9820199881

For any queries regarding the editorial desk, contact - 7506760610

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## Letters to the Editor

### "Scepticism" over China

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said in February that based on the information provided by the US intelligence agency, China is in the mood to provide arms and ammunition to Russia and is eager to help Russia. If China does this, China will face serious consequences. As a result, China's Queen Gang has to hold an urgent press conference and say that China is not helping anyone, Russia or Ukraine, but is neutral. International pressure is increasing on China. Looking at the political relations between China and Russia, China will definitely supply arms and ammunition to Russia.

**Dattaprasad Shirodkar**

### Sacred Marijuana

Cannabis or in Indian lingo Bhaang is a plant that finds mention in many ancient medical discourses like Sushruta Samhita where Bhaang or Cannabis is recommended as a treatment to clear excess mucus from the nose or throat, and for treating phlegm, it is also a wonder drug for the treatment of diarrhea. The ayurvedic discourses are replete with mention of bhaang as a refresher and a cure for headache and fatigue. Bhaang was revered as a sacred plant as it is one of the offerings to the Hindu God Shiva but now if one possesses Bhaang he/she would be slapped with so many legal sanctions that it would be nearly impossible for them to come out of the legal hellhole. India was never against Bhaang until 1985 when the Rajiv Gandhi government labeled Bhaang as synthetic and imposed a ban on the once sacred plant for the Hindus. It is interesting because India was not a signatory to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs but after 25 years suddenly India was against its sacred plant. It is certainly not a coincidence that the alcohol market started to boom in India in the late 1980s. Alcohol kills more than 2 lakh Indians every year but there is not a single death related to marijuana consumption. We should not be blind to this fact.

**Noopur Baruah**

### Rashmi Thackeray's decision laudable!

It has come to know from the news report that Rashmi Thackeray is to hold a women's rally in Nashik. If it is so, then very nice. Shiv Sena party president Uddhav Thackeray is sidelined by his own party leaders. Uddhav Thackeray is in a difficult situation in the political field. The present situation of politics is unbalanced, like a perturbed sea. Accusations are being made against each other. Every party leader is behaving as the supremo. At such an adverse time of politics, Rashmi Thackeray has taken assertive decision to support Uddhav is literally laudable. Rashmi Thackeray is a civilized and serene personality. A simple and honest person is sure to be succeeded in her mission. Almighty God is always on the side of genuineness.

**Sudhir Kangutkar**

### Trend to mock Hindu beliefs

A case has been registered against comedian and blogger Yash Rathi at Prem Nagar police station for making objectionable remarks about Lord Shriram. It is alleged that he made objectionable remarks about Lord Shri Ram during a program organized at Sheela Farm, Nanda Ki Chowki. In protest against this, office bearers and workers of various political and religious organizations lodged a complaint at the Prem Nagar police station after protesting at the farm. He said that when Jesus first tried to walk on water, he drowned in the water because he had not written 'Ram' on his slippers. For the past few years, it has become a trend to mock Hindu beliefs, denigrate Hindu Deities, and demean Hindu Saints. India does not have strong laws against blasphemy, hence accused are not punished appropriately. The shows of such comedians should be banned by the Government and they should be sent to Jail! Only then will they come to their senses.

**Dr. Jyoti kale**

# English, a gift to live with!

Happy English Language Day! The choice of April 23rd for the eventful day mindfully synchronises with the birth and death anniversary of William Shakespeare, the renowned playwright, who left a lasting influence on English language and literature.

While each language is rich and riveting in its own way, why English, not some other language, achieved such a worldly status? Why English is popular, important for you and me? How do we honour and rejoice this wonderful day?

### Lingua franca

Began as a communication mode about 1,500 years ago in the British Isles, English makes its prodigious presence. No language in history has prevailed quite like English does today. Nearly 2b people use it as their first language, second language, and also the 'bridge' language that connects humanity.

Although Mandarin and Spanish are the two most common languages in the world, English is the most influential language. Spoken and written, it offers a means of immense potential. The relevance is realised in most aspects of our lives – be it travel, academic medium, science, technology, communication... It's no longer a luxury, but more a functional necessity.

More than 350m Chinese are learning English, and the same goes for India and the rest, and the global determinant is compulsively contagious and adaptable.

### Interesting insights

As per Oxford English dictionary sources, there're about 170,000 words in current use, and nearly 20,000 words used by average individual. Shakespeare had used about 30,000 words himself, and coined about 1,000 words. New words are periodically added to the constantly evolving language.

The special day also reminisces about the esteem of the language amid its oddities. The remarkable variety based on sounds, pedagogical norms, spelling, grammar and vocabulary within the English-speaking world makes it truly phenomenal. Curiously, some of the observations make the language fascinating:

- Nigeria has more English speak-

ers than the United Kingdom.

- "E" is the most commonly used letter, and most number of words start with "S".
- All pilots speak in English on international flights, making it the official language of the sky.
- "Pronunciation" is the most mispronounced English word.
- We pronounce "ough" in nine different ways! For example, the word "dough" is pronounced differently than "tough".
- "Swims" will be "swims" even when turned upside down.
- "Go!" is the shortest grammatically correct sentence!

### ...and many more!

### Meanings on the move

Though some words, such as, "not, we, mother, worm..." remain unchanged, some, however, gained different meanings than they used to. Samples:

- Until the late 1400s, "girl" was just a gender-neutral term for a child.
- In old English, 'meat' was a more general term for "solid food".
- The original "naughty" had to do with being poor.
- Not always a compliment, "Nice" originally meant "ignorant", coming from the Latin *nescius*.
- "I could care less" and "I couldn't care less" means the same.
- When a person says to you, "How do you do?", he will be taken aback if you reply, with impeccable logic, "How do I do what?"

Thesauruses exist mainly for English. The vocabulary abundance and the wealth of synonyms seem less available to non-English languages. The French, for instance, cannot distinguish between "house" and "home", between "mind" and "brain"... The Spanish cannot differentiate "chairman" and "president", and the Russians have no native words for "efficiency", "challenge"...

### Celebrate, honour

- Commemorate the language on this day through sharing of ideas, games and activities.
- Host a quiz, a great way to get your learners to put their thinking caps and challenge them on

wider English knowledge.

- Converse only in English on this day.
- Organise a story telling session, a skit, role-play in schools or in your social gatherings.
- News reading/reporting in English. Watch the English news together or ask your children to report news to you.
- Go deep, find new words which have roots in different languages, understand the etymology.
- Embrace and learn more about the intricacies and nuances of vocabulary.
- Read your favourite English author's book.
- Visit any of the heritage buildings in your city which are from the British period. The train, telephones, telegraph, postal system, the currency are some of the legacies left behind by the British. Organise a talk or a visit.
- Letter. Take this opportunity and (re)introduce the art of letter writing. Make your children/grand-children write letters to grand-parents or relatives/friends and post them.
- If you have the expertise, teach the language to common people.
- Be language-fit to succeed. Practise speaking, listening, reading and writing every day. Read out loud. Take to books. Appreciate the importance of spelling and grammar.
- As you study, use it as you know it, fearlessly, effortlessly.
- Get exposed to media, music, movies, books, travel, conversations...

English makes the road ahead less bumpy and opens an array of opportunities. The linguistic proficiency enhances your personality. Indeed, English is the world language! If you're reading this, English is your language, too. Clearly, it's like fine wine, getting better with age.

**- C.S. Krishnamurthy**

Columnist

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

[afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com](mailto:afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com)

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

City

# Every Govt has its reservation on RTI : RTI Activist Anil Galgali



Well-known RTI Activist Anil Galgali said every Government of day, has had its own set of reservations regarding implementation of Right to Information. He was addressing students of Sidharth Law College on practical use of RTI to solve problems of

common man. His special lecture was organised under college fest Bodhang, which began on 11th of April 2023. Programme was attended by about 70 students of law faculty & their lecturers.

Anil Galgali began by explaining the origins of the act and how it has evolved over the

years. He then went on to discuss the importance of the act in promoting transparency and accountability in governance and how it has been used to expose corruption and malpractices in various government departments.

Anil Galgali also shared his personal experiences of using the RTI Act to uncover cases of corruption and irregularities. He highlighted the challenges faced by RTI activists and the need for greater protection of whistleblowers in India. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session. At this occasion Principal Sandhya Dhoke welcome Mr Galgali. Lecture well organised by Student Coordinators Rupesh Jagtap, Kamlesh Ubale, Vikas Waghmare, Muzayyana Shaikh, Hrishikesh Jadhav.

# We won't be in govt if Ajit Pawar joins BJP with NCP group, says Shiv Sena spokesperson



Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Shirsat has said if Ajit Pawar joins the BJP with a group of NCP leaders, then the Eknath Shinde-led Sena will not be part of the government in Maharashtra. Talking to mediapersons in Mumbai on Tuesday, Shirsat, whose party shares power with the Bharatiya Janata Party in Maharashtra, said he thinks the Nationalist

Congress Party (NCP) will not go with the BJP directly.

"Our policy is clear about it. The NCP is a party which betrays. We will not be with the NCP even in power. If the BJP takes NCP with them, Maharashtra will not like it. We decided to move out (of the earlier undivided Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray) because people didn't like us going with the Congress and NCP," he said.

# Maha prisons dept to use drones for surveillance

The Maharashtra State Prisons Department has decided to use drones to ensure security in prisons and monitor the movements of inmates, a senior official said. In the first phase, drones will be deployed in 12 prisons -- eight central jails, two district jails and two open jails, Additional Director General of Police (Prisons) Amitabh Gupta said on

Tuesday. "They will also be used for night-time surveillance. This will help in getting real-time updates on what is happening within prison premises," an official release said. The prisons which will use drones for surveillance include Yerawada (in Pune), Kolhapur, Nashik, Sambhaji Nagar, Talaja (Navi Mumbai), Thane, Amravati, Nagpur, Kalyan and Chandrapur, it said.

# Ajit Pawar's image being maligned by MVA, claims Maha BJP chief Bawankule

NAGPUR: Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Maharashtra unit president Chandrashekhar Bawankule alleged that Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar's image is being maligned by Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) constituents and the saffron party has no role to play in it. Bawankule was responding to queries on recent news reports about how Pawar may quit his party or provide support to BJP, something which Pawar



denied during a media briefing on Tuesday at Mumbai.

# WR relaxes curbs on speed, Harbour line to run at 80km

Western Railway (WR) has relaxed the permanent speed restriction (PSR) on Harbour line from Khar Road and Santacruz to Vile Parle that will pave the way for Harbour trains to run at a maximum speed of 80kmph instead of

60kmph now.

WR's chief public relations officer Sumit Thakur said, "There was a series of curves on both up and down Harbour lines. These curves were realigned by undertaking complex engineering works. There will be savings

of 2 minutes per train. The savings in time can also allow us to explore the option of increasing services."

WR had said there was a curvature of an average of 4 degree at three places and this was reduced to approximately 2.4 degree.

# Sunstroke deaths: Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole urges governor to sack Shinde govt

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Wednesday urged Governor Ramesh Bais to dismiss the Eknath Shinde government over the death of 14 persons following the Maharashtra Bhushan award function. Patole took to Twitter to target the government over the deaths after the programme in an open ground in Kharghar area near Mumbai where social worker Appasaheb Dharmadhikari was conferred with the state's highest civilian award by Union home minister Amit Shah.

# After RTO crackdown, BEST asks advertising agency to ensure reflective tapes on its buses are visible



The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) has directed the advertising agency to take immediate steps to ensure that reflective tapes on its passenger buses are visible and not concealed under wraparound advertisements to avoid any violation

of rules. The direction came in the wake of the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) on Tuesday taking action against the BEST buses for violating rules about reflective tapes. According to RTO officials, a fine was imposed on more than 100 buses for the violation of the rule.



Nation

# No data to back Centre's claim on same-sex marriage as 'urban-elitist' concept: SC

The state cannot discriminate against an individual on the basis of sexual characteristic over which the person has no control, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday, asserting the Centre has no data to back up its claim that the concept of same-sex marriage is "elitist" or "urban".

The apex court was hearing a batch of petitions seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriage. "It is very simple, the State cannot discriminate against an individual on the basis of a characteristic over which the person has no control," a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said on the second day of day-long hearing on the pleas.

The Centre, in one of its affidavits filed in the apex court, termed the petitions a reflection of "urban elitist" view for the purpose of social acceptance and said recognition of marriage is essentially a legislative function which the courts should refrain from adjudicating. Apparently agreeing



with the submissions of senior advocate A M Singhi, appearing for one of the petitioners, the bench said, "When you say that this is an innate characteristic then it is also an argument in response to the contention (of the Centre) this is elitist or urban or it has a certain class bias."

"When something is innate, then it cannot have the class bias. It may be more urban in its manifestations because the people in urban areas are coming out of

closed\ closet. Anyway, no data is forthcoming from the government to indicate that this is urban. No data at all," observed the bench, also comprising Justices S K Kaul, S R Bhat, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha. Singhi stressed that every averment made by the Centre in the affidavit is without a "single survey, single data".

Another senior advocate, K V Viswanathan, who also represented one of the petitioners, said branding the petitioners as "urban

elitist" showed "absolute lack of grace".

"The Union should have shown some grace," Viswanathan said. At the start of the day's hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, filed a fresh affidavit urging the bench that all states and Union Territories be made parties to the proceedings as any decision on the issue without obtaining their views will render the present "adversarial exercise" incomplete and

truncated.

During the hearing, the bench also deliberated upon the consequences of legalising same-sex marriage including adoption and different marriageable age for male and female. "Incidentally, even if a couple is in a gay relationship or a lesbian relationship, one of them can still adopt. So the whole argument that this will create a sort of psychological impact on the child is belied by the fact that even today, on the state of the law as it stands, once we have decriminalised homosexuality, it is open to people to live-in together and one of them can adopt. It is just that the child loses the benefit of parenthood so to speak of both the parents," the CJI said.

The apex court dwelt upon section 4 of the Special Marriage Act, which deals with conditions relating to solemnization of special marriages and mandates that a male and female must be of the age of 21 and 18 years respectively.

## SC sets aside Bombay HC order of G N Saibaba acquitted in Maoist case



The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside a Bombay High Court order acquitting former Delhi University Professor G N Saibaba in a Maoist links case and remanded it back to the high court for fresh consideration on merits within four months.

A bench of top court Justices M R Shah and CT Ravikumar directed the chief justice of the Bombay High Court to place Saibaba's appeal and that of other accused not before the same bench which had discharged

them and the case be heard by another bench. It said that question of law, including sanction under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), is to remain open for adjudication by the high court. The top court had on October 15 suspended the Bombay High Court order acquitting Saibaba and others in the case. Advocate Abhikalp Pratap Singh appeared for the Maharashtra government and senior advocate R Basant represented Saibaba in the case in the apex court. More than eight years after his arrest

in 2014, the Bombay High Court on October 14 last year acquitted Saibaba and ordered his release from jail, noting that the sanction order issued to prosecute the accused in the case under the stringent provisions of the UAPA was "bad in law and invalid".

The Nagpur bench of the high court allowed the appeal filed by Saibaba challenging a 2017 order of the trial court convicting and sentencing him to life imprisonment for offences under provisions of UAPA and the Indian Penal Code. Apart from Saibaba, the Bombay high court had acquitted Mahesh Kariman Tirki, Pandu Pora Narote (both farmers), Hem Keshavdatta Mishra (student) and Prashant Sanglikar (journalist), who were sentenced to life imprisonment, and Vijay Tirki (labourer), who was sentenced to 10 years in jail. Narote died during the pendency of the appeal. PTI

## Shraddha Walkar murder case: News channels restrained from displaying content of charge sheet

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday restrained all news channels from displaying or playing content of the charge sheet in the Shraddha Walkar murder case.

Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar also directed the Centre to ensure that no news channel displays such material till the disposal of the petition filed by Delhi Police.

The order was passed on a plea by the Delhi Police seeking to restrain media houses from publishing, printing and disseminating confidential information contained in the charge sheet and other such materials collected during the course of the investigation in the case.

Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad submitted that the Aaj Tak news channel has got access to the narco analysis video of accused Aaftab Poonawala and



the channel was restrained by the trial court from showing any such content. However, he said the order needs to be passed against all other channels also as the video might have been shared with others and if telecasted, it would prejudice the case. The high court listed the matter for further hearing on August 3. Poonawala is accused of strangling his live-in partner Walkar and chopping her body into pieces in Mehrauli here on May 18 last year. The Delhi Police had filed the 6,629-page charge sheet in the case on January 24. PTI



World

# France exposes West's divide over deterrence against China



Political unrest in the West continues even though it has been a week since French President Emmanuel Macron sparked a controversy by saying that the West shouldn't become a "vassal" and that it should stay out of any disputes between the US and China over Taiwan, reported Asian Lite International.

Terming Taiwan as a "crisis that is not ours," the French President said that Europeans should stay out of it and not be "America's followers."

Macron made the above remarks in an interview with Politico and Les Echos while he was

on his flight returning to France after his three-day (April 5 to 7) visit to China where, as per Xinhua, the two countries inked many cooperation agreements in the field of aviation, aerospace and civilian nuclear and wing energy, science, and technology, building a China-France carbon neutrality centre and joint training of talent, Asian Lite International reported.

Irked over the comment of the French President, the US Republican Senator noted in a social media post that if Macron spoke for all of Europe, then the US should consider focusing its

foreign policy on containing China and leave Europe to handle the war in Ukraine, as per Asian Lite International. In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal termed Emmanuel Macron's remarks on Taiwan as "unhelpful comments" which would undermine American and Japanese deterrence against China in the western Pacific.

Moreover, what sent shockwaves through the corridors of power throughout the West was the three-day military exercise that China conducted against Taiwan on April 7, hours after the French President's flight left Guangzhou. In response to the meeting between US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in Simi Valley, California, on April 5, the Chinese People's Liberation Army organised a military exercise against Taiwan from April 8 to April 10. America and its allies, especially those from Europe, continued their commitment to democracy and its ideals. They consider it as their rightful duty to safeguard these values, which is why they are backing Taiwan and Ukraine.

# India overtakes China, becomes world's most populous nation: UN



India has now crossed China to become the most populous country in the world, according to the United Nations Data. The UN world population dashboard stated that India now has 1428.6 million people while China's population stands at 1425.7 million.

This is for the first time that India has topped the United Nations' list of most populated countries, ever since the UN began collecting population data in 1950. The year before, China's population shrank for the first time since 1960.

In 2016, Beijing ended its strict "one-child policy," imposed in the 1980s amid overpopulation

fears, and began letting couples have three children in 2021. China faces an impending demographic decline, as its workforce ages and fertility rates decrease.

Meanwhile, the United States is in the third position with an estimated population of 340 million. India has not performed a census since 2011, hence there are no fresh official statistics available on its population size.

The once-in-a-decade census in India was scheduled to take place in 2021 but was postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak. The global population is expected to hit 8.045 billion by mid-2023, according to the UN data.

# Sudan clash: Death toll reaches 270, over 2,600 injured



As many as 270 people have been killed and more than 2,600 have been injured in the unrest in Sudan, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) officials citing Sudan's Ministry of Health Emergency Operations Center, reported CNN.

Fighting continued in Sudan as forces loyal to duelling generals fought for strategic positions in the city and accused one another of breaking the ceasefire hours after an internationally mediated ceasefire was scheduled to take effect.

Minutes after the agreed-upon 6 pm (16:00 GMT) start of the ceasefire, loud gunshots continued to echo in the background of live feeds from numerous television news channels in the Khartoum capital region on Tuesday.

The rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the regular army both released statements accusing the other of breaking the ceasefire. According to the army's top leadership, actions to secure the capital and other areas will continue, reported Al Jazeera.

# Civilian infrastructure hit as Russia launches drone attack on Ukraine's Odesa

Civilian infrastructure has been hit as Russia launched a drone attack on Ukraine's Odesa on Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported referring to the local authorities. The commander of the Ukrainian Air Force, General Mykola Oleshchuk, claimed that 10 of the 12 "kamikaze" drones had been destroyed by air defences.

"At night, the enemy carried out an attack by UAVs of the Shahed-136 type on the Odesa region," the district military administration head of Odesa, Yuriy Kruk, said on Telegram, according to Al Jazeera.

"According to preliminary information, there were no casualties. Measures are being taken to contain the fire, units of the State

Emergency Service and other structures are working on the spot," the military administration head said.

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has only recently escalated as a Russian missile attack on a residential neighbourhood in the eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk on Friday last week claimed at least 11 lives.

# Nepal Prez Poudel admitted to AIIMS Delhi

Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel arrived at New Delhi airport on Wednesday for his medical treatment. He admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here due to a fall in oxygen levels.

The Nepal President was flown from Nepal to New Delhi in an air ambulance after he was detected with a lung infection, officials had confirmed.



Earlier, an official from the President's Secretariat confirmed that the President would be flown to AIIMS for further treatment as

there was no improvement in his health. He was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday after falling short of breath and fainting.



# Expression

## Landslide challenges and solutions in India - Part 1



Nripendra Abhishek Nrip

Author and Researcher

Imagine what you will do when you have no roof over your head and no ground under your feet? In the event of a landslide, people's life becomes a victim of tragedy and they are forced to stumble door to door. In India too, this problem has taken a gigantic form. In the Himalayan region, there is increasing concern about the cracking mountains. Cloud burst or landslide. The date changes, the year changes, but the incidents of rock slides and landslides do not change in the monsoon. Due to this, there is a huge loss of life and property. Roads and houses are often destroyed. Excessive rainfall, large-scale deforestation and illegal construction have added to the problem.

Landslides, which have always been a major threat to India, have once again come into the limelight due to the landslides happening in Joshimath. For some time, the speed of sliding of Joshimath has suddenly increased. The entire Joshimath is sinking due to the subsidence of the land. Hundreds of buildings are no longer habitable. In many places, wide cracks have also started emerging on the ground. In some places, water is coming out due to the bursting of the ground.

### What is the Joshimath problem?

Joshimath is located in Chamoli district. In this Joshimath itself is the center of religiosity and Badrinath Dham, one of the Char Dhams. Every year there is an influx of devotees and lakhs of devotees throng here. Today this monastery is sinking into the pit of the earth and this is not happening all of a sudden, but it was predicted long back. But this was not taken care of.

According to the 1976 Misra Committee report, Joshimath is not situated on the main rock but on sand and stone deposits. It is situated on an ancient landslide area. The report states that erosion by river streams of Alaknanda and Dhauliganga also come under the factors of landslides. The committee had recommended a ban on heavy construction work, removal of boulders for blasting or road repair and other construction, felling of trees, keeping the construction work on hold. These include construction works, hydroelectric projects and widening of

national highways, and these works have increased the slope over the past few decades. made it extremely unstable. Apart from this, the streams flowing from Vishnuprayag and the rock slides along with the natural streams are other reasons for landslides in the city. The problem of Joshimath has brought the landslide problem back into the limelight.

Joshimath is not the only one which is on the verge of collapse. There are dozens of towns all over the Himalayas, especially in Uttarakhand, which are sitting on time bombs. The case of Uttarakhand is also special because according to geologists, Uttarakhand is the region in the entire Himalayas where earthquakes above scale eight are most likely to occur. For this reason, geologists call this area as the Central Seismic Gap and the itching in the leprosy is that even simple standards have not been followed in the construction of buildings in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand. Dehradun, Haldwani Similar is the situation in other areas as well.

### Where is the most prone to landslides in India?

According to the Geological Survey of India (GSI), in India, 420,000 sq km, or 12.6 per cent of the total land area, is prone to landslides. Snow covered areas are not included in this. Landslide prone areas include the North East Himalayas (Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayan regions), the North West Himalayas (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir), the Western Ghats and the Konkan hills (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra) and Andhra Pradesh includes the Eastern Ghats of the Aruku region. The possibility of rock falls from mountains in these areas is because of the increasing risk from climate change. The GSI has prepared a National Landslide Vulnerability Map on 1:50,000 scale for 85 per cent of the entire 420,000 sq km of rock-prone area in the country and work is underway to complete the rest.

### What is the factor responsible for this?

Landslides are triggered by natural causes like earthquakes or heavy rains as well as some man-made constructions and occur every year, especially during the monsoon. Unpredictable weather, climate crisis, heavy and intense rainfall are



increasing the incidence of landslides in the country. Climate change is increasing the risk, especially in the Himalayas and the Western Ghats, but one thing to note is that landslides in India occur more in the Himalayan region than in the Western Ghats. Sheffield of America A study by university researchers found that India was one of the worst affected countries in terms of human-caused fatal landslides in the period 2004-16. The study analyzed 5,031 fatal landslides from around the world. In which 829 incidents of India were included. In India, 28 per cent of the incidents of stone falls occur due to construction work.

This discrepancy was also pointed out in the National Landslide Risk Management Strategy published by the National Institute of Disaster Management in September 2019. The report said that most of the building constructions in the Himalayan region are inspired by the Delhi Master Plan, which is not suitable in the context of hill cities. Landslides often occur when building and building roads in mountainous areas; A large number of rocks have to be removed, which can cause landslides there.

There are other reasons for landslides as well. For example, sometimes landslides are also seen due to heavy rains. Along with this, deforestation is also a major reason for landslides because trees, plants, etc. keep the soil particles dense and

due to deforestation, the mountain slopes lose their protective layer, due to which the rain water flows freely on these slopes. Earthquakes are also one of the factors that affect landslides. For example, there was an earthquake in the Himalayas because the earthquake destabilized the mountains, which resulted in landslides every day. In areas of additional north eastern India, shifting agriculture causes landslides. Due to the increasing population, a large number of houses are being built, which creates a large amount of debris that can cause landslides.

There is a danger here not only from the power projects, but also from the anti-nature development thinking. We did not learn a lesson from the unimaginable floods in 2013 over Kedarnath and again erected a heavy cement-concrete structure there. That flood cleared the entire Mandakini valley including Kedarnath from the human encroached river bank area. After that ignoring landslide sensitivity, 825 km in the name of Char Dham All Weather Road. The long road network has cut through the mountains including more than 40 thousand trees and innumerable bushes and the old dormant Landslides were woken up while on the request of Chandi Prasad Bhatt, the pioneer of Chipco, a dozen expert institutes of the Government of India under the leadership of ISRO had identified dozens of spots vulnerable to landslides on this entire Char Dham Yatra route



## Entertainment

### Rhea Kapoor shares glimpse on social media of Tabu, Kareena, Kriti from sets of 'The Crew'

Indian producer Rhea Kapoor on Tuesday shared a glimpse of actors Kareena Kapoor, Tabu and Kriti Sanon working on the sets of their upcoming film 'The Crew'. Taking to Instagram, Rhea shared a monochrome picture on her story which she captioned, "My Crew," followed by three-star emoticons.

The picture is clicked from a monitor on the sets of the film in such a way that only the lower halves of Kareena, Tabu and Kriti are visible. The film also stars actor Diljit Dosanjh in the lead role. ANI



### Actor Salman Khan drops picture with Shehnaaz Gill for a cute selfie

Superstar actor Salman Khan is currently busy promoting his upcoming family entertainer film 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'. On Tuesday, actor Shehnaaz Gill took to her Instagram account and dropped a new selfie with the 'Ready' actor and fans are going gaga over it.

She captioned the post, "#Bhaijaan on 21st April."

Looks like the picture was taken during one of their promotional events. In the picture, Shehnaaz looked beautiful in a red and black checked shirt. She opted for minimal makeup with her hair open and could be seen flaunting her cute smile. While Salman on the other hand looks handsome in a black shirt. Soon after she dropped the picture, fans flooded the comment section with red hearts and fire emoticons. "This movie break all records," a user wrote. Another user commented, "It will be a dream come true to see our queen with Salmaan bhai on big screen." A fan commented, "Our jaan our bhaijaan." Helmed by Farhad Samji, the film also stars Pooja Hegde, Venkatesh Daggubati, Bhumi Chawla, Jagapathi Babu, and Vijender Singh. 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' marks the return of Salman to big screen after four years. ANI

### Film director Catherine Corsini's 'Le Retour' struck out of Cannes amid complaints

French director Catherine Corsini who was supposed to be the seventh female director at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival has now been subject to review for its slot due to complaints. The slot for the movie 'Le Retour' in the competition is now kept on hold as the numerous inappropriate events related to the movie have gained attention. According to Variety, a US-based media house, On April 13 the Cannes chief Thierry Fremaux confirmed to the director that she would have a competition slot, but as the time of the announcement came, the festival's administration board decided to hold off on giving the title a slot in the lineup.

The decision came after the news of Corsini being accused of harassment of team members and crew members allegedly involved in inappropriate acts against two female actors surfaced. Fremaux said, "administration board wished to gather more information about the situation around the film before taking a decision on whether to include the film in its Official Selection." To give a reason behind removing the movie from the festival. As per a report by Variety the producer of the movie Elisabeth Perez defended the scenario by stating the information as "malevolent rumours, and these allegations should not lead to the life or death of a film. Nor should they take away its right to be selected for Cannes". ANI

