



Punjab: Panic grips residents after gas leak in Ludhiana, locals narrate ordeals

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## MVA's 'vajramuth' rally to be held in Mumbai's BKC today

The Maha Vikas Aghadi will hold a rally in Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai on Monday during which leaders of the Shiv Sena (UBT),

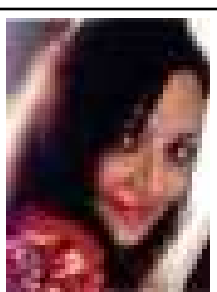
Nationalist Congress Party and Congress are expected to launch a frontal attack on the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis dispensation in Maharashtra.

The 'vajramuth' (iron fist) rally has been organised to safeguard the Constitution, a Shiv Sena (UBT) leader said on Sunday. The event, which will be held at

MMRDA grounds in BKC, will be the third 'vajramuth' rally, the first two having been held in Aurangabad and Nagpur.

### Beggars are unconditional givers too

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

If we see and think from a broader perspective, we all—privileged and underprivileged—are beggars in our own way. Politicians beg for votes; we beg God for riches, well-being, and whatnot. People visit spiritual leaders to beg for solace and prosperity; beggars on the street beg for their basic needs. Remember as you think that God can fulfill your entire wish if you demand it. Similarly, beggars on the street see you as God because they know that when they ask, you have the capacity to give them something. Most of the time, we disregard our abilities and compassion by insulting and humiliating those who seek assistance. Mumbai has a history of having the richest beggars; they might have what you never thought of, but still they beg because they

chose to do so. Mumbai appears to be the dream city for beggars, because here they somehow manage to meet their basic needs.

The majority of beggars in India are leading a pathetic life. Many are suffering from various diseases. Their outward appearance itself creates nausea in one's mind. Their tattered clothes, emaciated bodies, and unclean body frames, followed by equally unclean mangy dogs, are an eyesore. There was one beggar at Krishna Nagar, Borivali. He was my morning walk partner. He used to stay alone on the footpath of a bungalow. Later on, the landlords asked him to evict the pavement and shift to another side.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

# Editoritis

# Beggars are unconditional givers too

▶▶▶ PAGE 1

*I had both an umbrella and a raincoat, so I gave him an umbrella. He wanted something else, but I failed to understand his sign language. I returned home, but while going to the office, I saw someone give him food, but he did not eat it.*

*From that day on, he became my street buddy. Every morning I used to give him some money for food and tea; gradually, people in the locality also started giving him food, water, and leftovers.*

*In the whole of India, one may find a dozen rich beggars. Rich people may possess lakhs of rupees. Some may lend money to small traders at a reasonable monthly rate of interest. Even if they possess so much money*

The area was not fully developed, so he could hardly ask for some help. One day, I saw him sitting on the other side of the pavement. It was raining badly, and the man was so fragile that he could hardly call us. He just raised his hand to ask for assistance.

I had both an umbrella and a raincoat, so I gave him an umbrella. He wanted something else, but I failed to understand his sign language. I returned home, but while going to the office, I saw someone give him food, but he did not eat it. The footpath was full of water, and he somehow adjusted himself in the corner with that umbrella. The very next day, I approached some BMC staff and asked them to help this old man. But they were not ready to encourage beggars by providing them a safe place to stay. I called my home help; she brought meters of poly sheets and created a small tent out of it. That tent became the home of that old man until his death.

From that day on, he became my street buddy. Every morning I used to give him some money for food and tea; gradually, people in the locality also started giving him food, water, and leftovers. Monsoon season approaches; every year, my organization distributes blankets to the people on the street. That year, I got two blankets for this old man too. His happiness knew no bounds. Looking at his happy face, I felt scared. In sign language, we conversed for ten minutes. Can you imagine him looking like the king of his small tent with new clothes and blankets? Some people gave him some bed sheets and a mattress too. His asset was a dirty bag that he always used to keep under his head.

By now I could understand him completely. During COVID, many NGOs in Mumbai made special efforts to reach beggars on the street. Mumbai might be a concrete jungle, but it has a lot of humanity and love for deprived people. Each one of them does something or other in their capacities. But an old beggar in a remote corner gets neglected. During those days, there was one young boy who started his catering start-up. I gave him his first job, providing two full meals to such beggars who were not part of the mainstream street population. Throughout his time in COVID, he served these people wholeheartedly. His start-up needed funds, but getting a bank loan was not possible for him, and meanwhile COVID had also financially broken everyone, so no one was ready to give him financial assistance. Still, he continued doing his job.

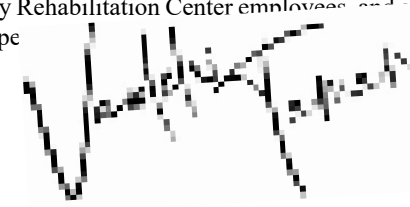
Let me cut the story short. In those days, the old beggar met me as I walked past that night; he was trying to say something by showing his bag. I was very busy with my own priorities; I just ignored him

and, as usual, asked for his well-being before moving ahead. Next morning I came to know that he had passed away. I rushed to his hut; his body was taken away by BMC personnel. His stuff was also taken into custody; to our surprise, when that bag was opened, there was a big amount in it. Well, the cops did charity work for other beggars with that money and made sure the small streetside eatery of that caterer got some funds for its makeover. Well, this was one of the rarest of the rare stories to tell, but we need government policies to make our country beggar-free.

In the whole of India, one may find a dozen rich beggars. Rich people may possess lakhs of rupees. Some may lend money to small traders at a reasonable monthly rate of interest. Even if they possess so much money, they cannot lead a decent life by buying or renting a house in a decent locality because the whole town would know them as beggars, and there is a fear of losing their clients. Despite having so much money, they are unable to abandon their begging profession because it pays well.

Most of the beggars are working for a gang that collects money from them every evening; worse still, they dress them to look like beggars. These normal people, fully capable of doing manual labor, are dressed and, yes, touched up to look poor. In this case, charity does not help; there are a number of children who are stolen from hospitals, homes, and streets. Worse, their poor parents sell them to these gangs to be used as beggars. Their limbs are operated upon, and they are made physically handicapped so that they can get alms. It is an endless chain, which is a vitiating circle; you give more money, the gangs want more, and they steal more children to create more beggars for society.

In order to improve their condition, successive governments have to formulate schemes in their favor. Beggars Rehabilitation Centers should be established in all states where beggars can be assigned a task and given food, shelter, and income-generating skills so that, once released, they can easily make a living in the outside world. However, the majority of those released continue to engage in the same illegal activity, are apprehended by Rehabilitation Center employees, and are returned to the center to repeat the cycle.



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## Letters to the Editor

### What does May 1 really stand for?

Every year on May 1, people across the world, including India, celebrate Labour Day as a public holiday. A few arrange get-togethers to enjoy the much-needed holiday while others spend it either watching TV, playing games or sleeping all day. The idea is to gain as much from this day as one can for oneself. But, what no one does is think about what this day truly stands for. Has any of us done something of value for the labour class or tried to resolve their problems?

There are countless problems which are being faced by our labourers such as poverty, illiteracy, food and water crises and so many others. A vast majority of labourers and daily-wage workers remain outside the field of labour laws, which means that workers have no paid holidays, no job security, no medical coverage, no pension, no provident fund, no limit on working hours and are paid no overtime. In India with all this, there is also an issue of child labour. Child labour in India is growing at a disturbing rate. Hundreds and thousands of children struggle to achieve their basic necessities of life. Children are the future of any country and we should all work to help them become better people. Child labour is a very complex problem with its root in the socio-economic environment of the country. The children suffer from a lack of education and health facilities and better employment.

It is important to note that India became a member of the International Labour Organisation right after its independence in 1947. However, there is not much change when I look at the present situation as there seem to be no labour laws' implementation. There should be an international monitoring in the country and people should be held accountable who use child labour and bonded labour. I know many people who are working as labourers just for a small amount of money and they don't even have a day off, because the day they don't work, there is no food in their house.

Jubel D'Cruz

### India can become a superpower

Creating an ideal state system by removing the corrupt system is the establishment of 'Hindu Rashtra'. Corruption is rampant in education, police, defense, justice, medical and all other fields. The person experiences every day. Thoughts like 'What can I do alone?' do not curb corruption but it only increases. I read articles in some newspapers about the All India Hindu Rashtra Convention, which contained information on Dharmashikshan, Adhyatma, Sanskar, and the need for a Hindu Rashtra. India can become a superpower or a world leader only when India becomes a 'Hindu Rashtra'. So the convention seems promising in terms of resolving the above issues.

Aparna Jagtap

### Real labour Day

The increased suicide of daily wage workers across the country is alarming in the view of the Union Home Ministry, in which Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are at the top of the state is worrying. The increased number of suicides of daily wage workers is a challenge for the Union Home Ministry. Tamil Nadu 7673, Maharashtra 5270, Telangana 4223, Gujarat 3206 in all other states, the statistics are showing a slight difference. In order to prevent such suicides, the central government and the state government should come together to solve this problem. International Labor Day will be celebrated on May 1. But when the depression of the workers in the country and around the world ends and the suicides decrease, it will be called the real "Labour Day".

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

# Mann Ki Baat Makes Real Sense



**M**ann Ki Baat is an Indian radio programme hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he addresses the people of the nation on All India Radio, DD National and DD News. Since the first show on 3 October 2014, there have been 100 episodes. The 100th episode was aired on the eve of May day. When we think of the working class and the hard work put in by the COVID19 warriors. By using the via media Mann Ki Baat is touching the heart of the people and reaching out to their homes by airing his views in a clear cut way. There lies the real success. The 100th episode is an enigma and the PM displayed his true colours praising the working class in the most eloquent ways.

Mann Ki Baat' in his journey of 100 episodes has showcased stories of talented individuals across diverse fields from promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat to Make in India and Space start-ups. The 100th episode of his monthly radio program is the hallmark of many talented people in the country who reached the pinnacle of success through hard work and Mann Ki Baat became a medium to bring those people and their products to the forefront.

The Prime Minister also mentioned how Mann Ki Baat acted as a tool for many mass movements to gain

momentum. Taking the example of the mission to re-establish traditional toys and the toy industry, every such model has become an agent of change in society. The programme was a landmark success and the gender ratio has improved in Haryana as a result of many campaigns like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and 'Selfie with Daughter' and so on. But the most remarkable one is the way of making textiles with lotus stem fiber, which is attractive even to the US and other countries.

The radio program 'Mann Ki Baat' has been a popular platform for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to connect with the people of India. The program, which is held on the last Sunday of every month, has been successful in reaching out to millions of Indians across the country. According to the report, the consistent message of the broadcasts is that the citizens of India are special people and need to have the confidence to act in a manner that assists in pushing forward the trajectory of the country.

The walk together programme is a runaway success and it has reached every nook and corner of the country and the UNESCO Director-General congratulated Indians and PM Modi for the wonderful journey of the 100th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' and also asked questions

on education and cultural preservation in India. She also asked various questions to PM Modi on education and cultural preservation amid India's ongoing G20 Presidency. The story telling aspect assumed prime importance.

It is indeed a significant success of connecting people in India and as a social activist for the last 52 years helping people's cause as a freelance writer I enjoy my retired life rather briskly and peacefully. All my 100s of scrapbook is a testimony of all services to the nation and I could prefer "Nation First" and give preference to sensible subjects, which got preference in the print media from the year 1971. The diverse global culture is brought out in a big way. The 75th year of Independence is well and truly remembered in a very big way with various achievements. There were no commercial breaks in between Mann Ki Baat and Multiplexes screened the programme with gusto.

- 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.)

# MVA claims victory in APMC polls

**M**aharashtra NCP president Jayant Patil has claimed the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi won a maximum number of Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMC) in recently-held polls, results of which were declared on Saturday.

Patil said the MVA- comprising Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and Nationalist Congress Party- swept his home turf in Sangli by winning all 18 seats. A total of 148 APMC seats went to polls.

In Baramati APMC, NCP won all 18 seats, Ajit Pawar, Leader of the Opposition in the state assembly said. NCP's Dhanajay Munde and senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan claimed victory in their home turfs of Parli and Nanded.

Patil said the APMC victory is once again an indication of people's mood. A BJP-backed panel has won 13 of 18 seats in the Pune Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC)



elections, while all four NCP candidates emerged victorious in the Baramati APMC polls, officials said.

APMCs regulate the wholesale business of agricultural produce in their respective areas of operation.

The polls in Pune APMC were held on Friday after 20 years. The Annasaheb Magar Shetkari Vikas Panel, backed by the BJP, won 13 seats after a close fight with

the NCP-supported Annasaheb Magar Co-operation Panel, they said. In Baramati APMC, NCP candidates grabbed all four seats.

Talking about the results, Baramati MLA Ajit Pawar said farmers and agricultural societies have delivered a good "judgement".

"It's a tradition in Baramati where we get 80 to 85 per cent of votes in every election. Those newly elected (candidates) will

work towards the betterment of the market... Under the guidance of Sharad Pawar, we are doing a great job in Baramati. After the market elections, we now have the responsibility to do more work," he said.

Of the 18 seats in Akola APMC in the Vidarbha region, the panel supported by NCP won 11 seats, followed by 5 seats bagged by the BJP-backed panel. The one supported by the

Uddhav Thackeray group won 2 seats, while the Vanchit-Aghadi panel failed to open its account.

In Gondia APMC, the panel led by sitting MLA Vinod Agrawal emerged victorious. In Tirora, candidates supported by BJP won 10 out of 18 seats. In Arjuni Morgaon, BJP-supported Shetkari Vikas Panel and Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)-backed Krushi Vikas Parivartan Panel won nine seats each. In Amgaon, BJP -NCP led Amgaon Vikas Panel has won 14 seats, officials said.

In Gondia APMC, MLA Agrawal and Congress leader Ashok Gupta had joined hands to form the Parivartan panel against the Kisan Sahkar panel led by former MLA Gopaldas Agrawal and NCP leader Rajendra Jain.

The Parivartan Panel wrested power by winning 14 of the total 18 seats to gain an absolute majority. "This is a mandate against corruption and ten-year misrule of APMC office-bearers," Agrawal said.

## Cine Dancer's Association chief and seven others held in cheating case



**T**he Mumbai Police has registered an FIR against the president of the Cine Dancer's Association (CDA) and seven other office-bearers on the charge of illegally collecting more than Rs 1 crore from aspiring members, an official said on Sunday.

Along with the CDA president, its general secretary, treasurer, and five other office-bearers have been booked for alleged cheating.

Dancers registered with CDA are hired as background dancers for songs in Bollywood movies, serials, and live performances.

As per the complaint, the accused collected money to the tune of Rs 1 crore-Rs 1.5 crore under the pretext of awarding CDA membership even though they didn't have permission to collect money from the court.

The complainant alleged the CDA president and others parked money in the bank accounts of their family members. They prepared fake invoices to release the amount but never gave the account of spend, as per the FIR.

The accused persons used to collect money in the name of granting membership, donations, non-subscription, etc., the FIR stated.

## Maha building collapse: One more body recovered, death toll rises to 5



**T**he body of a man was recovered on Sunday from the debris of a two-storey building that collapsed in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district, taking the toll to five, an official said.

Fifteen people were still feared trapped, Thane Municipal

Corporation's Regional Disaster Management Cell (RDMC) chief Avinash Sawant said.

Twelve people were injured after the structure collapsed like a pack of cards at 1.45 pm on Saturday at Wardhaman Compound in Valpada area, officials said.

## Nights to be cooler across state in May: Weather dept

**A** relatively cooler summer is likely to continue for most of Maharashtra, the IMD's May temperature outlook has forecast. Though parts of Konkan and Vidarbha may continue to feel the heat during the day, most parts of Maharashtra could witness cooler nights start-

ing next month. As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD) outlook, most parts of western Maharashtra, including Konkan and some eastern parts of the state, have higher probability of experiencing above-normal day temperatures during May. In the rest of the areas, including

parts of Madhya Maharashtra, there is an equal chance of the day temperatures falling in any of the three categories — below normal, normal or above-normal, as per the white colour depicted on the tercile probability maximum temperature forecast map in the outlook.

## School holidays from May 2, but govt schedules event on May 6

**A**fter announcing summer vacations from May 2, the state wants schools to organise activities on May 6 as part of the conclusion of the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj death centena-

ry year. The education director (primary) on Friday issued a circular directing schools to declare results of 2022-23 on May 6, and conduct activities that day to mark the end of the death centenary.

## Nation

### Punjab: Panic grips residents after gas leak in Ludhiana, locals narrate ordeals



**P**anic gripped Punjab's Ludhiana after a gas leakage was reported at a factory which claimed 11 lives on Sunday morning, with the locals narrating the ordeals of the tragic incident. The gas leak incident sparked fear amongst the residents of the area following which many of them shut the doors and windows of their homes, isolating themselves to avoid the possible chances of infection.

11 people died so far while 11 others were hospitalised in dif-

ferent hospitals including Civil Hospital in Ludhiana. "11 deaths confirmed till now... in all likelihood, there is some gas contamination which has happened. It is quite likely that maybe some chemical reacted with methane in manholes. All of this is being verified. NDRF is retrieving samples," says Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner Surabhi Malik.

"We appeal that don't believe any kind of rumours and do not panic. The gas which was leaked has been diluted but just to check

the spread of the gas the cooperation, and NDRF teams are checking. We are just going to for safety's sake check how much the gas has spread," she added. The official further appealed to the locals to wear masks and stay away from the spot of the incident a little longer, adding that the cause of the gas leak is yet to be ascertained. "A total of 11 persons are dead. There are five females and six males including 2 male children of 10 years and 13 years," the official said. The two deceased at SPS Hospital were identified as Naveent Kumar (39) and Neetu Devi (39), they said adding that the identification of the other deceased is awaited. Addressing the media Commissioner of Police Mandeep Singh Sidhu said, "The investigation is going on and till now 11 people have died and they are admitted to different hospitals. The forensic team will reach here from Bathinda." ANI

### Wrestler's protest: Kabil Sibal raises question of 'pliant investigation'

**R**ajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday said the wrestlers staging a protest here demanding the arrest of the wrestling federation chief over sexual harassment charges are facing the predicament of a defiant accused and "no arrests", and wondered whether there is a "pliant investigation" into the matter. Sibal, a senior advocate, is representing the wrestlers in the Supreme Court. In a tweet, he said: "Protesting Wrestlers Predicament: A minor, 6 others traumatised, a defiant accused, a silent PMO, no arrests. A pliant investigation?" The Delhi Police filed two FIRs against Wrestling

Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Friday on allegations of sexual harassment levelled against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP by seven women wrestlers.

The first information reports (FIRs) were filed hours after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Delhi Police, told an apex court bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha that a case will be registered on Friday. While the first FIR relates to the allegations of a minor wrestler and was registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences

(POCSO) Act, the second was related to outraging the modesty of women. Several wrestlers who have brought laurels for the country from international competitions have been protesting at Jantar Mantar, demanding that the government make public the findings of an oversight panel that investigated the sexual harassment charges against Singh. The wrestlers have asserted that they will not leave the protest site until Singh is arrested. They resumed their sit-in last Sunday and demanded that the findings of the panel that probed the allegations be made public. PTI

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in all likelihood, there is some gas contamination which has happened. It is quite likely that maybe some chemical reacted with methane in manholes. All of this is being verified. NDRF is retrieving samples," says Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner Surabhi Malik.

### Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Seeks To Reach Out To Workers Of Anganwadis & ASHA With Promise Of Enhanced Pay



**C**ongress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said if her party is voted to power in the Karnataka Assembly election, the honorarium of workers at major Anganwadis will be increased to Rs 15,000 per month, and for those in mini Anganwadis, it will be hiked to Rs 10,000. The party will also increase the honorarium of the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers to Rs 8,000 per month, and Rs 5,000 per month for women working for the mid-day meal programme, she said. In a public meeting here in Belagavi district bordering Maharashtra, the Congress leader said, "Our party has decided to increase the honorarium up to Rs 15,000 for my sisters in ma-

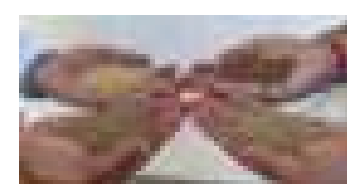
for women in mini Anganwadis. The honorarium of the ASHA workers will be hiked to Rs 8,000 and those working for the mid-day meals will get Rs 5,000."

Vadra also promised to give Rs three lakh to the workers of main Anganwadis on their retirement or to their nominee in the event of death due to accident and Rs two lakh to those working in mini Anganwadis. She slammed the BJP government for its "lies and deception", saying it "ruled the state in such a bad way that it got the tag of 40 per cent commission government". Karnataka votes on May 10, with results slated to be declared on May 13.

### Army plans millet fest to raise awareness about crop among all ranks in J-K

**A**s part of its initiative to raise awareness among all ranks and families about benefits of millets in diet, the Northern Command of the Indian Army is mulling to organize a mega 'Station Millet Festival' in Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesman said on Sunday. The festival will be organized in near future as a culmination of an awareness campaign started by the command with the holding of a workshop at the northern command headquarters in Udampur on Sunday, the spokesman said. He said the awareness workshop on 'Mission Millets' was conducted in collaboration with the Jammu University and was presided by Chief of Staff, Headquarters Northern Command, Lt Gen Andya Sengupta.

The Northern Command is also planning various other



events as part of 'Mission Millet' campaign to include essay, quiz and slogan competition at school level and cooking competition at unit level. The spokesman said millets are not just a nutritious grain, but also a reminder of the "rich agricultural heritage of India". "To harness the untapped potential of millets for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, the year 2023 has been declared as 'International Year of Millets'. The Northern Command has undertaken a noble initiative to raise awareness among all ranks and families highlighting benefits of including millets in diet," he said.

World

# US calls on China to stop 'provocative and unsafe' acts in South China Sea



The United States called upon China to stop the provocative and unsafe conduct in the South China Sea, the State Department said in the statement. In a statement, the State Department said, "We call upon Beijing to desist from its provocative and unsafe conduct. The United States continues to track and monitor these interactions closely."

This statement came after the Philippines accused China's coast guard of "aggressive tactics" on Friday following an incident during a Philippine coast guard patrol close to the Philippines-held Second Thomas Shoal, a flash-point for previous altercations

located 105 nautical miles (195 km) off its coast, Reuters reported. In February, the Philippines said a Chinese ship had directed a "military-grade laser" at one of its resupply vessels.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said that Philippine vessels had intruded into Chinese waters and made deliberate provocative moves. "On April 23, two Philippine Coast Guard vessels intruded into the waters of the Ren'ai Reef without Chinese permission. One of them made deliberate provocative moves by closing in on a Chinese Coast Guard vessel. In accordance with the law, the Chinese Coast Guard

vessel upheld China's territorial sovereignty and maritime order by making timely manoeuvres to dodge the dangerously approaching Philippine vessel and avoid a collision. The Chinese side's manoeuvres were professional and restrained," Ning replied to a media query.

The State Department said that the US stands with the Philippines in the face of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Coast Guard's continued infringement upon freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

"Imagery and video recently published in the media is a stark reminder of PRC harassment and intimidation of Philippine vessels as they undertake routine economic zone," the state department said in the statement.

"The United States stands with our Philippine allies in upholding the rules-based international maritime order and reaffirms that an armed attack in the Pacific, which includes the South China Sea, on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft, including those of the Coast Guard, would invoke U.S. mutual defence commitments under Article IV of the 1951 U.S. Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty," it added.

# EU's employment rate peaks at 75 pc in 2022



75 percent (193.5 million) of the European Union's 20-64-year-olds were employed, the highest share recorded since the start of the time series in 2009, according to data on the labour force published by Eurostat.

The employment rate dropped to 72 percent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but rebounded to 73 percent in 2021 and further increased by 2 percentage points (pp) in 2022. Among the EU countries, 11 had employment rates above 78 percent (one of the three targets set in the 2030 action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with the Netherlands (83 percent), Sweden, and Estonia (both 82 per cent) having the highest rates. The lowest rates were recorded in Italy (65 per cent), Greece (66 per cent), and Romania (69 per cent).

In 2022, the EU over-qualification rate was 22 per cent, with 21 per cent for men and 23 per

cent for women. Over-qualification is when people with tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-8) are employed in occupations that do not require such a high level of education (equivalent to ISCO major groups 4-9).

Among the EU countries, the over-qualification rate was highest in Spain (36 per cent), followed by Greece and Cyprus (each 32 per cent).

Meanwhile, Luxembourg (7 per cent), Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, and Czechia (each 14 per cent) recorded the lowest rates. In 19 of the 27 EU countries, women had higher over-qualification rates than men, with the largest differences recorded in Malta (+11 pp), Cyprus (+8 pp), Italy, and Slovakia (both +7 pp).

However, in eight EU countries, men had higher over-qualification rates, with the biggest differences recorded in Baltic countries: Lithuania (+5 pp), Estonia, and Latvia (each +4 pp).

## Users gain access to ChatGPT in Italy after month-long temporary ban

Italian authorities and OpenAI have announced that access to the ChatGPT chatbot has been reinstated after the company "addressed or clarified" concerns raised by Italy's data protection authority, Al Jazeera reported.

After the Data Protection Authority of Italy, also known as Garante, temporarily banned ChatGPT and opened an investigation into the artificial intelligence program's alleged violation of privacy laws, OpenAI removed ChatGPT from the Italian market last month.

The Italian Data Protection Authority described its action as provisional "until ChatGPT respects privacy", as per Al Jazeera.

The watchdog added that OpenAI, the company that created ChatGPT, lacked a legal justification for "the mass collection

and storage of personal data for the purpose of 'training' the algorithms underlying the operation of the platform".

It also made mention of a data breach that occurred on March 20 and was attributed by the American company to a glitch. User conversations and payment information were exposed, Al Jazeera reported.

Chatbots are computer programmes that process and recreate discussions with users that are human-like using a massive quantity of online data. ChatGPT, which stands for Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer and was introduced in November 2022 as a prototype, is powered by a machine-learning model that mimics the functioning of the human brain.

## Women Emergency Volunteers take part in Israeli Mass Casualty Exercise



A terrorist has opened fire on a bus full of civilians, hitting the driver. The bus crashes into other vehicles, leaving 50 people wounded, some critically.

In just minutes, with lights and sirens blaring, women from different backgrounds from all over

Israel converge on the scene, wearing protective vests and helmets, in specially equipped motorcycles, ambulances and private vehicles.

The first to arrive on the scene, they cut through the fire and smoke and quickly assess the wounded. They categorize and stabilize them and arrange for

transport to hospitals. While the prospect of such an attack is very real, this scenario was a simulated, "mass casualty incident" drill, which United Hatzalah of Israel held in Janana Park in Jerusalem, on April 28, just days after Yom Haatzmaut, Israel's 75th birthday.

"We are the only Hatzalah in the world that incorporates women into the EMT team," said Raphael Poch, United Hatzalah international spokesman and digital media manager and himself an emergency medical technician.

Hatzalah began including women in its program in 2006. Some 1,300 of its current 6,500 volunteers are women--some 20 percent.

## Expression

# Working Journalist movement



Er. Prabhat Kishore

The Author is a technocrat and educationist

Before independence, journalists used to get very low salaries in India. Neither the working hours were fixed nor there was any proper arrangement for holidays. The policy of "No work No pay" was adopted by the newspaper owners in case of illness. The journalists had to face many such problems and miseries. For the prevention of these problems, the journalists of the country and the states have been demanding from time to time to investigate the newspaper industry, in which they have been successful to a large extent.

In 1944, a committee was appointed by the All India Hindi Journalist Association to investigate the newspaper industry. Fifteen questions were asked by the committee, such as name, address, title, other qualifications, salary, whether there is any rule regarding increment etc. The answers to these questions were quite interesting. A journalist replied – "What is the destination of flying birds, where there is fodder, there is home. He got a job for fifty rupees. Salary hike is not expected. There is no provision for leave even in case of illness."

The answer of the second gentleman was- "My salary was sixty rupees per month. Presently he is being paid eighty-five rupees. There is no provision of pension, gratuity, insurance etc". Shri Bhola Paswan Shastri, who later became the Chief Minister of Bihar (three times), used to work in the daily "Rashtravani", published from Pataliputra. His answer was – "I get fifty rupees here. Earlier, I used to work in Rashtra Sandesh for twenty rupees". Shri Ramkrishna Raghunath Khadilkar (Hindi Dainik Aaj) replied – "I have been getting eighty rupees to one hundred and thirty-five rupees for working in different newspapers."

In the year 1944, the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference constituted an inquiry committee, which at its Karachi session recommended a monthly salary of one hundred rupees for English journalists and seventy-five rupees per month for vernacular journalists. Delhi Hindi Journalist Association and Bihar Journalist



Association opposed this proposal and demanded monthly payment ranging from one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five rupees.

In 1944, Syed Abdullah Bareilvi, while presiding over the All India Newspaper Editor's Conference in Chennai (Madras), said that journalists should be organized on the basis of trade union. In the meantime, in Punjab, the Punjab Journalists Association was formed under the leadership of Rana Jang Bahadur Singh and A.C. Bali. This union threatened the newspaper-owners, as a result of which the journalists were paid good salaries in the form of dearness allowance. There was an increase in the salary of newspaper's journalist from Rs.60 to Rs.80. This increased the trust of journalists towards the trade union. In 1947, a committee was appointed by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to investigate the difficulties faced by journalists in the state. Similarly, the Government of Madhya Pradesh also appointed an inquiry committee under the chairmanship of Justice Madolkar. Both the committees submitted their reports to the respective governments, but no action was taken on them.

Meanwhile, in September 1947, an unpleasant incident took place in the daily Aaj published from Kashi. Shrikant Thakur Vidyalkar, the then editor-in-chief of the newspaper, was forced to quit his job. Thirteen members of the editorial division went on a one-hour pen strike against the rude behaviour meted out to him by the newspaper owners. However, they assured that the publication will be delivered on time and there would be no other loss. But the

owners immediately fired those thirteen journalists. This untoward incident irked the journalists across the country and they were forced to form a federation of journalists at the national level. On 28 October 1950, Journalists from all over India organized a conference in Delhi, in which the "Indian Federation of Working Journalists" was founded. Mr. M. Chellapati Rao was elected as the president of the federation and Jagdish Prasad Chaturvedi as the secretary.

In March 1951, the constitution of the Federation was presented for approval in its convention held in Mumbai. According to this, it was decided that the federation will remain a proletarian federation in true sense i.e. organisers of the newspaper will not be its members. At the same time only those unions or associations will be recognized as members, who have been registered as trade unions. The constitution of the federation was passed unanimously. The representatives of the South Indian Journalists Association did not participate in it.

In April 1952, in the Calcutta session of the federation, a strong demand was made to the Government of India to investigate the newspaper industry and appointed a commission. Along with this, some policy related decisions were taken which continued to conduct the activities of the conference for a long time. In the session, a demand was made to provide the benefits of Labour Law, Industrial Disputes Act, Wages Act and other similar laws to working journalists. After the formation of the federation, two journalists of the English daily "Leader" published from

Prayag were suddenly removed from their jobs. In this one Mr. Mahipati Ram Nagar had served the newspaper for twenty-one years and the other Mr. Ramnathan for twenty-eight years. They were neither given retrenchment salary nor notice amount. Mr. Ramnathan had to get his daughter married. He was so worried that he died on 13 July 1952.

The Newspaper Commission was appointed on 23 September 1952, which submitted its report to the Government of India in 1954. Several journalists of the country testified before the commission under the leadership of Vinaynath Narayan Singh, assistant editor of "The Searchlight" published from Pataliputra. Under his leadership, the Bihar Working Journalists Union presented a very impressive report. Mr. Singh also submitted accountable documents, as a result of which he was fired by the Searchlight's management. Till then the journalists of the country did not come under the purview of the definition of labourer. The result was that even after knocking the doors of the Supreme Court, Mr. Singh could not get any legal help. After this, Mr. Singh stayed in Delhi for some time, but where he went is not known till date. He was the first recognized person to be martyred on the sacrificial altar of journalistic movement.

The Indian Federation of Working Journalists believes in the labour welfare, so it had to organize movements to protect the rights and interests of journalists. The Indian Working Journalist movement basically started with economic questions, but has been active in defending of newspaper's freedom, raising the standard of journalism, and restructuring the newspaper industry.

The other universal body of journalists in the country is the National Union of Journalists (India), which claims to believe in the same policy and objective as the federation. Indian Working Journalist Federation, Press Trust of India Union, United News Agency Union and Newspaper Employees Federation of India jointly formed a larger federation to protect journalists and newspaper employees from exploitation by newspaper owners. Even after this, the journalist's associations formed in the states are trying to find solutions to the problems faced by the journalists of the country in different states and newspapers.

## Entertainment

### Sonam Kapoor to perform spoken word at King Charles III's coronation concert

Bollywood diva Sonam Kapoor Ahuja will be performing at the historical coronation concert of King Charles III. According to Variety, Sonam Kapoor will be present at King Charles III's coronation concert with numerous celebrities from around the world. The news source has confirmed that the 'Neerja' actress will be performing a spoken word at the coronation concert on May 7, 2023. Sonam will be joined by actor Tom Cruise and Pooh who will appear alongside "Dynasty" star Joan Collins, singer Tom Jones, adventurer Bear Grylls and dancer Oti Mabuse in a series of pre-recorded VTs in which they will reveal "little-known facts about the King" for the coronation, which will honour King Charles' ascension to the throne following the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II last year.

Other celebrities on the list are Paloma Faith, Tiwa Savage, Steve Winwood, Olly Murs and club DJ Pete Tong, who will play his Ibiza classics. The concert will also feature world-renowned pianist Lang Lang as well as recent 'The Piano' winner Lucy. ANI



### Abhishek Bachchan reacts to fan asking him letting Aishwarya work more

This is not the first time that Abhishek Bachchan has been questioned about his wife's professional choices and so on. But the junior Bachchan knows how to shut down the trolls and he came up with a befitting reply. Praising Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's latest release 'Ponniyin Selvan 2' Abhishek wrote on Twitter on Saturday, "#PS2 is simply FANTASTIC!!! At a loss for words right now. So overwhelmed. Well done to the entire team #ManiRatnam@chiyaan@trishtrashers @actor\_jayamravi @Karthi\_Offli and the rest of the cast and crew. And so, so proud of the Mrs. Her best by far. #AishwaryaRaiBachchan."

In that thread, a person commented, "As you should! Now let her sign more movies and you take care of Aaradhya." Retorting back to the said person, Abhishek wrote, "Let her sign???" Sir, she certainly doesn't need my permission to do anything. Especially something she loves." ANI

### Alia Bhatt preps for her Met Gala debut with this special companion

Alia Bhatt who is all set to make her Met Gala debut this year on Saturday shared a glimpse of preparation and revealed her companion for the fashion's biggest night out. Taking to Instagram story, Alia shared a couple of pictures with her cat.

In the first picture, she can be seen facing her back towards the camera while dressed in a black strapless gown and holding her cat.

She wrote, "Prepping for the Met..." And in the next actor can be seen showering love and kisses on Edward and captioning it, "with my own Coup-Ed."

On Sunday, Alia also shared a photo from her room in New York and captioned it "New York- You were missed." ANI

### "You are missed every day", Neetu Kapoor, Riddhima remember late Rishi Kapoor on his third death anniversary

Few words and deep emotions! Neetu Kapoor took to Instagram on Sunday to share her thoughts on the third death anniversary of her late husband Rishi Kapoor. Neetu wrote, "You are missed every day with all the wonderful happy memories." Neetu posted a picture with Rishi where both the lovebirds were twinning. Rishi wore a blue tee and pants teaming it up with a hat and shade. Neetu wore a top, which was based on a lighter shade of blue. The picture seems to be from one of their travel diaries.

Rishi's daughter Riddhima Kapoor Sahani also posted a throwback picture on her Instagram story. The picture shows baby Riddhima alongside her father, looking dashing as usual. The caption says, "I miss you every day." ANI

