



Barsu refinery work won't start by force promises people won't face injustice: CM Shinde



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Headphones compulsory on BEST buses in Mumbai

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) has barred people from indulging in loud conversations on mobile phones and accessing audios/videos on mobile devices without headphones while travelling on its buses, informed officials. The loud conversations can be fined and prohibited. The decision has been taken by the city civic transport body to evade inconvenience to co-passengers.

Acting on the numerous complaints from passengers, the BEST administration has taken this decision and issued a notification on April 24. Under the new regulation, all passengers travelling on BEST buses, the public transport service for Mumbai and neighbouring cities, are required to use headphones while watching videos or listening to an audio on their mobile devices.

The spokesperson said BEST's buses are public service vehicles and hence, to avoid any kind of inconvenience or trouble caused by anyone to co-passengers, action can be taken under the Bombay Police Act's section 38/112. The department concerned has been asked to display the notification on all the buses, the official said. All staffers working on the BEST buses, including those of the wet-leased vehicles hired from private companies, will be made aware of this new regulation, he said.

The BEST, which has a fleet of nearly 3,400 buses, provides public transport services in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mira-Bhayander cities. More than 30 lakh passengers travel every day on the BEST buses.

Majority of Indian Sikhs don't want Khalistan

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Sikh don't want to separate from India soil, what they want is basic respect and acceptance. In this book I have written how Sikh's are politically betrayed in India. Some Sikh leaders had a lot of political ambitions but they were not fit for the party-political itinerary, while some sections of Sikhs wanted to push the agenda of Khalistan but that can never happen. Some issues are here to stay for not to be solved or resolved, same like separate Tamil Nadu, Hindu Rashtra and Kashmir. These issues are political gasses; they are used for burning political agendas only during elections. With the matured voters such issues have also lost their relevance. Go to Punjab and ask the average Punjabi or Sikh, if they really crave for Khalistan. Likewise, ask an average Hindu voter about Hindu Rashtra, they don't even know what Hindu Rashtra is all about. The Indian Middle-class has routine challenges and their life goes by dealing with them.

Those minute and rather insignificant number raising slogans can't be construed to be speaking for the whole community. 1984 was indeed a dark year for Sikhs as well as India. It shouldn't be forgotten, but one must make sure that there is no repeat of such incidents. In recent times the idea of Khalistan is fueled by some sections of NRI Sikhs, who fled from the country a long time ago, and Pakistani ISI agents who want to disrupt peace and harmony in India. Sikhs demand basic respect from other communities. Sikhs have made selfless sacrifices to shield others from cruelty, torture

& death in the past and even present. Their charitable work is enormous, they are known for helping people of India irrespective of caste, religion or creed. They feel hurt when you make jokes on them and treat them as entertainment entities. They don't want to be labeled as Khalistanis or extremists. A small vocal section sharing hashtags on social media, raising loud slogans or wielding kirpans are not representative of the entire Sikh community.

Since 1984, that young generation has now grown up and many old age people have departed. Then the young generations Sikhs are now entrepreneurs, government employees, farmers and army cadres. The overall mistrust of the Indian state has been restored to an utmost confidence in them. The injustice to the community still irks and spills out on social media, is because of the Indian policy of going with skirmish against its own people, in the name of teaching them a lesson, murdering a bunch of them and denying justice to them recurrently. This in the case of all other minorities, the riots are well propagated plans to demoralize and break the minorities. With time, the memories of this massacre may fade, but it will rank in Sikh History with the likes of the one orchestrated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, who also attacked the Golden Temple and massacred a large number of Sikhs. Punjab is a landlocked state, with two nuclear powers on both sides and the destabilized region of Kashmir to the North. There is no chance of being able to do trade without aligning with either Pakistan or India. Punjab has

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Majority of Indian Sikhs don't want Khalistan

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Congress party was solely accused for 1984 Sikh riots; there were many congress leaders who found participating in passing the orders. But to my surprise, ever since 1984 Punjab has been electing the Congress Party time and again, which means 1984 allegations against Congress hold no ground?

Congress was always unfair to Sikhs since the pre-independence era but the anger against them has almost faded in the struggle of choosing a lesser enemy

Social media played an important role in Farmer's agitation. While all kinds of media either refused to show them initially, and later on to demoralize farmers they were peddling fake news. Likewise, Youtube gave voices to agitating farmers.

no power sources or mineral resources of its own. The state's major assets are its rivers and fertile lands, and the rivers blocked by the dams and water is distributed around. Most Sikhs don't bother with the idea of Khalistan but they are bothered by the idea of sharing their water and resources.

Congress party was solely accused for 1984 Sikh riots; there were many congress leaders who found participating in passing the orders. But to my surprise, ever since 1984 Punjab has been electing the Congress Party time and again, which means 1984 allegations against Congress hold no ground? Most of the Chief Ministers of Punjab were Sikhs are Congress loyalists, and voters are also most of the Sikhs. Why is the anger against Congress translated as votes? Why Sikh politicians are supporting Congress? Punjab has endured the dark decade of 1980. The violence took a toll on both Hindu and Sikh communities. That is the reason the vast majority of Sikhs in Punjab do not want a separate homeland and that war-like situation. The occasional shrill voices for Khalistan separation comes from those NRIs in Canada/UK who have nothing to lose in India. They faced no brunt during 1980, nor have anything to lose if those dark days return to Punjab.

Maybe some misguided youth who were born in the 1990s and who don't know what it was to live and grow up in Punjab of the 1980s. The movement in the 1980s lost o because Sikhs never identified themselves with the movement for a separate homeland. Mind you, even after Operation Blue Star many Sikh Generals in the Indian Army only resigned in protest, imagine what would have happened had they revolted? Their protest was against the Indian States and authorities but not the Indian Nation.

Congress was always unfair to Sikhs since the pre-independence era but the anger against them has almost faded in the struggle of choosing a lesser enemy. They prefer to vote for secular political parties rather than trusting communal politics. Punjab is mostly ruled by the Congress. Captain Amarinder Singh former Chief Minister was once a scion of Patiala state and former Indian army officer. He was the first Indian parliamentarian; who resigned as a mark of protest after Operation Blue Star operation in Punjab. But later on until early 2021 he was Congress veteran and Chaired as CM of Punjab.

Decade old Aam Aadmi Party made their political debut from Punjab, and Sikhs across the globe kept a lot of hopes from them as they thought this new party may deliver some justice to them by releasing political prisoners from Jail. The Aam Aadmi Party turned out to be the biggest disappointment. Instead of sticking to its anti-corruption agenda, AAP got into unwanted politics. Now Punjab wants peaceful governance and Congress has managed to do so. Above all some political motivators were successful enough in creating a perception in urban voters that AAP is being supported by fringe elements like Khalistani supporters. Some unfortunate events also led to this like the Sucha Singh Chhotepur event. Chotepur was Punjab AAP convener and biggest leader of AAP in Punjab but he was caught selling tickets. In India being good and doing everything right doesn't guarantee you electoral success. Even those who considered AAP to be a reasonable alternative did not vote for AAP; in apprehension that Akalis may return to power hence those irritated with Akalis and supporters of AAP also voted Congress.

Apart from political dilemmas and social stigmas, India Sikhs are still fighting for their religious and traditional identity. Why are they not allowed to disassociate with all other beliefs and adhere to Sikhism. Why do we try to establish their ancestry in Hinduism? Why is the Indian media also mostly biased against their faith? Why is their descent translated as Khalistan?

To some extent the politically motivated media houses hardly have anything to offer when it comes to the Minorities of India. Hindu supremacy is the prime agenda of mainstream media channels. Spewing venom against minorities, creating disturbing narratives about them is routine assignments of some sold-out media houses. And in this race recent victims are Sikh farmers; their protest was deduced as Pakistan-sponsored and Khalistan sympathizer's event. There are many Sikhs who proudly serve India, they belong here and calling them terrorists was disgraceful.

During farmer's agitation one old farmer said on the allegation of extremism, मैं अपने जमीर और जमीन दोनों से ईमानदार हूँ, कैसे यकीं दिला दूँ? (I am honest with both my conscience and my motherland; how can I make one believe?) The right to protest against the establishment is a fundamental right in Democracy. We all Indians have equal rights in this democratic country. Thankfully some parallel media houses were bold enough to echo farmer's voices and gather support across the globe. These are the people who are holding democratic values against the authoritarian elements.

India's Sikh population stands at 20.8 million, which is 1.72 percent of the country's total population. Sikhism is the fourth largest religion in India contributing 1.7% of the population and has existed since the late 15th century. The Sikhs are present in all over the parts of India and their contribution is equally huge to all the state's economy and welfare.

During Farmer's agitation, the headlines were made to project Sikh farmers as Khalistani terrorists', showing one viral video of a Sikh man threatening Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the entire agitation was branded as an anti-BJP protest. To counter this bias and menace, the agitating Sikhs came up with their own social media page called Kisan Ekta Morcha; Facebook temporarily shut down that page, and then they printed their news and circulated amongst farmers. Kisan Ekta Morcha; was the official update on the agitation, and was restored in three hours following social media outrage.

Social media played an important role in Farmer's agitation. While all kinds of media either refused to show them initially, and later on to demoralize farmers they were peddling fake news. Likewise, Youtube gave voices to agitating farmers. The powerful use social media and the strong will of farmers finally forced our PM to repeal the farm Laws. Some see it as a political gimmick ahead of elections in crucial states. Some farmers are still agitating for a complete conclusion.

Till today no media person was made accountable for making those derogatory statements and Running those schemes. No media dared to talk, what has forced the Modi government to repeal those laws? Some Media anchors were seen crying in their programmes questioning Modi's soft approach, some went on tomtom

how kind hearted Modi is but none of them were absolutely responsible for drawing accurate conclusions.

The seva by Sikh's was translated as picnic, the voices of Sikhs were anticipated as voice of Khalistan extremists, and the participation of Sikh women was fated as sold-out protesters. Film actors, media channels, anchors, IT cells and celebrities were unleashed against one community, and finally most of the common citizens started believing that the protesting Sikhs were terrorists.

This is not the one and only issue, be it of releasing political prisoners or Sikh agitators, the media either remained mute or displayed their double standards. When Sadhvi Pragya was released from jail on health reasons Congress leaders coined a term called "Hindu Terrorists". Entire media, social media, political leaders, Hindu religious preachers and Sanyasis all took to the prime-time debates with rabble rousing media anchors by calling it 'Hindu-phobia'. Some went on cursing the fate of other minorities in India. I am not passing any judgement here, but if we feel bad to be coined as terrorists then why the minorities of India had to be tagged arbitrarily?

Another issue that is agonizing Sikhs is the prolonged detention of Sikh political prisoners, this issue has grabbed global attention during the recent times when a Sikh farmer of Haryana Gurbaksh Singh Khalsa vowed to fast until his death or the release of named prisoners who were not being released by the Indian State despite serving the minimum mandatory terms of their sentences. But the Indian media was again mute or misleading. This issue was discussed on various global media platforms. We are a small newspaper, but our morality is way too big, keeping calm on such crucial issues was a burden on my soul. I don't know how much I will be able to reach people but I am sure that I made some efforts. Maybe the nonviolent, peaceful struggle of Gurbaksh Singh Khalsa was not dramatic enough to gain TRP. Maybe this topic is not commercially viable for them, maybe there is no personal gain in this news telecast. Afterall media standards have unbeatable competition for the advertisements. This is the reason Indian citizens remained unaware of the developments taking place in Punjab. They just know there was a threat to the PM's life due to a security breach. They just know how political scheming failed in tug of war. They just know some female calling herself Sidhu's sister is washing the family's dirty linen in public. They know all that creates the sensation but not sense. Sikhs are not only political victims but they are sufferers in the entertainment industry too; Sikh jokes are another thing that Sikhs have to deal with every day. Many of us have made merry with the jokes, ignoring and realizing that it's just a mere joke. But, why do we make a point of humor and that too not on genuine humor stunts but appearance, communication skills, not so intelligent people. To the contrary many Sikh personalities have been at the top of their respective fields.

When the whole country was divided into states on the basis of language. Punjab was an exception. Sikhs started supporting Akalis because they felt their culture and language was in danger. Mass protest irked Nehru; he made every possible effort to tame. Partap Singh Kairon, CM (congress 1960) worked hard for undivided Punjab and made it the most prosperous state. After Kairon's assassination and Nehru's death Akali leaders once again pushed their agenda for division of Punjab on a lingual basis.

Later on, Lal Bahadur Shastri took some good decisions and helped the Punjab. In the meantime, one of the top congress leaders promised to give perks to Punjab if it gets divided. This came true in the leadership of Indira Gandhi, who flipped all the decisions of Shastri. Punjab was misused by the center to gain votes. Hatred against them was rising in the country. In early 80s there was a conference in Amritsar, top Sikh leaders were called but they felt discriminated against. Media was under the control of politicians; no news was made to bring the truth about all that was burning in Punjab. Meanwhile, the Government started promoting Deras. Congress helped Deras to open various new branches. This was done to weaken Sikh agitations. Later on Badals also supported Dera under the table to make Sikhs insecure. Time and again they got deceived but every time the opponents were different. Sikhism has often been criticized by non-Sikhs regarding its texts, practices, and social customs, but Sikhs and other scholars argue that these criticisms are flawed and are based on a biased and poor understanding of the texts, particularly the multiple languages used in the Sikh scriptures. They also argue that most western scholars who attempted to interpret eastern religious texts, were missionaries and could not overcome the bias they carried with them, irrespective of whether they were translating the Quran, Vedas, Puranas of the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak rejected ceremonial worship and encouraged belief in one true God, Waheguru.

The worship and bowing to the Guru Granth Sahib, has often been interpreted by western scholars as parallel to idolization, as observed by the Hindu faith, which defeats the ideology of Guru Nanak. A few Sikh groups have put pressure on universities to clutter academic criticism of popular Sikh literature and theories of Sikh history but even today, the outlook towards Sikhism has not changed much. From political linkage to protecting Sikh cultural values they have various challenges to deal with.

Vaidehi Taran

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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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Letters to the Editor

Rahane & Rahul gives stability to team India in the WTC finals!

Performance in domestic cricket has been rewarded as Ajinkya Rahane has been recalled for the WTC final after some brilliant performances in the Ranji Trophy. Rahane gives stability to the middle order as he has an immaculate defence & would be an asset for Team India in Test Matches where patience gets tested. A couple of good innings in the IPL too must have made the job of the selectors easy & I am sure Rahane would do well as he has an impeccable record in Tests.

Inclusion of K L Rahul ahead of Suryakumar Yadav too is interesting. It was horses for the courses as the former was picked going by current form in a format that suits his style & KL Rahul can even keep wickets at times of need. The Rohit Sharma led team looks strong on paper & India will have the upper hand against Australia in the WTC finals!

S.N.Kabra

"Excessive" enthusiasm of the super-rich

The fascination of gold does not stop anyone, whether rich or poor, gold is something that always attracts. In India, marriage without gold is a rare event. Now other countries along with India have entered the race to buy gold. Globally, the super-rich in Austria account for an average of 8% of the total purchases, the super-rich in our country show 6% of the total purchases, and our neighboring country China also shows enthusiasm for 6% of purchases. The super-rich in various countries have invested an average of 8% of their total investment in gold. Due to the coronavirus, the global banks reduced interest rates and due to the adoption of liquidity policies by the banks, the drop in the interest rates caused a huge loss to the common customers. The common citizens had to face many financial crises. Due to this, gold may have been preferred by the super-rich. Investments through investments like gold which are stable and protect against inflation will cause the price of gold to increase in the future.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Waste water treatment has to be modernised

The world is progressing at a rapid pace, and this progression is exerting a lot of pressure on natural resources. The resources are limited, but demand has been increased to all time higher. The nations are facing many challenges including climate change, extinction of natural flora and fauna, acute crisis of fresh water etc. Tremendous population growth has put stress on water and sanitation system. One of the major issues of present days is the management of wastewater being generated from domestic, hospital, industries, and agricultural sectors. Discharge of wastewater into rivers, seas, and oceans harms the aquatic environment in many ways such as acidification, nutrient enrichment, high level of growth, oxygen depletion and many others. This has led to the extinction of rich flora and fauna of aquatic systems and also has indirect impact on human health by means of bio-magnifications. Over the years, technologies have developed and many advanced methods have been emerged which are more efficient, cheap and eco-friendly in treating wastewater. Methods like Removal of dye-based recalcitrant from aqueous matrices using radical driven Advanced Oxidation/Reduction Processes, membrane based separation technique, a combined solvent extraction and ion exchange process and a number of other advanced biological means has to be employed at various levels of wastewater treatment.

Vijaykumar H K

Talking About Opposition Unity

What if BRS, TMC, AAP, SP, BJD, PDP, INC, CPI, DMK, CPI(M), TDP, JSP, JD(S), RJD, JMM, RLD, NPP, SAD, and AIMIM merge into one party and fought the 2024 general election against the BJP? The question cannot be answered in the affirmative. Anyway, it does not take it easy policy for BJP and NDA to keep the flag aloft in the year 2024.

Many political parties merged in 1977 under the leadership of charismatic leader Jay Prakash Narayan and won a spectacular victory in the 1977 election. In 1989, many former Janta party factions joined hands to form Janta Dal and contested elections in alliance with BJP and Left parties. Janta Dal managed to emerge as the second biggest party with 143 MPs behind Congress and limited Congress to 197 seats. Janta Dal leader V P Singh became PM of India with support from BJP and Left parties.

Now, if all parties mentioned in the question merge to form a joint opposition party then it will certainly form a formidable challenge to BJP in 2024. It would mean that there would be a direct fight between NDA and this grand party in almost 480 to 500 seats. This would mean that the winner will have to secure somewhat around 45% of votes (assuming 10% plus votes would go to other smaller parties and independents). On paper, the opposition alliance may have a slight advantage based on the 2019 Lok Sabha election. NDA had almost 45% of the votes but many allies like Shiv Sena, JD(U), Akali Dal, etc. have left BJP. So the combined opposition alliance may have the same or slightly more vote share than BJP. But in that case, the result of the election

will depend on the following issues –

The opposition needs a leader who is respected and admired in the whole or part of India. As of today, I don't see any pan-India opposition leader who is capable of challenging Modi nationally. Some leaders are very strong in some pockets but they don't have hardly any effect outside their sphere of influence. Till now, Rahul Gandhi has not shown the leadership skills required to lead the whole opposition. He is considered the spoiler of the unity.

Congress is the political adversary of many of these parties in many states. Congress can't go with the Left Front in Kerala, Congress can't ally with AAP in Punjab, etc. Some parties like SP, AAP, TMC, etc. may not give more seats to Congress leaders on their home turf. Arvind Kejriwal is aiming to become the main challenger to Modi and if he accepts the leadership of Rahul Gandhi or Mamta Banerjee it would be the end of the road for Kejriwal for national expansion. Modi and BJP's propaganda machinery is by far the best throughout the country.

Even if the grand opposition party is formed despite all difficulties, it would give a chance to Modi to claim that all parties have united just for defeating Modi. It would turn the election upside down. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election in UP, BJP invoked this and managed to defeat SP and BSP comprehensively. The united opposition may galvanize the BJP supporters and it would make it easy for BJP to invoke nationalism and Hindutva politics. In states like Bihar, it would be the election between Hindu identity and caste identity. The presence of leaders like

Owaisi in the opposition camp would make BJP's campaign more aggressive.

There are so many contradictions between these parties in many states and it would come into play in the election. A combined opposition would mean that very few people would get tickets and the infighting would be rampant. Let's take some examples - Even if Congress and the Left ally with each other in Kerala, many workers of these parties may not campaign and vote for other factions. In UP, a section of the Yadav community may not vote for a BSP quota candidate, and in Bihar, a section of the Kushwaha community may not vote for an RJD quota candidate. Such a contradiction would be seen in every part of India.

An election between BJP and the united opposition party would be fascinating. Arithmetic may support the united opposition party but BJP would have the chemistry. Anything can happen in such an election and the result of the election would depend on Leadership, election management, containing the infighting, better poll and booth management, etc. Moreover, the complaints about EVM tampering, booth capturing and freebies are part and parcel of the present-day political scenario. Instead of showing strength, the blame game is played across the country for all the inevitable losses. Thus far, the opposition unity is not just a cakewalk but a distant dream.

- C.K. Subramaniam

Columnist

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

City

Four injured in multi-vehicle pile-up on Mumbai-Pune Expressway



As many as four people were injured after seven vehicles rammed into each other on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway at Khopoli, informed officials on Thursday. The rescue team reached the spot and the injured were taken to the hospital.

Further details are awaited. Earlier in March, three people were killed after their car crashed into a stationary truck on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway near Urse village on Friday morning, police said.

According to the police, one

of the deceased has been identified as Vijay Vishwanath Khair. "The car was on its way to Pune from Mumbai. It hit a loaded stationary truck from behind, parked on the roadside and three people including the driver died in this incident", said the police.

Upon receiving the information, the police reached the spot and sent the bodies to the hospital. The police said that the impact was so powerful that the car nearly went under the truck and all three people died on the spot.

"The traffic was affected but later after removing the damaged vehicle from the road, everything was brought back to normal", added the police officials.

People must be taken into confidence: Uddhav Thackeray on Barsu refinery plan

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said he had suggested Barsu as an alternative site for the refinery complex proposed in Nanar, both in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra's Konkan region, but would have moved ahead with it only after taking the people there in confidence had he continued as chief minister.

Thackeray, whose Maha Vikas Aghadi government fell after a rebellion in June last year by his cabinet colleague Eknath Shinde, who went on to become CM, also warned he would extract revenge for his ouster.

Residents of Barsu in Rajapur tehsil in Ratnagiri, some 400 kilometres from Mumbai, have been opposing the setting up of a mega refinery-petrochemical complex at an estimated cost of several thousand crore rupees claiming it would destroy the ecology of the coastal region.



The Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress have been supporting these residents and have said the state government must proceed only after all the fears of the people are allayed.

Addressing the 55th annual general meeting of the Bharatiya Kamgar Sena, the trade union wing of the Shiv Sena (UBT), Thackeray said, "I did suggest Barsu as an alternative site to Nanar due to opposition from the people.

My government was toppled or else I would have demanded that the project be explained to the local population."

He said people will have to be told about employment generation and benefits of a green refinery, but questioned "if it is a green refinery, then why is police resorting to high-handedness?"

Thackeray asked why such projects were being imposed on Maharashtra and said Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis should have visited Barsu and explained the details of the refinery complex to the local population.

"If you wanted to take my suggestion (of Barsu), then why did you topple my government? The manner in which I was betrayed and my government toppled, I would extract revenge," Thackeray said in a warning to the ruling Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party.

2 held with elephant tusks worth Rs 1.5 cr in Thane

Police have arrested two persons and seized elephant tusks worth Rs 1.5 crore from them in Maharashtra's Thane city, an official said on Thursday.

With this, the police claimed to have busted an inter-state gang involved in the smuggling of animal body parts.

Acting on a tip-off, the police laid a trap on Tuesday in Kopri area here and nabbed the duo - one hailing from neighbouring Mumbai and the other one from Tamil Nadu.

The accused have been identified as Mohammad Rafi Ibrahim Sayyed (41), from Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu, and Rahim Bad-

shah Khan (35), from Andheri in Mumbai, he said.

The two have been booked under provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, the official said. The police were trying to find out from where the accused got the elephant tusks and to whom they planned to sell them, he added.

Barsu refinery work won't start by force promises people won't face injustice: CM Shinde



The refinery plan in Barsu in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district will come up only after consent from the local population and not by force or through injustice, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Thursday.

Residents of Barsu in Rajapur tehsil in Ratnagiri, some 400 kilometres from Mumbai, have been opposing the setting up of a mega refinery-petrochemical complex at an estimated cost of several thousand crore rupees claiming it would destroy the ecology of the coastal region.

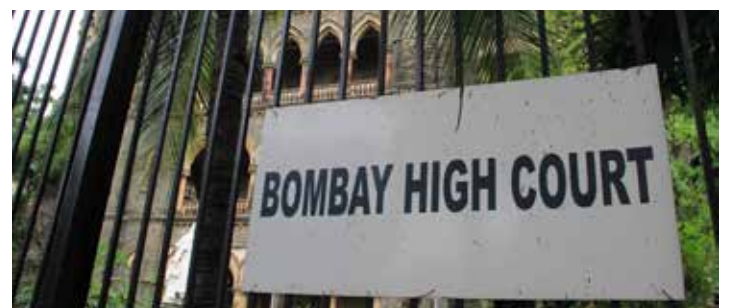
The Barsu site is an alternative to the one at Nanar, also in Ratnagiri in the state's Konkan

region. "Under no situation will the Maharashtra government start the Barsu refinery project by subjecting people to injustice or through force and without consent of the people," Shinde said.

Citing the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway project, which faced initial opposition but has seen the Nagpur-Shirdi leg commissioned, Shinde said all stakeholders will be taken into confidence at Barsu, adding that many people there are already supporting the plan.

"We have undertaken boring and soil testing procedures etc. We are not immediately starting the Barsu project," Shinde added.

Won't notify fact-checking unit for fake news against govt till July 5 Centre tells Bombay HC



The Union government told the Bombay High Court on Thursday that it will not notify till July 5, 2023 a fact checking unit to identify fake news against the government on social media under the recently amended Information Technology Rules.

A division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale accepted the statement and said since the amended rules would be inoperable in the absence of a fact checking unit, no urgent

hearing was required on stay of the rules as sought by stand-up comic Kunal Kamra.

The bench posted the petition filed by Kamra, challenging the constitutional validity of the rules, for hearing on June 8.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, appearing for the Union government, told the HC that the fact checking unit would not be notified till July 5, 2023, so that the court could hear the matter in June when it reopens after the summer vacation.

Nation

Dalit outfit moves Patna HC against Bihar govt order releasing gangster-turned-politician Anand Mohan



a Dalit IAS officer, in 1994. According to reports, Krishnaiah died after his car was attacked during the funeral procession of a gangster Chotan Shukla.

Anand Mohan was part of the procession, and Muzaffarpur police had charge-sheeted him for provoking his supporters to commit the crime. Uma Krishnaiah, the widow of slain Dalit IAS officer, urged the Bihar government to withdraw the decision claiming it would set a bad precedent and have serious implications for the entire society. "We are not happy and feel it was a wrong decision. It shows how caste politics in Bihar influences such decisions. He is a Rajput and can help attract Rajput votes. why else would the government release a criminal? He will be given an election ticket so that he can attract Rajput votes," she said. ANI

Alleging amendments in jail manual, Amar Jyoti, the Bihar in-charge of Bhim Army's Bharat Ekta Mission, on Wednesday moved Patna High Court against the state government's order releasing former MP and life convict Anand Mohan and 26 others. Amar Jyoti, through his Public Interest Litigation (PIL), alleged that the Nit-

ish Kumar government tweaked the state's jail manual to "favour criminals".

The order of the Bihar government has drawing ire from the Dalit community. Anand Mohan, a former gangster-turned-politician who was freed from jail on Tuesday, was convicted for the murder of former Gopalganj district magistrate G Krishnaiah,

Same-sex marriage: SC may refer challenge to notice provision under Special Marriage Act, 1954

The Supreme Court, which is hearing arguments on a batch of pleas seeking legal sanction for same sex marriages, on Thursday indicated it might refer for adjudication by a two-judge bench the challenge to the 30-day prior notice provision in the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 provides a legal framework for the marriage of peo-

ple belonging to different religions or castes. It governs a civil marriage where the state sanctions the marriage rather than the religion. Section 5 of the Act says when a marriage is intended to be solemnised under this law, the parties to the marriage shall give notice in writing in the form specified in the second schedule to the marriage officer of the district in which at least one of

them has resided for a period of not less than 30 days immediately preceding the date on which such notice is given.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said on Thursday the 30-day notice provision is not a five-judge bench issue and has absolutely no connection with whether same-sex couples should have a right to marry. PTI

Cattle Smuggling Case: Delhi's court grants three days custody of Sukanya Mondal to ED



Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Thursday granted three days Custody of Sukanya Mondal to Enforcement Directorate (ED) to interrogate her in the cattle smuggling case. She was arrested yesterday by the ED. Her father is a TMC leader and is in custody in this case. Special judge Raghubeer Singh granted three days custody after hearing the submission of the special public prosecutor (SPP) Nitesh Rana and defence counsels.

The court has also allowed to the counsel to meet the accused during the ED custody. The court has also directed the ED to get the accused medically examined in every 48 hours. ED sought three days remand to

trace the proceed of crime, to trace the money trail and to identify the modus operandi. She has to be confronted with Anubrata Mondal also. The SPP submitted that the accused has been arrested yesterday evening. She is the daughter of accused Anubrata Mondal accused in the matter. Her custody is required to interrogate her to trace the proceed of crime, trace the money trail and to identify the modus operandi adopted by the accused, the SPP argued. ED said that the custody of the accused is required to ascertain her complicity with other accused persons to trace the proceeds of crime siphoned off through various transactions of sale and purchase of immovable properties. ANI

Uphaar fire tragedy: SC allows Ansals' firm to approach trial court for de-sealing of cinema hall



The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed Ansal Theaters and Clubotels Private Ltd to move the trial court for the de-sealing of Uphaar cinema hall where 59 movie-watchers had lost their lives in a blaze in 1997. A bench of Justices KM Joseph, BV Nagarathna and Ahsanuddin Amanullah asked the trial court to decide in accordance with law the plea, if moved by the firm, whose former directors were real estate barons Sushil Ansal and Gopal Ansal, within 10 weeks.

"Trial court to take a decision in accordance with the law, as early as possible, within a period of ten weeks," the apex court said. The bench recorded the submissions of Delhi Police and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that they do not have any claim over the property. The counsel appearing for the Ansal brothers, said, "Now that the trial in the main case is over, the cinema hall, which was sealed nearly 17 years ago, should be de-sealed." ANI

'Gunshots, screams'; Viral video shows Naxal taking position after Dantewada attack in Chhattisgarh

A video purportedly showing the moments after the deadly Naxal attack on the District Reserve Guard (DRG) personnel in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada surfaced in which a Naxal was seen firing at the police. In the video, the jawan's bag was seen lying on the ground after the IED blast on DRG vehicle and a Naxal was seen crawling into the forest with a gun in his hand

to take the position further for carrying out the attack. The sound of gunshots was also heard at the end of the video.

As many as 10 personnel and one civilian were killed in the improvised explosive device (IED) blast by Naxalites in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh on Wednesday. The video surfaced pertaining to the attack has gone viral on social media but the source of which is

unverified.

Speaking to ANI, IG Bastar P Sundarraj said that the jawans were returning to Dantewada when Maoists targeted their vehicle on the Aranpur-Sameli route. "During a search operation in Dantewada on Wednesday, 10 District Reserve Guard personnel were killed in an IED blast carried out by Naxalites," Sundarraj said. ANI

World

Indian Army raising new units to counter China, Pak in cyber warfare



Amid the rising activities of adversaries China and Pakistan in the online domain to target India, the Indian Army has operationalised new specialist units to counter these threats and challenges under its cyber warfare initiatives. The decision was taken during the Army Commanders Conference held in the third week of this month headed by Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande.

"To safeguard the commu-

nication networks and increase preparedness levels in this niche domain, Command Cyber Operations and Support Wings (CCO-SW) are being raised in Indian Army," government sources said here. They said that Cyberspace has emerged as an important component of the military domain both in grey zone warfare as well as conventional operations," they said.

Highlighting the importance and requirement of such special-

ist units, the sources said the expansion of cyber warfare capabilities by our adversaries has made the cyber domain more competitive and contested than ever before. "The Indian Army today is rapidly migrating towards net centricity, which entails an increased reliance on modern communication systems at all levels," they said.

Specifying the role of these new units, the sources said: "These organisations will assist the formations to undertake the mandated cyber security functions to strengthen the cyber security posture of the Indian Army."

In the last few years, the Army has taken multiple steps to counter the aggression of adversaries in the form of virtual honey trapping and hacking. The Defence Cyber Agency is working at the tri-services level to deal with these issues.

Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu arrives in Delhi to attend SCO Defence Ministers' Meet



Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu arrived in New Delhi on Thursday to take part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting scheduled to be held on Friday in the National Capital. Li Shangfu will also take part in the bilateral meeting with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh.

This is the first visit by the Chinese Defence Minister

following the border transgression in Galwan. India and China recently held the 18th round of the India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side. India, and China during the 18th round of Corps Commander Level Meeting, agreed to maintain security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector of the LAC.

US bans Sri Lankan Governor's entry for 'violation of human rights'



The United States on Thursday banned the Governor of North Western Province in Sri Lanka, Wasantha Karannagoda and his family from entering the country over gross violation of Human Rights, the US State Department said in a release.

"The United States is designating Wasantha Karannagoda, Governor of North Western Province in Sri Lanka, pursuant to Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2023, due to his involvement in a gross violation of human rights during his tenure as a Naval Com-

mander," the US State Department said in a release.

"The United States is designating Sri Lankan Governor and retired Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda for a gross violation of human rights. The United States continues to seek truth and justice for victims of the Sri Lankan civil war," State Secretary Antony Blinken tweeted.

"As a result of today's action, Karannagoda and his wife, Sri-mathi Ashoka Karannagoda, are ineligible for entry into the United States," the release stated further.

The US State Department release said, "The allegation that Wasantha Karannagoda committed a gross human rights violation, documented by NGOs and independent investigations, is serious and credible."

By designating Wasantha Karannagoda, the United States reaffirms its commitment to upholding human rights, ending impunity for human rights violators, acknowledging the suffering of victims and survivors, and promoting accountability for perpetrators in Sri Lanka, the release read.

Another Operation Kaveri flight arrives in Mumbai with 246 Indians on board



Another Operation Kaveri flight landed in Mumbai on Thursday with 246 Indians on board. "Another #OperationKaveri flight comes to Mumbai. 246 more Indians come back to the motherland," Jaishankar tweeted on Thursday.

Earlier on Thursday, as many as 128 Indian nationals, evacuated from conflict-ridden Sudan, arrived at Saudi Arabia's Jeddah under "Operation Kaveri" by the Indian Air Force aircraft C-130J flight, Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said on Thursday.

Muraleedharan along with officials received the Indian na-

tionals in Jeddah. Muraleedharan tweeted, "Another IAF C-130J flight under #OperationKaveri arrived at Jeddah with 128 Indians, the fourth aircraft from Sudan. Efforts are on to ensure that all Indians, who arrived in Jeddah will be sent to India at the earliest." Muraleedharan stated that efforts are being made to send Indian nationals who arrived in Jeddah to India at the earliest. He posted a video which showed Indian nationals deboarding from the aircraft in Jeddah. Earlier, Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted, "The 4th IAF C-130J flight takes off from Port

Sudan for Jeddah with 128 passengers. This is the sixth batch of Indians to be evacuated from Sudan under #OperationKaveri, taking the total to nearly 1100 persons." India has launched 'Operation Kaveri' to bring back Indians stranded in conflict-hit Sudan.

Earlier, the third IAF C-130J from Port Sudan arrived in Jeddah. V Muraleedharan tweeted, "Third IAF C-130J from Port Sudan arrives in Jeddah, glad to welcome 136 Indians who were on board. #OperationKaveri will continue till we rescue all Indians who want to come back home."

Expression

28 April - World Day for Safety and Health at Work



Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist, All India Radio & TV panelist, Haryana

How is our occupational safety and what are the health hazards?

The business world is undergoing profound changes. Governments, employers and workers, and other stakeholders need to take advantage of opportunities to create a safe and healthy future workplace for all. Their day-to-day efforts to improve safety and health at work can directly contribute to India's sound socio-economic development. World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed every year on 28 April to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

Are you interested in understanding occupational safety and health? If yes, then occupational health and safety is a branch of public health that investigates trends in workplace diseases and injuries and recommends and enforces prevention methods and laws. The most prevalent types of occupational hazards include heights, electrical hazards, lack of protective gear, motion injuries, collisions, biological hazards, chemical hazards, ergonomic hazards, and psychological hazards.

The Department of Occupational Safety and Health aims to reduce risks and investigate problems in various workplaces. The field of occupational health and safety creates regulations seeking the elimination, reduction, or replacement of workplace hazards. OHS programs also include processes and procedures to reduce the consequences of workplace incidents. It covers first aid and the safe operation of heavy machinery and infection prevention, ergonomic best practices, and workplace violence response strategies. Occupational health and safety (OHS) is a subset of public health that focuses on improving workplace health and safety. It examines patterns of employee injury and illness and makes recommendations to reduce risks and hazards at work.

Every business has health and safety risks, and it is the responsibility of every employer to guarantee that

their workers can do their jobs as safely as possible. Occupational hazards can result in a variety of health problems for employees. The six primary hazard categories are physical hazards, chemical hazards, biological hazards, ergonomic hazards, and behavioral hazards. Occupational hazards are diseases or accidents that can happen in the course of work. In other words, the risks that employees face at their workplace. An occupational hazard is a negative experience or consequence that occurs to a person as a result of their work. According to some dictionaries, the term also refers to the risks that people face while working on their hobby. A hazard is a potentially harmful or unpleasant event.

Occupational hazards come in various forms. This collection of hazards is present at work all the time and is responsible for a wide range of occupational diseases including high blood pressure, stress, and cancer. Factors, agents, or events that can cause harm with or without touching are known as physical hazards. They are classified as either environmental or occupational hazards. Radiation, heat, cold stress, tremors, and noise are some examples. Biological

Hazards—Biological hazards, often referred to as biohazards, are biological compounds that pose a health risk to humans and other living species. Samples of a toxin from a biological source, a virus are examples of this type of threat. In particular, samples that are harmful to people's health.

The ergonomic hazard refers to the need for incorrect posture, boredom, repetition, shift work, and stressful situations. The adequacy of the anesthesiologist's workplace includes the adoption of an ergonomically designed OR. The anesthetic machine, operating table, side table, and monitor should all be set at the anesthesiologist's height. Chemical hazards are risks that may arise from exposure to chemicals in the workplace. Victims may experience immediate or long-term health consequences. Hundreds of hazardous substances include immunosuppressants, dermatological agents, carcinogens, neurotoxins, and reproductive poisons. Hazardous compounds include asthmatics, sensitizers, and systemic poisons.

Psychosocial nature of the hazard – Psychosocial hazards are workplace hazards that have

an impact on the mental health of employees. These hazards limit their ability to function in team situations with other people. The way work is created, structured, and managed is associated with psychosocial hazards. Patients have psychological or mental impairment or illness. Some people are also physically injured or sick. Legal regulation, certification and registration, surveillance and monitoring, accident reporting, and work injury compensation are all part of workplace safety and health. Understand your responsibilities for improving workplace safety.

Protect people from the risks of corporate activity to their health and safety; eliminate workplace hazards at the source; and involve employers, employees, and organizations representing them in the formulation and implementation of health, safety, and welfare standards. The world of work is undergoing profound changes. Governments, employers and workers, and other stakeholders need to take advantage of opportunities to create a safe and healthy future workplace for all. Their day-to-day efforts to improve safety and health at work can directly contribute to India's sound socio-economic development.



Entertainment

Priyanka Chopra to return to Met Gala red carpet

Global queen Priyanka Chopra is all set to rule the Met Gala 2023 with her fashionable avatar. Variety journalist Marc Malkin confirmed the presence of Priyanka at the upcoming edition of Hollywood's biggest fashion night.

He tweeted, "@priyankachopra just told me she will be at the #MetGala on Monday. Says her look 'will be on theme' because she loves a theme but it will also have a 'special element'."



Kim Kardashian admits she'd give up reality TV to be a 'full time' lawyer



Reality TV star Kim Kardashian does not mind quitting showbiz for being a lawyer "full-time". Kim recently got candid about her future in the criminal justice reform movement while speaking at the TIME100 Summit, People reported.

"I would be just as happy being an attorney full-time," she answered when asked if she would ever consider a life without being in the spotlight.

"The journey just really opened up my eyes so much," she shared, adding, "It gets overwhelming because there's so much to be done ... I brought my sister Khloe [Kardashian] to a prison for the first time last week, and that was really eye-opening for her."

While not yet an official lawyer, The Kardashians star shared with moderator Poppy Harlow that she hopes her efforts in the movement will be "her life's most meaningful work."

"I hope so," she said, adding, "I always joke with my mom -- who's my manager -- I say Kim K. is retiring, and I'm just going to be an attorney."

Jafar Panahi leaves Iran for first time in 14 years after travel ban lifts



The travel ban on dissident Iranian director Jafar Panahi has suddenly been lifted after 14 years. Following that, the acclaimed director and his wife Tahereh Saeedi reportedly left Iran for an undisclosed location. Saeedi on Tuesday night posted a picture on Instagram showing her arriving with her husband at an undisclosed airport, reported Variety.

Panahi, 62, was temporarily released from prison last month after going on a hunger strike to protest "the illegal and inhumane behavior" of Iran's judiciary. He was out on bail.

The director was arrested last July in Tehran in the wake of the country's conservative government crackdown.