



Land-for-job-scam: ED attaches assets worth over Rs 6 cr of people linked to Lalu

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RPF CONSTABLE SHOOTS DEAD SENIOR, 3 PASSENGERS ON BOARD JAIPUR-MUMBAI TRAIN



A Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable on Monday shot dead four persons on board a running train near Palghar railway station in Maharashtra, an official said.

Constable Chetan Kumar Choudhary fired from his automatic weapon, killing an RPF Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)

and three other passengers of the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express shortly after 5 am, the official said.

According to a senior police official, the accused RPF constable was mentally unstable.

Palghar is around 100 km from Mumbai. The constable opened fire on

his escort duty in-charge ASI Tika Ram Meena in the running train, the official said.

After killing his senior, the constable went to another bogie and shot dead three passengers, the official added.

The accused then tried to escape from the train between Mira Road and

Dahisar, but was later nabbed by the Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel and his weapon was also seized, he said.

The accused is in the custody of the Mira Road railway police, the official said. The bodies were taken out of the train at Borivali railway station, he said.

Sambhaji Bhide created controversy to sideline the Manipur issue?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

The burning Manipur issue has created a lot of clamours against the ruling party BJP and Prime minister Modi. Entire nation is saddened because BJP and centre and state has failed to control the violence and brutality against women in Manipur. Parliament was stalled for several days because leaders of the opposition wanted discussion or dialogue from PM Modi. Amid all this ruckus, the founder of Shri Shiv Pratishthan, Sambhaji Bhide had made some controversial statement against Mahatma Gandhi and that has successfully diverted all the attention of the opposition party from Manipur to Mahatma. He even claimed that people unnecessarily give importance to Pandit Ne-

hru in the freedom struggle. Bhide said there is no iota of contributions by Pandit Nehru to the freedom struggle.

Pressure was mounted over the incumbent BJP-led government in Maharashtra to arrest Bhide. Condemning Bhide's remarks Maharashtra Deputy CM and home minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Mahatma Gandhi is viewed as the leader of the history of India's freedom struggle. Such a statement against him is inappropriate, people will not tolerate it. The state government will take appropriate action in this case. Insulting Mahatma Gandhi will not be tolerated under any circumstances."

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Editoritis

Sambhaji Bhide created controversy to sideline the Manipur issue?

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On the other hand, Ajit Pawar who is part of the incumbent government also demanded the arrest of Sambhaji Bhide. The Amravati police have already registered the police complaint against Sambhaji Bhide

We personally spoke to dozens of Congress leaders, each one of us told that they have not read the book or not even aware of such a book that is available online.

Writer A. Ghosh is an Indian writer. He won India's highest literary honor. Ghosh worked at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi and several academic institutions

On the other hand, Ajit Pawar who is part of the incumbent government also demanded the arrest of Sambhaji Bhide. The Amravati police have already registered the police complaint against Sambhaji Bhide under IPC section 153 A — promoting enmity between two groups. This is a cognisable offence with three years of imprisonment and a penalty. Earlier former Maharashtra Congress chief minister Prithviraj Chavan brought up Bhide's remarks against Mahatma Gandhi on the floor of the House in the Maharashtra state assembly monsoon session and demanded the arrest of Mr Bhide. Former Maharashtra cabinet minister and Congress MLA Yashomati Thakur had asked "for whose permission the BJP-led government is waiting" when there are demands for Bhide to be arrested.

Surprisingly no congress leaders know about the book that Mr Bhide referred to. We personally spoke to dozens of Congress leaders, each one of us told that they have not read the book or not even aware of such a book that is available online. Many opposition leaders said that they don't know the writer A Ghosh, and some of them said we have ordered the book, we will read it and seek appropriate action against the writer. Political think tanks look at this entire controversy as a diversion tactic, they believe that the Bhide is assigned to make such a statement by the BJP to divert attention from the burning issue of Manipur issues which has severely brought embracement to BJP.

Writer A. Ghosh is an Indian writer. He won India's highest literary honor. Ghosh worked at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi and several academic institutions. Ghosh holds two Lifetime Achievement awards and four honorary doctorates. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest honours, by the President of India. This most acclaimed writers' book was missed by the Congress leaders.

Ghosh in his book The Kuran and The Kafir writes "some say that Gandhi's natural father was the Moslem employer of Gandhi's father. Gandhi's father used to work for a Moslem landowner and had stolen money from the cash box and had fled. He was a fugitive for three years and his wife was taken over by the

Moslem landlord and placed in his harem. Gandhi was born during this period when his father was a fugitive. There are people who assert that Gandhi's father used to come inside the harem like a thief to sleep with his wife, and he indeed was the true father but that seems to be highly unlikely. However! Gandhi had promised to his mother to be a strict vegetarian. This promises he kept all throughout his life. Otherwise, he was a servant of Islam in his political dealings."

No one knows from where A Gosh has gathered this kind of information, there is no authentication to his claims. This can be a propaganda but surprisingly no one has taken objection to his book and the book is in the best category at Amazon. Learned congress leaders should have questioned the motive of the author or they could have demanded the ban on this said book, but the irony is that until Bhide's statement they were clueless about it.

No congress leader so far took any action against the writer or the book, they all went after 90 years old Bhide and made several condemnations and complaints against him. Bhide, is accused of making offensive remarks about Gandhi in his speech during a programme at Bharat Mangal Hall in Badnera Road area in Amravati district on Thursday, July 27. The Rajapeth police in Amravati booked Sambhaji Bhide under Indian Penal Code section 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony). Though his statements were not against any religion, cast, creed or group, he just stated the paragraph written in the book. The question is, will the Congress leaders take action against A Bose? Or will they haunt the book reader?



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Letters to the Editor

Gokhale Bridge - a necessity!

The work on the Gokhale Bridge, a major link between Andheri East & West, seems to be progressing, the girders for the bridge have arrived at the work site. So, what's the big deal? According to newsreports, the trucks carrying the girders were welcomed by the officers at the site with a LIVE Band! How ridiculous! What were the authorities celebrating? The construction of a new bridge? They need to ask themselves, how long with that bridge last? The previous bridge lasted for less than 50 years, can they match the British record of more than 100 years?

The authorities should be ashamed of this drama. They must understand, they are not doing the citizens a favour. That bridge is a necessity and they should ensure that it is completed as soon as possible. And, yes, with a longer lifespan, please!

Melville X. D'Souza

Revival of Article 44?

Movements are now underway to bring the issue of Uniform Civil Code to the parliamentary table. Private Bills will be coming to convert the Uniform Civil Code into law across the country. According to Article 44 of the Indian Constitution, all citizens of the country are given the fundamental right of equal citizenship. Similarly, the right to protect the life and privacy of citizens Even though it has been given, in the case of women, this law seems to be shaky and the lack of equality between men and women is still felt in many parts of the country even after 75 years of independence. According to the Uniform Civil Code, the suggestions and objections called for by the Law Commission have exceeded 50 lakhs and it will definitely take some time before all these suggestions and objections are scrutinized and the law actually comes into existence.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Timely census crucial

The census, originally planned for 2021, has been postponed once again and is now slated to take place in 2024, coinciding with the parliament elections. This delay is expected to have negative consequences on various welfare schemes and socio-economic development initiatives that heavily rely on up-to-date population data. Additionally, the Bihar government's caste-based census plans have encountered legal complexities. Accurate data plays a vital role in shaping effective policies and the reliability of statistical surveys heavily depends on census data. The postponement of the census has raised concerns about the accuracy of population estimates and the allocation of resources for government schemes. The delay also affects discussions about electoral boundaries and seat distribution among states. Consequently, the repercussions of postponing the census stretch to policy formulation, monitoring of government schemes and statistical management for governance. It is imperative to stress the importance of conducting the census in a timely manner.

Bishal Saha

Retort to China

China has repeatedly tried to signal to India and the world by issuing stapled visa to the people of Arunachal Pradesh that Arunachal is part of China because it is part of Tibet. This time also it has given stapled visa to Arunachal Pradesh athletes for the sports event in China. In response, India banned Arunachal players from traveling to China. Due to which, India expressed their anger, but the disappointment caused by the players should not be a loss. To this, India must also respond appropriately in view of China's antics.

Nawaz Ashraf

Embracing the Power of Chatbots



With each passing moment, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the world around us, and at the forefront of this revolution are chatbots - revolutionary tools that provide user-friendly interfaces for businesses and consumers alike. In the year 2023, the emergence of countless innovative and powerful AI chatbots has been evident, shaping various industries with their capabilities. ChatSpot, ChatGPT, and Bing Chat are among the leading chatbots leveraging machine learning and natural language processing to simulate human-like conversations and offer relevant solutions based on user requests.

Billionaire Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has endorsed the potential of AI chatbots during a keynote talk at the ASU+GSV Summit in San Diego. He believes that AI chatbots can be instrumental in education, serving as tutors to help children learn to read and enhance their writing skills in just 18 months, emphasizing their potential to be as effective as human tutors.

AI chatbots have changed

the way businesses interact with customers and candidates. They offer human-like conversations, provide support 24/7, and save time and money. Using machine learning and NLP, these chatbots have become very popular and are expected to be worth \$15.5 billion by 2028. They have also improved customer support by offering help all the time, resolving queries instantly, and saving costs without needing human operators. Businesses can now provide uninterrupted support through different channels, making customers happier and communication smoother.

AI chatbots have grown rapidly thanks to improved generative AI and NLP (Natural Language Processing) technologies, allowing them to handle multiple conversations at once in areas like HR and customer service. They also play a significant role in talent acquisition, with a 40% increase in their use since 2018. Chatbots, along with candidate relationship management software and texting solutions, have successfully improved candidate communications,

making candidates happier and more responsive.

Taking a well-informed and strategic approach to embrace this groundbreaking technology and its integration can lead to an unmatched customer experience, meeting current needs and anticipating future ones.

Thus, Chatbots are gaining popularity for their 24/7 customer support and engagement across different platforms, resulting in cost savings. They are valuable assets for businesses, capable of managing multiple conversations simultaneously. However, continuous improvements are necessary to ensure a seamless experience, particularly in talent acquisition. The chatbot market is rapidly expanding, promising even more potent interactions in the times ahead.

- Dr. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma

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.)

DCM action order regarding the mismanagement of Mumbai Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya chaired by Sharad Pawar

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has ordered action regarding corruption, mismanagement, arbitrary management etc. in Mumbai Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya which is chaired by Nationalist Party leader Sharad Pawar. The mismanagement by the office bearers in the said institution is increasing and it is feared that the existence of the institution has been threatened.

RTI activist Anil Galgali has given a memorandum to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. It has been mentioned that in the year 2021, the elections of the organization were conducted in violation of the constitution and rules of the organization. Complaints and claims have been filed in the charity commissioner's office regarding this illegal election. In the current scenario, at least 5 claims against the organization



are pending before different tribunals, including criminal offences. Also, the current controversial office bearers have hijacked this institution in a way. Due to this, the letter has requested to investigate the affairs of the organization by appointing an administrator or by appointing an ad hoc committee under the authority of the Charity Commissioner.

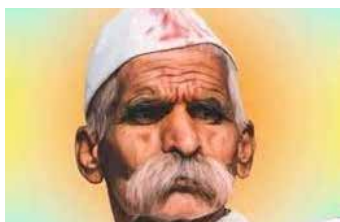
The following demands have been made in this memorandum.

The controversial executive of Mumbai Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya should be dissolved immediately and an administrator or temporary committee should be appointed there. The financial affairs of the Granth Sangrahalaya should be investigated. An inquiry should be made into the extra-constitutional proceedings regarding the Granth Sangrahalaya elections (2021). The main source of income of the Granth

Sangrahalaya, 'Sharada-Cinema', should be informed about the reasons for keeping it closed since 2017, and instructions should be given to start the said theatre. Illegal parking in Granth Sangrahalaya premises, court-matters, contracts awarded should be investigated. The transactions in the properties of the organization in Pune, Chembur, Pantnagar, Bandra and also the illegal sale of the branch of the organization

on Bhadkamkar Marg should be investigated and directed to take action. Action should be taken keeping in mind the embezzlement of lakhs of rupees in the name of overtime by keeping the central office open when all the establishments are closed due to lock down during the covid period. Grants and other funds given so far by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, as well as the State Government and other organizations, should be audited. In violation of constitution and rules, taking action by investigating people who became members and then trustees and office bearers on the same day. Inquiring into the appointment of private bouncers and fixing the responsibility of those who have caused damage to the organization by making such appointments unnecessarily and recovering the financial loss from them.

Bhide row: Ex-CM gets death threat



An employee from Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan's office lodged a police complaint on Sunday after a threatening mail was received earlier in the day. "The one-line

mail abused and questioned Chavan whether he wanted to stay alive or not," an officer from Karad city police said.

"We have sent our teams to nab the sender..." Satara superintendent of police Sameer Shaikh told TOI, but did not get into the specifics of the locations. A local police officer, who did not wish to be named, confirmed, "We have traced the IP address of the computer used to send the mail."

Kanjur land for Metro car shed belongs to state: Minister

The Kanjurmarg land where the erstwhile MVA government had proposed to construct a Metro car shed belongs to the state government, so the transfer of 15 hectares to the MMRDA for Metro-II car shed is valid, revenue minister RadhaKrishna Vikhe-Patil told the legislative council last week. Last year, the Centre had asserted its ownership and title over the land. "As per the orders of the Konkan divisional commissioner, dated May 21, 2015, and then revenue minister, dated November 1, 2018, it is clear that the



Kanjurmarg land belongs to Maharashtra government. . . so the transfer of land to MMRDA is valid," Vikhe-Patil said, in a written reply to a question raised by Sena (UBT) MLC Anil Parab. "After MMRDA took possession

of the 15 hectares in April, the Centre's deputy salt commissioner took objection to the land survey, and was informed by the Mumbai suburban collector that the land belongs to the state government."

Gokhale bridge to be partially opened in November

After about 62 metric tons (MT) of steel, arrived at the Gokhale bridge site on Friday, Mumbai suburban guardian minister MP Lodha took stock of the work on the bridge. Lodha claimed that it would be partially opened by November. The BMC had planned to open the bridge partially by September. But the factory in Ambala, where the girders are being made, was af-



ected by flooding, Lodha said. The steel will help start the assembly work for the girders.

He also visited locations in the city to check on the pothole filling work.

Sena MLA faces flak over misogynistic remarks about Uddhav-led party's Rajya Sabha member

Shiv Sena MLA has come in for flak over his misogynistic remarks against Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi, who belongs to the Uddhav Thackeray-led group. The Eknath Shinde-led party's MLA Sanjay Shirsat claimed that Chaturvedi was sent to Rajya Sabha by Aaditya Thackeray because of her beauty. Shirsat said former MP Chandrakant Khaire, who belongs to the Ud-



dhav Thackeray faction, had told him this. Slamming Shirsat, Chaturvedi on Sunday called him a traitor who sold his soul and integrity. "I don't need a traitor to tell me what I look like and why I'm where I am, she tweeted.

Nation

“They called me gold digger...” Nora Fatehi tells court Jacqueline, others ruined her reputation



case in the media to safeguard certain people and because I am an outsider and I have been taken as a soft target and I want compensation for all the damages caused to my career," the actor said. Jacqueline has stated in the media why the ED has listed me as a witness in the case and herself as an accused. "This statement has led to prolonged and unnecessary harassment, loss of work and cyberbullying," Fatehi said in her statement.

The actor in her defamation complaint, also stated that she is aggrieved of defamatory remarks made by Jacqueline Fernandez, initially, which was further carried forward and circulated by the other accused persons (media organizations), all of whom were acting in connivance with each other and a conspiracy by the Jacqueline Fernandez to ensure the financial, social, and personal downfall of the complainant (Fatehi) was hatched, and enacted by the said actions. ANI

Actor Nora Fatehi on Monday recorded her statement before the Metropolitan Magistrate Kapil Gupta in a defamation case filed by her against another Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez and various media organizations. Fatehi who appeared in Patiala House Court today stated, "This defamation case has been filed against Jacqueline Fernandez and the various other channels and publications who have ruined my reputation in the public eye

through false narratives. They have called me a gold digger and accused me of having a relationship with a con artist Sukesh Chandrasekhar."

"This has caused me a loss of financial gain and reputation. The reason why I have filed this case is because of the ongoing ED case against Sukesh who was accused of conning a sum of Rs 200 crore that I have nothing to do with and neither do I know anything," she said further. "I feel that I have been used as a scapegoat in this

Land-for-job-scam: ED attaches assets worth over Rs 6 cr of people linked to Lalu Yadav's family



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth over Rs 6 crore of many people linked to former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Yadav's family in the land for job scam, the sources said on Monday. The sources from the federal agency said that the seized property includes properties in Patna and Ghaziabad as well.

The development comes nearly a month after the CBI, which is also probing the scam, filed a fresh charge sheet against former Bihar CM Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, and his son and current deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav in connection with the case. Recently, CBI has filed a chargesheet in a land-for-job alleged scam case of

former Union Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav naming Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav and others including Tejashwi Yadav etc.

According to the CBI, this is the 2nd chargesheet in the Designated Court against 17 accused including the then Union Minister of Railways, his wife, son, then GM of West Central Railways(WCR), then two CPOs of WCR, private persons, private company etc. in a case related to Land for Job Scam.

CBI had registered a case on May 18, 2022, against the then Union Minister of Railways and 15 others including his wife, two daughters and unknown public servants and private persons. ANI

Over 17,000 people died in floods and heavy rains between 2012-2021: Govt

Over 17,000 people died in floods and heavy rains between 2012 and 2021 in the country, the government said on Monday. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Bishweswar Tudu said the increased incidence of high intensity rainfall of short duration is mainly responsible for urban floods, which is further compounded by unplanned growth, encroachment of natural water bodies and poor drainage system. According to data shared by Tudu in the House, 17,422 deaths due



to floods and heavy rains from 2012 to 2021 took place in India.

The state-wise data on damages due to heavy rains and floods in the entire state (rural and urban areas) has been compiled by

the Central Water Commission (CWC), and as per which the total damages, including crops, houses and public utilities stood at Rs 2,76,004.05 crore, he said. Tudu, in a written response, said several initiatives have been taken by the government to encourage groundwater recharge and other nature-based solutions to tackle urban flooding in flood-prone areas. "Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater - 2020 has been prepared by the CGWB in collaboration with states/UTs envisaging construction of about 1.42 crore rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of water," he said. PTI

Calcutta HC restrains TMC's Aug 5 programme to gherao homes of BJP leaders

The Calcutta High Court on Monday restrained the ruling Trinamool Congress's August 5 programme to gherao homes of BJP leaders in West Bengal. Petitioner Suwendu Adhikari, the leader of the opposition in the West Bengal assembly, claimed that TMC national general secretary Abhishek

Banerjee called for the gherao at the party's martyrs' day rally here on July 21. "The respondents and all concerned are restrained from any such protest or gheraoing or blocking of traffic, inconveniencing the general public on August 5," a division bench presided by Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam directed. PTI

“Why police took 14 days to register zero FIR in Manipur viral video case”: CJI Chandrachud

Supreme Court on Monday questioned the Central government on the Manipur viral video, in which two women were allegedly sexually assaulted and paraded naked by a mob, asking why the FIR in the case was registered on May 18 when the incident happened on May 4. "Supreme Court questions why the FIR was registered on May 18 when the incident happened on May 4. What were the police doing from May 4 to May 18? The incident came to light that women are being paraded naked and at least two were raped. What were the police doing?" the Supreme Court asked the Central government.

However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that government has nothing to hide. "This court can monitor the situation.



Something coming from here or there will be hazardous," he added. A 26-second video from Manipur has triggered outrage in the whole country where two women were stripped naked, assaulted and paraded by a mob. The incident allegedly took place on May 4, a day after ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur. After a video of the same went viral, the police swung into action and arrested seven people, including the main accused. ANI

World

Will hold talks with other countries to resolve Rohingya crisis, says EU representative



The European Union assured that they will hold conversations with other countries about what needs to be done to resolve the Rohingya crisis, reported Dhaka Tribune. Eamon Gilmore, European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights spent a full day in Cox's Bazar and met the Rohingyas who fled from Myanmar over the past six years.

Bangladesh is hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas in Cox's

Bazar district and Bhasan Char. He said they are talking to other governments about what needs to be done. "Because we recognize that there is a need for support. And we will continue to work on that. We will continue to keep it on the international agenda," he said. Gilmore added that they are particularly conscious about the reductions in food rations that are being made this year, Dhaka Tribune reported. "It has to be resolved and it has to be re-

solved in Myanmar. The resolution of that crisis has to happen. And the circumstances need to be created whereby the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh can voluntarily go home safely, with their rights respected and in full dignity," he said.

Gilmore also said that the food rations for the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar have been cut from USD 12 to USD 10 (per person per month) and then USD 8 due to funding reductions by international donors. Gilmore heard their problems and assured them that the European Union has not forgotten them despite the current crises going around the world, reported Dhaka Tribune. While appreciating the Bangladesh government and the office of the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation (RRR) Commissioner, he added, "We are working with countries in the neighbourhood and with the ASEAN countries." ANI

Pakistan: Unknown assailants hurl grenade at police checkpoint in Khyber district



Unknown assailants hurled grenade and fired gunshots at a police checkpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Khyber district on Sunday, reported Geo News. The attacker was blocked from leaving by the counteraction of the police and the Frontier Corps (FC) officials.

There were no reported victims from the terror incident that took place. The existing security concerns in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which has been the scene of multiple insurgent strikes just in July, are made worse by this assault on law enforcement,

according to Geo News.

On July 21, Geo News reported at least four terrorist assaults in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in within 48 hours, including one in Peshawar, the nation's capital, which was successfully thwarted by officials.

On July 20, a terrorist killed one police officer and injured ten others when the police stopped him and his accomplice as they entered the Bara tehsil compound, which houses the Bara Police Station, government buildings, and a counter-terrorism department (CTD) cell. ANI

Residents evacuated as flash flood hits China's Fangshan district



As rains continue to wreak havoc in China, residents were evacuated following a flash flood in mountainous region of Fangshan district on Sunday afternoon, reported Global Times. According to National Meteorological Center (NMC) of China, heavy rain will continue to hit Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei and nearby provinces on Monday.

Some areas will see extraordinarily heavy rainfall, with up to 400 mm of rainfall within 24 hours, Global Times reported citing the NMC. China's Ministry of Water Resources upgraded the emergency response for the flood

in Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei to Level II on Sunday afternoon. Strong convective weather, thunder, and lightning warnings have been issued already.

According to Global Times, scenic spots across Beijing and suburbs, including the Palace Museum and the Yonghe Lama Temple, will be closed on Sunday and Monday out of safety concerns due to heavy rainfall. After battering the Philippines and Taiwan, where it caused scores of deaths and compelled thousands to flee, Typhoon Doksuri has brought severe rainfall to numerous districts in northern China, including the capital Beijing. ANI

US extends support to ECOWAS, demands immediate release of President Bazoum

The United States on Monday extended support to the leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to defend constitutional order in Niger. This comes as the Niger military has been holding Mohamed Bazoum, the elected president since Wednesday in the third attempt to depose a Sahelian leader in as many years.

"The United States welcomes

and commends the strong leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Heads of State and Government to defend constitutional order in Niger, actions that respect the will of the Nigerien people and align with enshrined ECOWAS and African Union principles of zero tolerance for unconstitutional change," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a US State Department statement. The US further called

for the immediate release of President Mohamed Bazoum and his family and the restoration of all state functions to the legitimate, democratically-elected government. "The United States further welcomes the dispatch of the special representative of the ECOWAS Chair to Niger and urges all parties to work with ECOWAS for a peaceful and expeditious resolution of the current situation," the state department stated. ANI

Death toll rises to 12 in Thailand fireworks warehouse explosion

The death toll of the people killed in the fireworks warehouse explosion in Thailand has risen to 12, CNN reported on Sunday. According to state-run Radio Thailand, at least two of the victims were children, including a four-year-old boy and an eight-month-old baby girl. At least 121 people are injured in the explosion at the warehouse in southern Thailand.

Drone footage of the incident in the town of Mu No showed that the warehouse and the surrounding area were reduced to ruins,



according to CNN. A hundred or more homes also sustained damage. According to CNN, Anuruth Imarb, commander of the Narathiwat Provincial Police, stated in a press conference

on Sunday that police intend to file criminal charges against the warehouse owner for "causing the explosion and resulting in people's deaths, injuries, and property damage." ANI

Expression

NEP Challenges and Major Action Points



Er. Prabhat Kishore

The Author is a technocrat and educationist

In course of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, major challenges have been categorized under three broad themes - School, Teacher and Child. Subsequently, during the Chief Secretary conference, 35 priority areas have been identified for major actions to be taken care of by the states.

Parent awareness drives will be conducted so that they can contribute to the quality of their child's education. Twinning of private and government schools should be done and private schools should adopt a remote school as part of their social obligation. Activities such as teacher exposure visits between private and government schools, hosting of government school students by private school students and joint sports competitions between private & government schools should be explored to increase exposure for both sets of students. Optimal utilization of resources should be systematically planned by the States/UTs on the concept of "Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas" (PURA).

There should be greater integration between Schools and Anganwadi centres and students from Anganwadis should be taken to nearby primary schools, where they should be given a platform to perform a song and creating confidence to prepare them for school. Also the school teachers should orient the Anganwadi

workers on teaching and learning for pre-school children. Adoption of Anganwadis by nearby schools should be properly planned. Hackathons should be organized, where students should provide innovative solutions to a variety of real-life problem statements created by different departments. Many of these solutions could be adopted to solve long-standing problems. Micro-improvements should be continuously undertaken. Also activation of Tithi Bhojan concept must be activated as "Sabka Prayaas" to ensure supplementary nutrition for the school-going children.

Parents should confirm the teacher's performance on the large photograph of the concerned teachers displayed in the classroom. The Campus-based recruitment drive, as done in technical colleges, for Teacher Education Institutions should be explored. Regular e-training should be promoted for capacity building of teachers to

excel. Retired outstanding teachers should be invited for mentoring a cluster of schools and motivating its teachers. Efforts will be made to do away with single-teacher schools and adequate amenities should also be provided in the school. To make teaching and learning more engaging for TV-driven education, teachers should be encouraged to provide high-quality content in various forms like animation, mono-acting, drama, dialogues etc.

To give a boost to access to high-quality content for each grade in the country, the setting up of 200 TV channels has been planned. The content of these channels will be sourced by the teachers of the States/UTs. There should be peer-to-peer learning in the classrooms. To improve the learning trajectory of the students, classroom interactions through academic quiz is necessary.

SCERTs have a pivotal role to play in the implementation of NEP 2020 and hence all SCERTs in the country would need to

be strengthened. All Teacher Education Institutions across the country have to adhere to certain norms and standards of the NCTE and gradually move towards a multidisciplinary environment. Under National Mentoring Mission (NMM), a unified learning interface in the form of a portal has been established where all the mentors will remain connected. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will focus on the preparation, practice and performance improvement of all teachers. Performance Grading Index (PGI) for the Districts, released by the Ministry of Education (MoE), assesses the performance of the school education system across 83 indicators and the report would be used by the States to accelerate the work in a particular district which is lagging behind. The progress with respect to these priority areas will be monitored by the NITI Aayog.



Entertainment

Birthday Special: Take a look at Taapsee Pannu's breakthrough performances



Actor Taapsee Pannu never hesitates in taking up challenging roles and she is known for her powerful performances in movies such as 'Pink', 'Thappad', 'Rashmi Rocket', 'Shabaash Mithu', among others. Although she made her Bollywood debut with 'Chashme Baddoor' in 2013, she gained a lot of prominence with her movies such as 'Baby' and 'Pink'. As the actor is all set to celebrate her birthday on August 1, let us look at some of her remarkable performances.

Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's legal drama, 'Pink' starred Amitabh Bachchan, Kirti Kulhari, Andrea Tariang, Angad Bedi, Tushar Pandey, Piyush Mishra, and Dhritiman Chatterjee. Taapsee as Meenal, portrayed an urban girl and her effortless performance impressed the audience.

Taapsee's portrayal of a housewife, who is obsessed with crime thriller novels and accused of her husband's murder, proved her acting capabilities. The ways she conveys emotions through her eyes and facial expressions, proved her to be an outstanding performer.

When we are talking about Taapsee, it is impossible to forget her performance in 'Thappad'. In the movie, she played a housewife who performs her duties perfectly at home and things were going well between the couple until her husband slaps her during a party. From here her fight begins for her self-respect. She excelled as Amrita in the film. ANI



Monday Motivation: Ranveer Singh sheds major fitness goals as he flaunts chiselled body in new gym pic

Actor Ranveer Singh is currently getting a lot of praise for his performance in Karan Johar's romantic comedy film 'Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'. On Monday, the actor took to his Instagram account and shared a throwback picture from the film's preparations in which he could be seen flaunting his chiselled body inside a gym.

He captioned the post, "It's not about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." - ROCKY #MondayMotivation #Throwback #RockyEra". Soon after Ranveer shared the drool worthy pic, fans flooded the comment section with red hearts and fire emoticons. "It's #ranveersingh world, am just living in it," a user wrote. Another user wrote, "Looking awesome bro." A user commented, "Such a Heartthrob Ji". ANI



Lady Gaga pens emotional tribute to Tony Bennett

Lady Gaga on Monday took to Instagram to pen a heartfelt tribute to her late friend Tony Bennett, who died earlier this month at the age of 96. "I will miss my friend forever," Gaga, who worked with the musician on two albums, wrote captioning her picture with Bennett. The singer-actor said losing her friend to Alzheimer's was painful but she was grateful to have had him in her life. "All I wanted was for Tony to remember how much I loved him and how grateful I was to have him in my life. But, as that faded slowly I knew deep down he was sharing with me the most vulnerable moment in his life that he could - being willing to sing with me when his nature was changing so deeply. I'll never forget this experience. I'll never forget Tony Bennett," she wrote. PTI

