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Chembur-based college asked students to remove their burqas (Islamic veil) before entering as the college

AV Team

A college in Mumbai stopped girl students from entering the premises while wearing burqa, but relented after a protest by parents and students and intervention by senior police officials. The security guards at the Chembur-based college asked students to remove their burqas (Islamic veil) before entering as the college has its own uniform, said a police official. It led to a row as the girls' parents also reached the college and videos of the scenes outside the gate began to circulate, he said. Senior police officials rushed to the spot and discussed the issue with the parents and the college authority.

“Wearing burkha is not considered as a wrong thing’ *INC worker Hakkam Ali Khan* said, “If college is only for girls, then there shouldn’t be a problem of not wearing burkha in college premises but if it is a Co-ED college then if female students want to wear

burkha they shouldn’t be stopped irrespective of college dress code”.

The Muslim girl students said they were ready to remove the burqa inside but will wear scarves in the classroom, the official said. The tension was defused after the college management agreed to this. The girls shall take off the burqa in the washroom before attending classes, it said.

“Another thing which I wanted to highlight is why Muslims are stopped wearing burkhas in college if a Sardar wears a turban in an educational institution, then that person is not restricted then are why are Muslim people stopped” *Hakkam Ali Khan* further added.

“This government is considered as Anti Women/ Anti- Girls,” *Samajwadi Party spokesperson Mrs. Nahid Lari Kahan* told Afternoon Voice, “Government should focus of education systems and make sure more students are coming to schools rather

than focusing on attire according to religions. Most of the school dropouts are seen in the educational institutions as most of the female students are not sent to schools for many reasons”.

“BJP government is also responsible for this as it does not ensure that education children are more important but these people are only busy to gain votes from people rather than education every student to minimize dropout in schools and Colleges. When PM Modi is not able to utter a word about the Manipur Violence in lok Sabha then how can we expect better education system for students in ruling BJP government” *Khan* further added.

Samajwadi spokesperson Sumaiya Rana said, “When our country focuses on females’ equal participation in professional fields and freedom as per our constitution then why are female students stopped from wearing burkha in educational institutions when they are

wearing this attire out of their will and not forced by anyone? Now in many places, females face a lot of harassment and to protect themselves they are wearing burkha”.

“If there is a dress code policy or a uniform to be followed then some burkha or covering attire should be of that same uniform so that it could match educational institution’s dress code policy. According to me female students should be allowed if they are comfortable in those attire” *Rana* further continued” *Rana* further added.

Advocate Majeed Memon said, “This matter was already raised earlier in the past from Karnataka and the court is also hearing the matter, and now raising this issue again is not correct. If female students are adhering to the school uniform and making sure that burkha should not be worn in the classroom of the premises then it should be accepted by the college administration instead creating conflict of such issues”.

Nuh: when will we rise above Hindu-Muslim and blood thirst?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Haryana state is not new to communal violence and riots. Both the religious people are intolerant towards each other. Brijmandal Jalabhishek Yatra organised by Hindutva groups Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad was passing through Nuh. In the show off during yatra, several hateful videos by Hindutva activists were circulated in the region, following which similar videos made by some Muslim youth challenging Hindutva activists like Monu Manesar to enter Nuh also surfaced on social media. The WhatsApp circulations and social media postings created anger among the groups. Hindu groups were all set to challenge Muslims in the areas. In the meantime, a Muslim mob tried to brutally stop the Yatra in Nuh because of which a fight

broke out and later escalated into a full-blown communal riot. The residual effect of the clashes was also seen in adjoining Gurugram where a mosque was set on fire the next day. The mosque is the only one on government allocated land in the area. The deputy imam of the mosque was stabbed 13 times with swords and killed by the Hindu mob.

However, since the clashes broke out, BJP leaders have tried to fuel the communal animosity in the area, with home minister Vij demanding the deployment of central forces in the region. The Congress legislators of the region, on the other hand, have been appealing for peace and working closely with the district administration to prevent another such flare-up.

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Editoritis

Nuh: when will we rise above Hindu-Muslim and blood thirst?

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the aggressive Hindutva activists have acted with impunity, which has led to the region remaining constantly on edge and sharply polarised along religious lines.

a rally in Haryana's Bahadurgarh city, shouting hateful slogans such as "Desh ke gaddaro ko, Goli maaro saalon ko" ("Shoot the traitors of our country") – a chant that was widely used

Things have not stopped here, the saffron clan is making preparations to invite riots like this so that these incidents can fetch some votes for the Party.

The Mewat and Gurugram regions have frequently been in the news over the last few years. Frequent incidents of lynching, cow vigilantism, attacks on Muslims and mosques, boycott campaigns against public offering of namaz, and hateful threats on social media against the Muslim community by Hindutva activists like Monu Manesar and Bittu Bajrangi have kept the communal pot boiling in the region. This has resulted in deepening mistrust between communities. More often than not, the aggressive Hindutva activists have acted with impunity, which has led to the region remaining constantly on edge and sharply polarised along religious lines.

The labourers from Bihar and West Bengal who are living in slum areas are leaving Gurugram due to fear of riots. In Sohna town, nearly 30km (18.6 miles) south of the Anjuman Jama Mosque, a stretch of shops belonging to Muslims in the town's main road lay charred following the violence there on July 31. The unrest in Haryana comes a month before global leaders are due to arrive in New Delhi for a Group of 20 (G20) summit.

Nearby, windows of homes were broken, vehicles burned and the streets littered with stones and bricks. The mob saw the names on the hoardings outside the shops and burned only those belonging to Muslims. They were shouting 'Jai Shri Ram' [Hail Lord Ram] and saying 'Jab mulle kaatey jayenge, Ram Ram chillayenge [Muslims will be slaughtered in the name of Ram]. Jai Shri Ram has emerged as a war cry by Hindu far-right groups, who have been accused of lynching dozens of Muslims on the suspicion of cow smuggling since Modi came to power in 2014.

Authorities in Haryana have deployed additional troops, imposed a curfew and suspended the internet in the wake of the unrest. But the measures did not stop Hindu mobs from attacking Muslim-owned shops, roadside eateries, properties and places of worship in Gurugram as well as in nearby towns such as Sohna. Shops in Gurugram's Sector 70A and Sector 66 were torched on, while Bajrang Dal members

held a rally in Haryana's Bahadurgarh city, shouting hateful slogans such as "Desh ke gaddaro ko, Goli maaro saalon ko" ("Shoot the traitors of our country") – a chant that was widely used by BJP politicians against Muslims during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests in 2019 and 2020.

The mosque – one of the few places for Muslim worship in Gurugram, a predominantly Hindu suburb of India's capital, New Delhi – came under attack on the night of July 31, by a Hindu far-right mob. Communal clashes broke out on Monday during a religious procession taken out by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Haryana's Nuh. At least six people, including two home guards, three civilians and an Imam, have lost their lives in the violence. Haryana Police have arrested at least 116 people and registered around 41 FIRs late on Tuesday following clashes. Meanwhile, fresh violence in Gurugram on Tuesday night out Delhi on alert.

The polarisation along religious lines is evident in the aftermath of Monday clashes. Members of the Hindu community told The Wire that mobs consisting of Muslims ransacked their shops, even looted liquor shops, and set many cars on fire. As per locals, the violence began from 12 pm and continued till 8 in the evening. Police failed to control the situation which resulted in three deaths on Monday. Injured Bajrang Dal members were taken to the neighbouring SHKM Medical College. Things have not stopped here, the saffron clan is making preparations to invite riots like this so that these incidents can fetch some votes for the Party.



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Letters to the Editor

Bhide should keep mum!

Sambhaji Bhide has created controversy by making controversial statement about Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. Prior to this also, Bhide has made such some controversial statements. Sometimes, whatever statements Sambhaji Bhide utters are worthless, for that, Bhide gets popularity, but the atmosphere in the society becomes murky. The violence that erupted in Manipur is gradually subsiding, but, violence between two religious groups in Hariyana is newly erupted. Due to this, the social life in the country is standing on the verge of instability. This is the time for society to get proper guidance from social service organizations as well as leaders in political circles. For this, the state government should ask Bhide to keep mum.

Sudhir Kangutkar

The Bhima Koregaon violence case

The Supreme Court order granting bail to activists Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira demonstrates how even under a stringent anti-terrorism law, denial of bail need not be the norm, and a preliminary assessment can lay bare the weaknesses of a police case. It is difficult for someone arrested under serious provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to get bail. Under Section 43D(5), no court can grant bail if there are reasonable grounds to believe the accusation is true.

Writer and scholar Anand Teltumbde was released by the Bombay High Court, holding that it could not be presumed that he had received funds from a co-accused, while Father Stan Swamy died in prison. In the latest order, a two-judge Bench has now found that the letters and witness statements, relied on by the NIA to claim that Mr. Gonsalves and Mr. Ferreira were part of a conspiracy and recruitment of persons to commit terrorist acts, are of weak probative value and quality. It is no surprise that many sweeping claims by the prosecution in this case wilt under judicial scrutiny. There are also reports that some of the purported evidence may have been remotely planted on computers used by the accused. The time has come for a comprehensive evaluation of the merits of this whole case.

Mohammad Taukir

Prevent accidents

It is seen that there is an increase in the incidents of accidents due to landslides during monsoons. The government should think about what can be done to prevent such accidents. At the government level, such works are very slow. Help flows from places like social institutions, and rich temples. But does the government as a system have any responsibility or not?

Uday Waghvankar

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

Market intervention is required

In order to protect consumers' interests from seasonal fluctuations in vegetable prices, it is up to the government to create such a mechanism that would make sure the vegetable prices do not rise due to seasonal reasons. But it is more important that government agencies like NAFED, NCCF are used in time. NAFED is making effective market interventions to keep prices of onion, tomato, and other vegetables under control. It has been made a nodal agency, but it is not being used effectively.

Ashraf Nawaz

Pathetic Potholes Position Pothole Blues Continue

It is indeed a traumatic experience for road users in Mumbai city. Even the highways are having potholes and that hampers the traffic. Traffic snarls are seen on focal points and the Sion-Panvel highway suffered the most. CBD Belapur bridge was a bottleneck in the past for expressway travellers and with potholes and craters the position has become bad to worse. Motorists were caught unaware and the five-hour jam saw a long Que of vehicles on the street. Instead of completing the repair work during night hours and that too in a phased manner.

If the condition of the bridges are so bad, then the plain roads in the city are pathetic and full of potholes. Potholes pose problems for two-wheelers, while four-wheelers are troubled with craters. With water filled in all the potholes, maneuvering the vehicles is a herculean task for the drivers. Thus the pothole blues continue and the pain undertaken by both the drivers and the pedestrians is horrible. BMC is cutting a sorry figure as their rain readiness promise has gone to the winds. The pothole woes will continue for two more months till the end of monsoon rains. It is now or never a situation and a wake-up call for BMC.

In Navi Mumbai, the Belapur belt creates lots of traffic jams as we find the bottleneck causes long lines of traffic all the way and the resultant traffic jam creates a nightmare for long-distance travellers towards Pune and other far-off places. It is time to provide greater longevity for the roads in the main roads leading to the expressway. Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation has completed concretisation work at 70 major traffic chowks out of a total of 88 in an effort to reduce traffic congestion, especially during monsoons. The work has involved re-laying earlier asphalted roads around the chowks, at a cost of approximately INR27 crore (\$3.6m). The work aims to ensure residents do not have to use potholed roads, which can cause significant wear and tear. The NMMC has 505 km of roads under its jurisdiction. More stringent measures will have to be applied to keep

the highways in best condition as we trumpet the long length of highways in India next to the US but with potholes everywhere makes the purpose defeated.

The appearance of numerous potholes on Mumbai roads has become a regular monsoon phenomenon for more than a couple of decades. What is strange is the fact that some 25 years ago and before that, these pockmarks were totally unheard of. What was the technology used for road construction at those times, and where does it stand now? If the relevant science has made advances by leaps and bounds, we should have been riding on smooth, flat and even road surfaces, irrespective of the time of the year. Now we find the position rather precarious and road accidents due to potholes have become a regular routine.

It is notable that the pothole problem is giving the road users torrid time and there were several methods followed to make the roads in perfect conditions. During the monsoon season these potholes give way due to moisture and there is traffic jam due to resultant accidents at focal points. The state government and the road contractors have tried all the time tested methods to plug the loopholes and find an amicable solution. Even levying penalty on road contractors did not yield results as they continue to extend poor road work despite warnings issued to them in the past. Now BMC has done research and found out its own pothole mix at Worli plant to fix the potholes in a record time. This will definitely reduce the cost of the mix drastically and provide the best solution in repairing the pot holes in record time through the quick fix measures. This is a good initiative taken by BMC and this will definitely result in getting better roads in Mumbai. The initiative taken by BMC with the German firm is a right step in the right direction.

The roads in Mumbai city are going from bad to worse day by day. The taxpayers money is spent on road development in Mumbai but the roads are giving away within a short span of 2 to 3 months resulting

in potholes all over the roads in the city. It appears that only concrete roads can give a permanent solution to the problems prevailing road construction. The roads of our city are being put under great pressure and a very few of them manage to stand the strain. In the light of this BMC should plan in such a way concrete roads are laid in all the focal points of the city and by the year ending 2015 all the roads should be made of concrete to reduce the cost factor. We all look forward to the alternative of concrete roads as the panacea to avoid frequent repairs to roads in this pocket. It would be a long-term solution but a permanent one to the people using the roads in the city. The advantages of switching over to concrete roads are many.

Apart from their long life, they also save on fuel, provide for better driving comfort and use cement, a plentifully available commodity in the country. Maintenance costs are also lower. Concrete Roads have a small Green Advantage as well. Being white-topped they reflect light at night which means the intensity of street lighting can be brought down in terms of wattage. The main disadvantage is that bitumen roads will cost only one fourth of what is the outlay for concrete roads. But more importantly, concrete roads require a long time period for laying and setting, as much as a month for one km stretch as compared to a bitumen topped road that requires one fourth time. And during the time concrete roads are being laid the traffic will have to be completely closed, something that is unthinkable in the city. Let us plan in such a way that the road users are not troubled much and the work related to laying concrete roads must be completed before the next monsoon season.

- C.K. Subramaniam

Columnist

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

City

Chrisann Pereira, who was framed in drug case, reaches Mumbai



Actor Chrisann Pereira, who was framed in a drug case, jailed and eventually acquitted by a Sharjah court, reached Mumbai Thursday. Taking to Instagram, Chrisann's brother said, "Chrisann is finally back & reunited with us. I know I had announced in

June that she would be back but it took slightly longer and she's finally back." Pereira who was behind bars for nearly four weeks was granted bail on April 28 but couldn't leave the country as did not get her passport back. On July 3, family members of the Sadak 2 actor had expressed their

disappointment that Chrisann still has not received permission to fly back to India.

Meanwhile, a group of girl students of Acharya Marathe College junior section (Classes 11 and 12) in Mumbai's Chembur area has alleged that they were denied entry to college for wearing burqa, with the college saying action was taken as the students "continued to disobey the new uniform policy". According to students, it was inappropriate to ask them to remove the burqa at the gate and they demanded permission to change in the wash-room after entering college. The issue came to light on Wednesday after a purported video of burqa-clad girls complaining about the issue was widely shared on social media.

921 wet lease BEST buses off-road today due to strike



Around 921 wet lease BEST buses are off-road today due to a strike called by workers of wet lease contractors on the second consecutive day.

Nearly 160 wet lease buses were out of road on Wednesday due to a strike called by workers of SMT Daga group contractor of Mulund and Ghatkopar depots. These workers have been demanding a salary hike.

BEST also imposed a fine on the contractor for its failure to run buses.

What is wet lease:

BEST is a public transport undertaking of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)

Under wet lease, the buses are not owned by BEST. A private contractor takes care of the operations and maintenance of buses procured from a manufacturer. The contractor will take care of the recruitment of employees, salary payment, etc.

BEST is the second lifeline of Mumbai after the local train. It sees 33 lakh ridership daily.

BEST has 3,100 buses of its ownership and the remaining 1,637 are from wet lease contractors.

With a lull in rain, BMC scurries to repair all pothole-riddled roads before next downpour



Taking advantage of the ongoing dry spell in Mumbai, the BMC has begun filling potholes on roads across the city. The roads that were dotted with potholes and highlighted by TOI in its July 28 edition have also been taken up for repairs on priority, said officials. However, this move has sparked questions from

civic activists, who are critical of the BMC's reactive approach to the problem instead of proactively addressing it beforehand. In Andheri, activist Ashoke Pandit, who had raised concerns about potholes on the road opposite Citi Mall, said that when he visited the site again on Monday, he found that the BMC had levelled the road.

SOP to tackle cases of women duped into marriage outside religion soon

Police in Maharashtra will be asked to frame a standard operating procedure (SOP) to handle cases where women are duped into marriage outside religion by presenting a fake identity, deputy chief min-

ister Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday. He was speaking in the state legislative assembly during a discussion on 'Hindu girls being lured by anti-social elements' in Aurangabad district, as alleged by some legislators.

Killer cop in custody, says he's unaware of events on train

Chetan Singh, a 34-year-old Railway Protection Force (RPF) constable who gunned down his superior and three passengers on the Jaipur-Mumbai Superfast Express, was remanded into police custody till August 7 by amagistrate's court on Tuesday. In a three-page application, Government Railway Police (GRP) sought his custody say-

ing Singh was not cooperating with the investigation and they were yet to find the motive for the killings. Singh gunned down the head of the RPF escort team, assistant sub-inspector Tikaram Meena, 57, around 5.15 am as the train neared Vaitarna station. In the same compartment, he also shot and killed Kadar Bhanpurwala, 62, an elderly resident of Nalasopara. The

third victim was Syed Saifuddin Moinuddin, who remained unidentified on the day of the incident. He was shot dead in the pantry car. Sources said Moinuddin was dragged from coach B2 to the pantry with the rifle pointed at his back before being killed. The last person Singh turned his weapon on was Asghar Abbas Shaikh, 48, in coach S6.

An FIR has been registered against right-wing leader Sambhaji Bhide



An FIR has been registered against right-wing leader Sambhaji Bhide for his alleged derogatory remarks against Saibaba of Shirdi and social reformer Jyotiba Phule in Nashik city of Maharashtra, an official said on Wednesday. The case was registered on August 1 on the complaint lodged by the president of a Nashik-based social organisation.

Later, police transferred the FIR to their counterparts in Amravati where Bhide had allegedly made these remarks. (PTI)

[0:21 pm, 03/08/2023] vaidehi sachin: Police in Maharashtra will be asked to frame a standard operating procedure (SOP) to handle cases where women are duped into marriage outside religion by presenting a fake identity, deputy

chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday. He was speaking in the state legislative assembly during a discussion on 'Hindu girls being lured by anti-social elements' in Aurangabad district, as alleged by some legislators. All police stations will be sensitized on this issue and if appropriate action is not taken, the concerned officials will face action, said Fadnavis, who handles the home portfolio. He will ask the state director general of police (DGP) to frame an SOP for dealing with such cases, Fadnavis added. If an adult woman marries outside religion, law cannot be do anything unless she has been duped by the man by using a different identity, he said. (PTI)

Nation

Rajya Sabha passes Bill to provide fixed 50-year production lease for offshore mineral



The Rajya Sabha on Thursday passed the Offshore Areas Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023 to provide a fixed 50-year production lease for offshore minerals. The Bill, which seeks amendment to the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, was passed by a voice vote as the Opposition staged a walkout from the House and did not participate in the debate.

Replying to the debate on the

Bill, Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi said the Bill aims to create a transparent auction route for the allocation of mines. The Bill also seeks to provide for the grant of production lease to the private sector only through auction by competitive bidding. It also provides for the grant of operating rights without competitive bidding to a government or a government company, or a corporation in the mineral-bearing areas reserved by the central government.

The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha on August 1, introduces a composite licence for granting rights for exploration as well as production. Under the composite licence, the licensee will be required to complete the exploration within three years. This may be extended by two years upon application by the licensee. If mineral resources have been established, the licensee will be granted one or more production leases for the explored area. The maximum area for undertaking exploration under a single composite licence will be 30 minutes latitude by 30 minutes longitude. The maximum area for undertaking production under a single composite licence will be 15 minutes latitude by 15 minutes longitude. The Bill also provides that a production lease, as well as a production lease under a composite licence, will be valid for 50 years. ANI

Shimla Police tightens noose around peddlers, arrest 470 in 6 months



Shimla Police have tightened the noose around drug peddlers by arresting 470 of them in six months. Shimla Police claimed that they were able to bring down the impact of drugs and they have nabbed nearly 25 per cent of total peddlers arrested across Himachal Pradesh, according to the state data.

"If you compare the past records and data during the past six

months, we were able to bring down the impact of drugs. We have arrested over 470 people so far, and 315 cases have been registered against retailers and interstate drug peddlers. As far as Shimla Police is concerned, we have nabbed nearly 25 per cent of the total such peddlers," said Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi, Superintendent of Police, Shimla. According to the state police data, from January 1 to June 30, 2023,

the Himachal Police caught 8,688 kg of heroin. In these 6 months, 1230 cases have been registered under NDPS ACT. 1670 people have been arrested in these cases.

Apart from one Nigerian national, 1611 men and 58 women are among those arrested. Apart from heroin (Chitta), the police seized 200.17 kg of cannabis, 15 kg of opium, 374 poppy husk, 27.36 gm of smack and 72 kg of ganja, besides a large number of other intoxicants in these 6 months. It is surprising that the maximum number of drug cases have been caught in Shimla district only. Shimla SP said that to nab the peddlers in the state there is a need for support from the civil society so that the drug menace can be curbed in the state. ANI

"LoP's observation not very wholesome, PM not required to be defended by me": RS Chairman on Kharage's remarks in House

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday termed as "not very wholesome" Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks about the Chairman "defending" Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the

context of opposition's demands on the Manipur debate and said that "PM is not required to be defended by me". Dhankhar said he is required to defend the constitution and the rights of members.

"PM is not required to be de-

fended by me. I am not required to defend anyone. I am required to defend the Constitution...your rights. Such an observation from LoP is not very wholesome... where are we heading," the Chairman said.

Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee moves SC challenging Allahabad HC order to conduct ASI survey of Gyanvapi premises



Hours after the Allahabad High Court allowed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi, the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee has moved to the Supreme Court challenging the verdict. The Advocate of the Masjid Committee mentioned the matter before Supreme Court not to allow ASI to carry out the survey.

However, Supreme Court says it will look into the issue. Allahabad High Court on Thursday allowed the ASI to conduct a survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi. "Allahabad High Court has said that the ASI survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex will start. Sessions court order is upheld by the High Court," Vishnu Shankar

Jain, representing the Hindu side in the Gyanvapi survey case told reporters.

The Allahabad High Court dismissed Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee's plea, challenging the ASI survey of the mosque complex, adjacent to Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi. The Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee had challenged the Varanasi District Judge's July 21 order. On July 21, Varanasi district judge AK Vishvesha ordered the ASI survey of the Gyanvapi complex on an application moved by four Hindu women on May 16, 2023. The order of the district judge, however, excluded the Wuzu Khana (ablution pond area) of the complex, which has been sealed on the order of the top court. ANI

Wrestlers' sexual harassment case: Court to hear argument on charges from Aug 9 to 11

Delhi court on Thursday fixed August 9 to August 11 for arguments on Charges in the sexual harassment case registered by several wrestlers. Outgoing Wrestler Federation of India (WFI) Chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, along with the Federation's assistant secretary Vinod Tomar Singh, is the accused in the case.

Recently, the Court granted regular bail to outgoing Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh and the Federation's assistant secretary

Vinod Tomar Singh in the sexual harassment case registered by several wrestlers. On Thursday, Advocate Rajeev Mohan, a lawyer for Brij Bhushan Sharan, submitted that the documents supplied are complete however there are certain documents for which he seeks a better picture/better copy as per his submission, he can take the soft copy from the Investigation officer. After taking note of this, the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Harjeet Singh Jaspal decided to keep the matter for arguments on charge for 9, 10 and 11 August, 2023. ANI

World

Russia fines Wikipedia and Apple for spreading "false information" about Ukraine conflict



A Russian court on Thursday imposed fines on Apple and the host of Wikipedia for failing to remove material deemed to be "false information" about Russia's military actions in Ukraine. Russian court on Thursday imposed fines on Apple and the host of Wikipedia for failing to remove material

deemed to be "false information" about Russia's military actions in Ukraine.

A justice of the peace in a magistrate's court, which handles administrative violations and low-level criminal cases, fined the Wikimedia Foundation 3 million rubles (USD 33,000) for retaining material on Russian-

language Wikipedia pages that violated a law against discrediting Russia's military and spreading false information about the Ukraine conflict, the Interfax news agency reported. The same justice found Apple guilty of failing to delete podcasts and apps with such information and fined the company 400,000 rubles (USD 4,400). Since sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has enacted an array of measures to punish any criticism or questioning of the military campaign.

Some critics have received severe punishments. Opposition figure Vladimir Kara-Murza was sentenced this year to 25 years in prison for treason stemming from speeches he made against Russia's actions in Ukraine. PTI

US blacklists two China-based firms over Uyghur forced labour concerns



The United States has sanctioned two Chinese companies for their labour practices, accusing the firms of deliberately targeting the members of persecuted communities in China. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced in a statement that products made by the battery maker Camel Group and the spice and extract manufacturer Chenguang Biotech Group would not be allowed into the nation starting on Wednesday.

"The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced new enforcement actions to eliminate the use of forced labour practices in the U.S. supply chain and promote accountability for the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minority groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous

Region. The interagency Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force (FLETF), chaired by DHS, added two People's Republic of China (PRC)-based companies to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) Entity List," the DHS said on Tuesday. "Promoting accountability for the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minority groups" in the western Chinese province of Xinjiang is another goal of the sanctions, according to the DHS. "Today's enforcement actions demonstrate the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to holding organizations accountable for their egregious human rights abuses and forced labour practices," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas, according to the official release of DHS. ANI

Schengen visa appointments not suspended for Indian tour groups, Swiss embassy clarifies

The Switzerland Embassy in India, on Thursday, clarified that they have not suspended any Schengen visa applications for Indian tour groups, contrary to erroneous reports by several publications. "The Embassy of Switzerland in India has not suspended Schengen visa appointments for Indian tour groups. We have almost 800 daily appointments through the end of September 2023. These include 22

groups," Spokesperson, Embassy of Switzerland in India said in a statement.

Earlier, several publications ran the news that Switzerland has stopped accepting Schengen visa applications for Indian tour groups until October due to a high volume of pending applications. These articles cited the news to SchengenVisaInfo.com.

The Swiss mission has clarified that in 2023, the Embassy of

Switzerland in India processed more visa applications than it did in 2019. "From January until June, we handled 129,446 applications, as against 120,071 during the same period in 2019 – a 7.8 per cent increase," the Spokesperson said. The spokesperson further stated that there are three measures that have been implemented since the beginning of this year to further ease the visa application process for Indian applicants. ANI

India is in touch with Indian nationals and embassy in Niger, says MEA

India is in touch with Indian nationals and embassy in Niger. There has not been any issue or complaint from them and all of them seem to be safe, said the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi Bagchi while speaking about the Niger coup, said, "There are around 250-odd (Indian) people there, but we could be a little off."

"Most of them are staying

there and there were some who were temporarily living there and they have utilized the opportunity of the French evacuation special flights. But, only 10 or 15 have left, including some of the businessmen who were there on temporary visas." Some other countries have also run evacuation flights such as European Union nations. "I don't have the exact number because this was an offer made

directly to the citizens," he added. Moreover, flights to five neighbouring countries have also resumed including Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Libya, and Chad. "So some Indian nationals are now planning to leave for those routes," Bagchi said. Bagchi said that the overall situation seems to be normal and stable. "We are in close contact with the Indian community there," he added. ANI

Indian student killed in crash in Australia

A 22-year-old Indian student working as an Uber Eats driver in Australia was killed after his bike collided with an SUV in Sydney, a media report said. Akshay Deepak Daultani, a Mumbai native pursuing a master's degree in Australia, died in a crash last week in New South Wales while working as a food delivery driver, the Australia Broadcasting Cooperation reported on Wednesday. Daultani received a scholarship for a master's degree in finance at Macquarie University and came to Australia in February.

He worked as an Uber Eats delivery rider at least three times a week to cover his expenses. He was taken to the Royal North Shore Hospital after the crash but



died hours later, the report said. "The only reason why he wanted to come abroad was not [just to] have a good life for himself but to provide more amenities for his family so they could live a lifestyle that was much better," his cousin Pratik Kamath was quoted as saying in the report. With Daultani's death, the number of food delivery riders killed in Australia since 2017 rose to 12, according to the Transport Workers Union. PTI

Expression

UCC: Lest It Becomes a Pit Bull?



Jag Mohan Thakur
Columnist

The Haryana and Manipur communal violence has, for the time being, capped the 'Zinn of UCC' in the bottle, but it will come out again at its appropriate time. However, these communal clashes have shown that the 'Zinn' of UCC may also create a dangerous cloud of abhorrence and people fear that it will thus unnecessarily cause disturbance and unrest in the country.

Indian society is a colourful rainbow of different cultures, customs, ideas and no Uniform Civil Society in India, then how can it be just and possible to implement Uniform Civil Code? The Bharatiya Janata Party government is determined to implement its previously declared and unannounced objectives. In the mid-eighties, the BJP, during the peak era of L K Advani, focused on three main issues – the UCC, abrogation of article 370 and a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. After the removal of Article 370 and commencing work on Ram Mandir, BJP has started feeling that it is capable of making and implementing any law due to the majority in the Parliament. But until the uniform civil society does not come on the ground, it would be meaningless to bring a uniform civil code law. Has society ever been bound by the rope of law alone? If this were the case then why are child marriages still happening? Why the Dalit class is being treated as second grade class? Why are rapes happening every day? Why the country's pride women players had to protest and stage sit-ins even to file a case of sexual harassment to get justice against a Bahubali MP? Had the accused been an ordinary person and not a Bahubali Member of Parliament, would the police have given the same laxity in arresting him and filing a case? Why have not the same norms been adopted?

Will all the problems be solved after the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code Act which the present BJP government is trying to force?

What the UCC is?

On a wider scale, Uniform Civil Code means one law for the whole country. Where the Uniform Civil Code applies, in that country, whatever laws are made related to marriage, divorce, child adoption, property division and all other subjects, they have to be considered equally for the citizens of all religions and castes. At present, many laws in India are decided on the basis of religion and ethnicity too.

It is being claimed that the condition of women in India will improve with the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code. There will be simplicity and clarity in the laws. Discrimination on the basis of laws related to personal or religion will be abolished. But can this really happen?

Expressing doubts over the new UCC, Shiromani Akali Dal president, Sukhbir Singh Badal, pleads that the issue had already been examined in depth by the 21st Law Commission which had in its report in 2018 noted that UCC

was neither necessary nor desirable at this stage. It said the Commission also observed that reforms in family laws of different communities would provide better guarantee of securing rights of women and children than bringing in Uniform Civil Laws. It also detailed how the Commission emphasized that cultural diversity must not be compromised and that nothing should be done to pose even a remote threat to the idea of 'unity in diversity' and eventually pose threat to the country's territorial integrity. It said in this light there was nothing significant after 2018 to compel the union government to seek views of stakeholders afresh.

Why the Minorities are afraid of the UCC?

Differing the new UCC, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) clearly rejects the proposed UCC and states that it is not in nation's interest. Opposing the essence of UCC, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in a recent letter informed the 22nd Law Commission that the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) was not in the nation's interest and enforcing it without a genuine countrywide inter-faith consensus, especially among minorities, would violate the spirit of the Constitution and generate fear, distrust and divisive sentiments.

The SAD president also informed the Commission that the party had held consultations with different stakeholders in the State and outside. "On the basis of that, the widespread impression we gathered is that the UCC, if implemented, will definitely affect the freedom of minority communities of different caste, creed and religions".

Sukhbir Singh Badal also asserted that the framers of the Constitution kept the Uniform Civil Code in the Concurrent List. He said after a detailed discussion on UCC it was decided not to put it in the list of Fundamental Rights but in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

The SAD also stressed that the proposed UCC would also affect Social Tribes who have their own diverse customs, culture and different personal laws. "It will thus un-necessarily cause disturbance and unrest in the country, especially in North Eastern states which enjoy special exemptions from certain laws under article 371 of the Constitution", Mr Badal added.

Will BJP dare to end the privilege of Hindus?

Addressing BJP booth workers in Madhya Pradesh, on June 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Muslims were being misled in the name of UCC. "These days, people are being provoked by the UCC. You tell me, if there is one law for one person in a home, and another law for another person, can that house function?" he asked.

But under the HUF, giving a special privilege to Hindus, are there not two discriminatory laws existing for different religions in India?

Will the UCC being implemented by the BJP government dare to end the special exemption in income tax currently given to Hindus (Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs) under Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), which is not available to other religions (Muslims, Christians, Parsis)? Or will the people of other religions also get the benefit of its exemption? Probably not. The BJP government, which is looking forward to win the 2024 elections only on the Hindu vote bank, will never want its Hindu vote bank to be angry, nor will it allow its religion-based purpose to go astray by giving this exemption to other religions at present.

In his article in Indian Express on July 18, 2023 – 'HUF and Uniform Civil Code', Deepak Joshi a CA writes, "Hindu Undivided Family is a legal entity that allows Hindu (includes Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs) taxpayers to claim certain benefits, but this benefit of statutory tax planning is not available to a tax payer of other religions, such as Muslims, Christians and Parsis etc., which raises concerns over the lack of uniform application of tax laws. Dehors the issue of UCC, it can be argued that granting an additional treatment that lowers the tax burden only on the basis of religion is arbitrary, and may fall out of Article 14 and Article 15 of the constitution."

Will UCC be able to protect gotra restrictions in marriage?

According to the present law, any two adults -boy and girl - can marry each other and live together, but in many castes, there are gotra/clan restrictions for marriage, they cannot marry in their own gotra. If the matrimonial system of Jats is seen, then we find that at present three clans and some areas are forbidden in the community. The boy and the girl should not be residents of the same village or fraternal village, both should not be of same clan, marriage is also prohibited in their mother's and grandmother's gotra. But the present law gives recognition to such marriages, due to which tension arises in the society. And the social fabric gets frayed and there comes a rift in social harmony and brotherhood. Whenever a young man or woman marries in a forbidden gotra or area, it is considered a question of honour in such families in the society and in most of the cases, incidents of 'honour killing' come to the fore. Although the law serves to protect such a married couple, which is considered to be a violation of social norms, and the society grows angry against the government and the law. The government should study such 'honour killing' cases and make this law socially compatible.

Social Khap Panchayats have also been demanding from time to time the government to enact a law to stop marriages in prohibited gotras/ areas. Since long, the khap panchayats have been seeking an amendment in the Hindu Marriage Act to prohibit same gotra marriages.

Supporting the concern of Khap Panchayats, on January 10, 2020, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had asserted that it has been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed.

"The khap panchayats have a principle that within a village or intra-clan, marriages should not take place. It has been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed," Khattar said in Panchkula.

Giving example of Gujarat, Khattar stated, "If the relation of sister and brother is followed within the village, or within neighbouring villages and khaps, then certainly it will have a positive impact on the society. I have noticed this in Gujarat also where the women are referred to as Behen (sister) and the men are referred to Bhai (brother)."

Will the Chief Minister's words be heeded? Will consanguineous and same-village marriages be legally prohibited as demanded by Khap Panchayats? Will UCC be able to solve this discrepancy? Questions need answers.

Discrepancies in Reservation: Will UCC Resolve?

Reservation in India is purely based on religion

and caste, and that too on discriminatory grounds, will UCC be able to resolve these discrepancies?

Alleging "appeasement politics" in granting OBC status to communities in West Bengal, National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) chairperson Hansraj Gangaram Ahir himself, on June 8, 2023, stated the state government should fix the "discrepancy" at the earliest.

The NCBC chief also charged that OBC reservations were not being implemented correctly in Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar – states with non-BJP governments, whereas there are seven districts in Rajasthan which do not extend any reservation to the OBCs and the Punjab, which has 25 per cent reservation for the OBCs, was just granting 12 per cent to the community.

"In Bihar too, there were issues related to Kurmi community which still are to be resolved," the NCBC chief said.

The question arises here that BJP has a majority government at the centre, why don't they talk about creating an equal civil society by removing the anomalies of OBC reservation before bringing the Uniform Civil Code?

In Rajasthan, except two districts of Bharatpur and Dholpur, Jats of the rest of the state are considered in the OBC category. Here the question arises that what extra social and educational achievements did the Jats of these two districts have that they were not considered under the backward category? Is it only because these districts had Jat princely states?

Do all the subjects of that caste or society automatically come in the upper class from the social and educational point of view when a particular person or family becomes the head of the state.

If so, Raja Rao Tula Ram had princely state in Rewari and adjoining Ahirwal area in Haryana, his heir Rao Birendra Singh was the chief minister of Haryana and at present his descendant Rao Inderjit Singh is a minister in the centre, then why the Yadav subjects of this Yadav dynasty have been included in the OBC category? Jats and Yadavs in Haryana are almost in the same social, economic and educational category. Both are agricultural castes and both have been living on agriculture and animal husbandry. Both have been sending their youth to the army to be martyred in the interest of the country. Then why are the Jats of Haryana being denied the OBC category? Even the ancestors of Jats were not the owners of any princely state in Haryana.

Are these discrepancies in reservation not the obstructive anomalies hindering the formation of an equal civil society? Will UCC find a solution for them?

Though any majoritarian democratic government has the power to legislate a law to act as a watchdog for the Country's and Society's security, safety and welfare, but should always keep in consideration – "Before we pet a watchdog, test and ensure its breed, creed, seed, deed, and need."

Otherwise, the watchdog may turn out a Pit Bull, which not only bites passers-by, but may also maul the owner, the past instances have proved so.

Entertainment



Rick Springfield reveals his secret to healthy lifestyle at 73

Australian-American musician Rick Springfield revealed his new album, healthy living, and getting ready for his 'I Want My '80s' tour, People reported. The '80s icon, who is 73 years old, credits his svelte figure and strict exercise regimen to his excellent health (plus, he has the abs to show it).

"I work out every day," Springfield tells PEOPLE in this week's issue, on newsstands Friday. "I just got a trainer, and I've been working out with him. Basically, I watch what I eat, and I try and stay active."

Springfield claims that he currently follows a pescatarian diet, despite having attempted veganism in the past. "I tried being a vegan, and it made me feel great, but I looked like hell," he explained. "A friend of mine came up to me and said, 'Are you OK?' I got so thin. So I had to put fish back in [for protein]." ANI

Adarsh Gourav joins Reema Kagti's next film 'Superman of Malegaon'



Actor Adarsh Gourav is all set to join Reema Kagti's next movie, 'Superman of Malegaon'. The film is based on the Malegaon film industry. Sharing his excitement, Adarsh said in a statement, "When Reema told me about Malegaon I knew I was going to say yes to the film. I have heard about the Malegaon Film industry before and it is quite intriguing how they make a movie or even finance it. They are a different world in itself. It is one of the most underrated film industries that churns out some fun films with a 100% business return. It was high time that the industry got the limelight it deserves." ANI

Salman Khan shares adorable birthday wish for his sister Arpita



Superstar Salman Khan on Thursday shared a sweet wish for his sister Arpita Khan Sharma on social media. Taking to Instagram, Salman posted an adorable throwback picture of himself and his baby sister Arpita.

In the picture, Salman can be seen posing with Arpita in a black printed leather jacket that he paired with a white t-shirt and denim. While Arpita can be seen busy chewing her brother's little finger. Sharing the picture, he wrote, "Happy birthday Arpita." Salman shares a great bond with Arpita and is often seen celebrating special occasions with her. ANI



"My work will immortalize me": Bhumi Pednekar

Actor Bhumi Pednekar has made a mark for herself in Bollywood through her determination and commitment that set her apart. Bhumi's passion for acting undoubtedly runs deep and she wants her work to make her immortal in the annals of acting.

Talking about her love for her work and acting, Bhumi said, "I'm a workaholic and I'm in love with the fact that I'm an actor spending every second of my life trying to create something that will stay on forever. Acting is a special profession and one that cannot be taken lightly. Whenever I set foot on a film's set, I'm filled with gratitude that my work will immortalize me in some way. So, I give my 200 per cent in any project that I do."

Time and again, Bhumi has proven her mettle with awe-inspiring performances that have left both critics and audiences spellbound. With every role, she delves deep into the essence of her characters, bringing authenticity and sincerity to her portrayals." Bhumi added, "I feel I'm responsible to leave a mark through my movies because films are a part of our cultural legacy. What we create now, will be remembered and be dissected in the years to come just as films from before stand the test of time or are questioned now for what they tried to say. Art is almost immortal." ANI