



Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee
moves SC challenging Allahabad HC order

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Afternoon

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THOUSANDS OF BUSES STAY OFF ROADS AS MUMBAI CIVIC TRANSPORT DRIVERS



AV Team

The protesting drivers have claimed that they did not get adequate salary hike in the last three years and find it difficult to manage household expenses. Their salaries are quite low compared to those of BEST employees, they added. The BEST has hired buses on a wet lease model under which private operators have the responsibility of the vehicle ownership, maintenance, fuel and driver costs.

The bus strike began with only 160 leased buses but later on the number crossed 1,000 on the second day. The operations of the BEST's wet leased buses were severely hampered at Ghatkopar, Mulund,

Shivaji Nagar, Worli and other depots, the officials said. The strike by the drivers of private bus operators hired by the BEST - Mumbai's civic transport utility - intensified on the third day on Friday with more than 1,300 buses staying off roads, causing immense inconvenience to commuters using the service.

The undertaking has directed the private operators to resolve the issue as early as possible, and necessary action was being taken against these companies as per the terms and conditions of the lease agreements, they said. A spokesperson of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) said that as many as 1,375 out of the total 1,671 private buses of the civic transport service

did not leave 20 depots, including Colaba, Worli, Majas, Shivaji Nagar, Ghatkopar, Deonar, Mulund, Santacruz, Oshiwara and Magathane, since morning.

The undertaking's fleet of around 3,100 buses (including its own 1,340 buses) ferries more than 30 lakh people in Mumbai and neighboring Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mira-Bhayandar every day. 1375 BEST Buses are off road on third day of the strike called by workers of private wet lease buses contractors

Services from 20 bus depots remain affected due to it. The depots are backbay, Colaba, Mumbai Central, Worli, Pratiksha Nagar, Arnik, Dharavi, Deonar, Shivaji Nagar, Ghatkopar, Mulund, Majas, Santa-

cruz, Oshiwara, Malvani, Gorai, Magathane etc. The strike has been called for salary hike mainly by workers.

BEST Contract worker **Bhushan Bhagwan Porkar** said, "Women who is sitting with her child at Azad Maidan for the salary hike we are in support of that worker as we all are also facing difficulty not only that for this strike we have taken permission from police mentioned that it would be peaceful strike and we are not here for any damage to the society or any of the government or private BEST buses instead we are only demanding our right of payment".

I CONTINUED ON PAGE 04

Rahul Gandhi all set to return to Parliament

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Finally, the Supreme Court suspended Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's conviction in a criminal defamation case over his remarks on the 'Modi' surname. The order will allow him to return to parliament and contest national elections due next year. The trial judge has awarded the maximum sentence of two years in the case, the top court observed, pointing out that it would not have attracted disqualification if the sentence was a day lesser.

Gandhi was convicted in March in a case brought by Purnesh Modi, a legislator from the western state of Gujarat belonging to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), over comments he made

in 2019 when he asked why "all thieves have Modi as [their] common surname". Lower courts and the high court in Gujarat - Modi's home state where the BJP holds power - had rejected appeals by Gandhi to suspend the conviction, causing him to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai said the lower court which sentenced Gandhi to two years in jail had not given any reasons for handing down the maximum sentence of two years which led to his disqualification from parliament.

I CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Rahul Gandhi all set to return to Parliament

▶▶▶ PAGE 1

Rahul Gandhi has begun to attack Adani directly. If he does not stop, it would have created a lot of headaches for Modi and BJP, they actually needed to clutch him and his statement was used as a tool.

This entire saga was politically motivated vendetta. What was wrong in his statement, Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi has of course looted our country, so if that is applied

Whom does it help? Who gets affected? India has a particularly strict criminal defamation law compared to many other democracies.

While Gandhi's comments were "not in good taste" and he "ought to have been more careful while making public speeches", the conviction not only punished Gandhi but also voters who had elected him to represent their constituency, said Gavai, who headed a bench of three judges which suspended the conviction.

Rahul Gandhi has begun to attack Adani directly. If he does not stop, it would have created a lot of headaches for Modi and BJP, they actually needed to clutch him and his statement was used as a tool. In the parliament, Rahul Gandhi had asked questions about Adani's role. BJP went to the trouble of obliterating a major part of his speech. In response the Prime Minister did not take the name of Adani even once. There are some people who are saying that he insulted the whole "Modi" caste and all OBCs. It is quite obvious that his only target was Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi and Narendra Modi. Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi are not even OBCs.

This entire saga was politically motivated vendetta. What was wrong in his statement, Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi has of course looted our country, so if that is applied, then there are many thieves who have that surname and does it mean that Modi's surname is defamed. When a person calls an Italian bar dancer in the media news, the people accept it and not the statements of Rahul Gandhi, are we not biased? If loose talks by Subramaniam Swamy and BJP leaders about Gandhi family are entertained, why take objection to Rahul Gandhi? Well, the supreme court has not only given relief to Rahul Gandhi but also given some assurance to people that justice is delivered.

The problem with the Criminal defamation law in India is that it is outdated. People need to think about the purpose of this law. Whom does it help? Who gets affected? India has a particularly strict criminal defamation law compared to many other democracies. In India, defamation is a criminal offence that can result in imprisonment and fines. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) includes defamation as an offence under Section 499, which defines defamation as any imputation that harms a

person's reputation.

Whereas in many other democracies, defamation is primarily a civil matter, meaning that it is addressed through civil lawsuits rather than criminal charges. In countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, for example, defamation can be the basis for a civil lawsuit, but it is not typically a criminal offence. Even in countries where criminal defamation laws do exist, the penalties may not be as severe as those in India. For example, in France, criminal defamation can result in fines and imprisonment, but the maximum sentence is typically shorter than in India, and imprisonment is typically not mandatory.

Overall, the criminal defamation law in India is among the strictest in the world, and there have been concerns raised about the law's impact on freedom of speech and expression. Some have called for reform of the law to make it more in line with international standards of freedom of expression. The number of instances in which this law has been used as a tool to harass and intimidate journalists, whistle-blowers and activists, are too many. If we look at previous such cases like Arvind Kejriwal vs. Nitin Gadkari: In 2013, Maneka Gandhi vs. Indira Gandhi: In 1977, M.G. Devasahayam vs. M. Karunanidhi: In 1992, Jay Amit Shah vs. The Wire: In 2017. All these cases are different from each other under defamation but none of these leaders were banned or barred from their rights and duties. In Rahul Gandhi's case it was an extreme sentence of disqualification. This law needs to be revisited, and discussed, in any case, it must be limited only to civil courts, not worth being treated as a criminal offence.



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Voices



Letters to the Editor

It is a matter of concern

Education can be the most important in making the golden age of freedom meaningful, but it is a matter of concern that despite this positive thinking of the governments, our education system has been giving opposite signals. The increase in the number of student dropouts in higher education and school education in India, i.e. the increase in the number of students who drop out in between, is becoming a major question not only on the education system but also on the education policy of the government.

According to an answer given in the Parliament, during the last five years, more than 34,000 students left their studies midway in the country's renowned higher educational institutions. On the other hand, in the analysis of the board examinations of 2022 by the Union Ministry of Education, it has been told that lakhs of children of class 10th and 12th drop out. The success of any country's education system lies in the continuity in the attainment of education. It is well known that on the one hand, the standards in the education system in school-college are not accessible to many students, on the other hand the lack of continuity is linked to poverty, family, social, and many other factors and all points need to be considered for its solution. There will be a need to see only by keeping it in a formula.

A Nawas

BJP must replace Manipur CM

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has no leg to stand on after this censure by the highest court in the land but continues to remain in office with a total lack of accountability because the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is determined to protect him for political reasons. The history of communal clashes in India suggests that mob violence for a prolonged period is possible only with the connivance of the state.

In the case of Manipur, it is more than evident. Bringing perpetrators to book is far more tedious and often a frustrating process compared to taking swift preventive police action at the first sign of trouble. In Manipur, far from a swift response to prevent escalation, the police allegedly facilitated the mob violence. Police personnel who failed in their duty or connived with mobs should face the full force of the law. Also, there must be a strong message from the country's political leadership. Sadly, the attempt by the ruling BJP has been to deny the gravity of the Manipur situation by comparing it with isolated crimes in Opposition-ruled States.

MJ Azizi

Broad shouldered Stuart ends his international career on a high!

Stuart Broad ends his international career on a high as he helps England level the series with a brilliant burst of spell on the last day in office. He hit the last ball he faced for a 'Six' & a wicket of the last ball of his career was an icing on the cake for the Broad shouldered Stuart who will go down in cricketing history as one of the greatest players ever to have played for England. Yuvraj Singh literally ended his international career by hitting him for 6 sixes in a T20 World Cup game in 2007 but Stuart Broad learnt a lot from that dubious distinction by bounced back strongly to figure in the list of greatest bowlers to have played the game.

Discipline & dedication apart from hard work & focus on his game is what made Broad stand out among the rest. He cut down on his limited overs games to focus on Test Matches should be taken as a lesson by fellow cricketers like Kohli, Rohit Sharma & others to extend their international career. Well played Stuart Broad. You are an true champion & fellow cricketers should take a leaf out of his book to retire at the prime & not when their performances are questioned!

S.N.Kabra

Student life gives flight to Dreams

It will not be wrong to call student life the golden age of human life. The hard work done during this period has to determine the course of the future life of a person. People who work hard during their student life succeed in reaching a successful stage in life, while students who are careless remain trapped in lifelong wanderings. The success of a student's life does not depend only on the hard work of the student, but the guidance and opportunities received during this period are also very important.

Those students who get competent teachers, those students automatically become hard workers. The teacher's inspiration and guidance become a guide for them. In the same way, the opportunity to take flight of dreams during student life also directly affects the student's personality. Book knowledge alone is not enough. If you work for hours on the laptop then you may have the problem of dry eye syndrome, eat these things to avoid Book knowledge alone is not enough for success in student life.

Experiment on practical during this period the opportunities for knowledge accelerate the student's learning process many times and positively affect his personality development. Knowledge taught in book form is like incomplete knowledge for the student. If the student gets an opportunity to apply that knowledge in practical form and see it directly, then the student's knowledge becomes permanent.

A student's imagination turns into reality. The student is shocked to see what he could only imagine in reality. It seems to him that hisAll the information recorded in the books is also real. Efforts have been started by the government Students of government schools are often left behind in terms of educational journeys because the decisions of government schools are taken by the government at the state level and not at the local level. Private institutions are free



to take their own decisions and they often make such efforts for their students. Many initiatives have been started by the state government with the aim of providing constructive knowledge to the students of government schools. Department of Education The opportunities being provided to the students of government schools are becoming an example.

The department is providing realistic knowledge to the students by taking them to those places, which their teachers may not have had the opportunity to. The students are taught only the information contained in the books about the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, but the present government took an effort to improve their knowledge by taking the students of the government schools to the Vidhan Sabha during the ongoing session of the Vidhan Sabha. of Chandrayaan-3A chance to see the launch up close The interest of school students in science subject is decreasing day by day. The difference in admissions for science and other subjects in senior secondary classes is enough to prove this fact. With the aim of increasing the interest of students in the subject of science and showing the knowledge of the subject of science to the students in a realistic form, the education department provided an opportunity to the students of government schools to see the launch of India's Chandrayaan-3 up close. Science field to government school students It provided to enjoy and know the proud moments of the country.

This occasion has become a golden page in the history of the

School Education Department. After seeing the launch of Chandrayaan-3, these students were welcomed by the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann himself and he also got to know the experiences of the students. By meeting the top scientists there, the desire to go into the science field will inevitably arise in the minds of the students. Importance of educational trips Educational trips are very important to convert the student's book form into theoretical knowledge. This In view of its importance, educational trips to religious and historical places are organized for students by educational institutions. During educational trips, it is very important to give detailed information about the place or event to the students before the start of the trip as well as at the place. In the field of knowledge and science, things will be hit These attempts to give flight to the dreams of the students of government schools will inevitably become the cause of creating a bright future. Book in fictional form by students The knowledge being acquired will always remain in their memories. The youth of the state will definitely excel in the field of knowledge and science.

- Vijay Garg

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.)

Maharashtra: Financial, operational turnaround of MSEDCL not achieved despite UDAY scheme, says CAG report



The compliance audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) for fiscal 2021 that was tabled in the Maharashtra Legislature on Friday said the financial and operational turnaround of state-run power distribution firm MSEDCL was not

achieved despite implementation of the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY).

The report, which was tabled in the Assembly and the Legislative Council on the last day of the Monsoon session, said Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited, also called

MahaVitaran, received Rs 4,960 crore from the state government under the UDAY scheme to repay its high cost debt.

However, MSEDCL did not receive any other dedicated fund to achieve various operational parameters, which it had improve through its own resources or under other Central/state schemes, as per the report. The state-run power firm approached the state government in 2017 for availing guarantee for raising bonds of Rs 1,653 crore in accordance with the government resolution of December 2016, but this guarantee was denied, the report said. "There was no firm commitment from the state to expeditiously clear the MSEDCL's outstanding dues. MSEDCL could not achieve its targets of bringing down the aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses to the desired level," it said. PTI

Maharashtra assembly: Bill to provide relief to farmers for losses due to adulterated seeds, substandard fertilizers, insecticides



The Maharashtra government on Friday introduced a bill in the legislative assembly that aims to provide compensation to farmers for losses caused due to adulterated seeds, substandard or misbranded seeds, fertilisers or insecticides.

The bill proposes to provide the payment of compensation within a month or with an interest of 12 per cent per annum in

case of a delay. The bill introduced by Agriculture Minister Dhananjay Munde provides for the procedure for filing and dealing with complaints of farmers and investigation for assessment and evaluation of crop losses in a time-bound manner. The bill also has a provision for payment of a deposit of 50 per cent of the compensation amount before filing an appeal. PTI

No change in top positions in Maharashtra govt, clarifies Fadnavis



Both Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis will remain the deputy chief ministers while Eknath Shinde will continue as the chief minister, Fadnavis said Thursday. Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis has reiterated there will be no changes in the top positions in the state government. Both Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis will remain the deputy chief ministers and Eknath Shinde will remain the chief minister,

Fadnavis said Thursday. Speculations were rife since the Nationalist Congress Party MLAs led by Ajit Pawar joined the BJP in Maharashtra and got stronger when NCP workers celebrated Ajit Pawar's birthday on July 22 by putting up huge posters boldly claiming he was the next CM. The posters were displayed on the route between Devgiri (Ajit Pawar's official residence) to Shinde's official residence Varsha at Malabar Hills.

▶▶ PAGE 1

Thousands of buses stay off roads as ...

"Our expectations are that our salary should be increased or else we will continue the strike" said BEST contract worker Amit Umesh Warkar, "A family who started this strike we here in support of them and we are also at strike as we are facing lot of issues like salary not given on time, No salary hike from last 3 years not only that lot of deduction are done in the name of taxes which is not seen in clearly in the salary slip and whenever we ask them about it they have do not give us any answers and clearly stated that "If you want to work then do your job without asking questions or else leave the job".

There was one incident where a BEST contract worker was removed from the job due to an accident but that was due to bad condition of these private buses as their breaks are not working not only that many of us have complained about the bad condition of bus which is break failure, AC not working, Battery issue and other issues to our seniors but they kept on ignoring and forced us to remove the buses on roads and in this situation if any-

thing happens then they easily blame the drivers of those buses and remove them from their job" Warkar further continued.

Contract worker Praful Madhukar Kardekar said, "We started this strike for the that one family but we were also looking for a path as we were facing lot of difficulties but did not take any step in the past as we did'nt knew how to go about it".

"One incident I want to share about this strike, I was removing the bus on the road from last 3-4 days which is already in bad condition and maintenance department was also aware of this issue but still they ignored it and told me to drive the bus on the road but they should understand if some one is working overtime not able to rest and run the defective buses then who would be responsible as it might lead to accident and these incidents are easily blamed on driver".

"People who are done with their work cannot go home they will be waiting in queue for more than 2 hours to fill the CNG of BEST buses which does not happen in government job as they

have different people working for those roles and private agencies of BEST should understand that it is affecting our Mental, Emotional are our personal life as we are not able to take proper rest required for us which might lead to inconvenience to people" Kardekar further added.

Contract worker Candrakant Raut said, "We come at site of the strike around 3:30 am and will go home around 9:00 pm and most of people at strike are surviving without any food as we are not able afford it but we will still continue to strike for our demand to be fulfilled".

While this ongoing strike people residing in Mumbai mentioned that some were happy with removal of private BEST buses as it takes lot of time to reach the destination while people did not like this move as frequency of public transport buses were less on roads. On the other side government employees of BEST buses mentioned that they were standing idle for hours in the day due to no AC buses but they were not moved to some other role of BEST bus department.

Nation

"My duty remains same, protect the idea of India": Rahul Gandhi after SC stays his conviction in defamation case



disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the House following the apex court order. "It's a happy day...I will write and speak to Lok Sabha Speaker today itself," Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury told ANI. "This is the victory of truth. This will prove costly for Prime Minister," he said. Chowdhury sought to raise the demand for revocation of Rahul Gandhi's disqualification in Lok Sabha on Friday. He said he will also make the demand on Monday.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Rahul Gandhi has "refused to bend" despite the relentless efforts of BJP. "The Supreme Court judgment is a strong vindication of truth and justice. Despite the relentless efforts of the BJP's machinery, @RahulGandhi has refused to bend, break or bow, choosing instead to place his faith in the judicial process," Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet. ANI

Hours after the Supreme Court stayed his conviction in the criminal defamation case over 'Modi surname' remark, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said that he will continue to work to protect the idea of India. "Come what may, my duty remains the same. Protect the idea of India," Gandhi

said in a tweet.

Supreme Court, in an interim order, on Friday stayed the conviction of Rahul Gandhi in the criminal defamation case over the 'Modi surname' remark. Earlier in the day, the Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said he will write to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to revoke the

Rajya Sabha adjourned till Monday amid ruckus on Manipur violence, crimes against women in Rajasthan



The Rajya Sabha on Friday was adjourned for the day amid a ruckus created by both the Opposition party members as well as the treasury benches. The House will reconvene on Monday at 11 am.

Soon after the House reassembled after its first adjournment at 12 noon, the Opposition party members reiterated their demand to hold a comprehensive discussion on Manipur ethnic violence issue under Rule 267. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar declined all the 48

notices given under Rule 267 by the Opposition MPs pointing out that they are not ready to discuss Manipur violence even after the assurance given by the chair that there will not be any time limit during the discussion on the issue and that each members will be allocated as much time as they want.

Meanwhile, BJP MP from Rajasthan Ghanshyam Tiwari raised a point related to crime against women in Rajasthan and sought a discussion on the issue too. ANI

Parliamentary panel suggests reducing of age to contest Lok Sabha, assembly polls



Parliamentary committee on Friday battled for reducing the minimum age to contest Lok Sabha and assembly elections, saying it would give the youth equal opportunities to engage in democracy. According to the present legal framework, a person should be at least 25 years old to contest Lok Sabha and assembly polls. The minimum age to become a member of Rajya Sabha and state legislative council is 30 years. At present, the age at which a person can register as a voter is 18 years. For "national elections" or Lok Sabha polls, it specifically recommended reducing the minimum age to contest from the present 25 years to 18.

For "national elections" or Lok Sabha polls, it specifically recommended reducing the minimum age to contest from the present 25 years to 18. "After examining various countries' practices, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, the Committee observes that the minimum age for candidacy in national elections needs to be 18 years. These nations' examples demonstrate that young individuals can be reliable and responsible political participants," the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Personnel said. It also suggested "reducing the minimum age requirement for candidacy in assembly elections". PTI

"We have no faith in...police": Ex Karnataka CM Bommai calls for SIT investigation Udupi video incident

Former Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai on Friday said that he will meet Governor, Thawar Chand Gehlot and will demand a SIT Investigation into the Udupi Medical College video incident as they have "no faith in the Udupi Police Department." "Today we are complaining to the Governor about the video shooting case at

Udupi College. This case should be fully investigated, and a SIT should be formed. This must be investigated by SIT only. We have no faith in the Udupi Police Department," said Former CM Basavaraj Bommai.

Three girls from a medical college in Udupi district, Karnataka, were reported to have filmed their fellow students in

the washroom. Days after the incident Udupi Police registered two separate FIRs in the Udupi Medical College video incident case. A statement released by the police details that police took suo motu cognizance and that two separate cases have been registered in connection with the incident, adding that an investigation has been initiated. ANI

ASI survey to resume after Friday prayers at Gyanvapi mosque complex

Amid the ongoing Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) survey at the Gyanvapi mosque complex, the Varanasi district administration has made elaborate arrangements at the complex for the Friday prayers anticipating an increased footfall. According to officials, the ASI survey that started at 7.00 am on Friday with a team of 40 experts, has been stopped for lunch and is scheduled to resume after 02.30 pm.



"The scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex started at 7 am today by a team of 40 experts. Photography and videography are being done," Sudhir Tripathi, lawyer of the Hindu side, who was present inside Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque complex during the ASI survey. "The survey

will resume post-lunch. This survey will continue for a long time," he said. Earlier in the day, a team of the ASI arrived at the Gyanvapi mosque premises adjacent to Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi and started a scientific survey of the complex amid tight security. ANI

World

Two US Navy Sailors held for passing sensitive information to China



Two Navy sailors in Southern California were arrested and accused of providing military secrets and sensitive information to Chinese intelligence officers, the New York Times reported. Jinchao Wei, known as Patrick Wei, 22, was charged with spying for the Chinese under the Espionage Act. Wei serves aboard the Essex, an assault ship moored at Naval Base San Diego, which is

the home of the Pacific Fleet. The investigators said that he misused the clearance to access the sensitive national security information.

The second sailor, Petty Officer Wenheng Zhao, 26, also known as Thomas, was charged with taking bribes in exchange for providing sensitive US military information to a Chinese intelligence officer posing as an economic researcher, The New

York Times reported.

Zhao worked at the Naval Base Ventura County in Port Hueneme, which is home to several aircraft squadrons and the service's naval construction battalions in the Pacific. The charges appear to reflect the Chinese government's deep interest in the Navy's Pacific Fleet and other aspects of the American military's operations in that region, part of a broader effort by China to steal American corporate and national security secrets.

Grossman said the section of the Espionage Act under which Wei was charged has been used just a handful of times in the past few years, underscoring the seriousness of the crime. The betrayal was particularly acute in San Diego, he added. "San Diego indeed has a storied history with the United States Navy," he said. "That's why this conduct is personal for San Diego, and we will not stand for it," he added. ANI

Five arrested after activists drape black cloth over UK PM Rishi Sunak's private mansion

Five people were arrested after climate activists draped a black cloth over British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's private mansion in a protest against the policy to "max out" the UK's oil and gas resources in the North Sea, reported CNN on Thursday. The demonstrators, from the environmental group Greenpeace, managed to climb



onto the Conservative party leader's house near his constituency of Richmond, in North Yorkshire.

CNN reported that protesters used ladders and climbing ropes to access the roof, where they unravelled 200 square meters of "oil-black fabric" to cover part of the mansion, Greenpeace said in a statement. Members of the group also unfurled a banner across the lawn which read: "Rishi Sunak - Oil Profits or Our Future?" ANI

India supports UN efforts to continue Black Sea Grain Initiative: Ruchira Kamboj



India's permanent representative to the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj said that India supports the efforts made by the UN Secretary-General in continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative. While addressing the United Na-

tions Security Council, Kamboj said, "India supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative and hopes for an early resolution to the present impasse."

She also showed appreciation

to the United States for its presidency of the Security Council and for bringing to focus the crucial issue of conflict-induced food insecurity. "We must work together to find common solutions through dialogue and diplomacy. Choosing peace, cooperation and multilateralism is essential for building our collective future. Strengthening the international architecture and governance systems to protect the global order. Global laws and global values must therefore be a shared responsibility," Kamboj suggested.

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan's volume of trade expected to touch USD 3 billion



Being the largest food supplier to Afghanistan, Kazakhstan said that the mutual trade turnover between the two countries has reached almost USD 1 billion, and is expected to reach USD 3 billion. According to the statement released by the Ministry of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan, Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin, in the Kazakh-Afghan Business Forum, said, "The mutual trade turnover between our countries has reached almost USD 1 billion, and in the future, it is planned to increase the volume of trade to USD 3 billion. This year, the Trading House of Kazakhstan was opened in Herat, which will allow increasing and diversifying export-import supplies between our countries."

He also stated that Kazakh-

stan has an export potential of supplies worth USD 500 million in food petrochemical, and chemical. "Afghanistan is a priority market for flour for Kazakhstan, which accounts for 70 per cent of the total volume of flour exports. Currently, we see a trend towards diversification of the export basket. According to our calculations, Kazakhstan has an export potential of supplies to Afghanistan worth USD 500 million in food, petrochemical, chemical, metallurgical, light, machine—building industries," Zhumangarin added.

Kazakhstan's business interacts with all countries of the region including Pakistan and India. To ensure the security and attractiveness of trade, the parties agree to create optimal mutual conditions, according to the statement. ANI

20 injured Indian crew members rescued from burning ship off the Dutch coast return home

A group of 20 injured Indian crew members rescued after a major fire broke out on board a cargo vessel carrying nearly 3,800 cars off the Netherlands coast have safely returned home while the mortal remains of one sailor who was killed in the incident are being repatriated, Indian authorities have said. An Indian crew member was killed and 20 others were injured in the fire that broke out on July 25 on board the Panama-registered ship Fremantle Highway, which was en route from Germany to Egypt. Several crew members were forced



to jump overboard. The ship was manned entirely by Indians. "20 Indian crew rescued from ship Fremantle Highway have safely returned to India over the past week. Thank Dutch authorities for their support & assistance as well as our sailors for their fortitude & courage through this difficult time," the Indian Embassy in the Hague said on platform X, formerly known as Twitter. ANI

Expression

Facing the Education Dropout Dilemma



Lalit Garg

Columnist

Education is one of the core building blocks of a society and of a nation. This is why countries with high literacy rates and good educational systems tend to be more developed than those without. It can be said that education is also such a weapon by which a person can change not only himself but also the society, the nation and the world. When it comes to making a new India - a strong India, then there is a need to develop a positive attitude towards education and pay maximum attention. But it is a matter of concern that despite this positive thinking of the governments, our education system has been giving opposite signals.

The increase in the number of dropouts of students in higher education and school education in India, that is, increasing the number of students leaving studies in the middle, is becoming a big question not only on the education system but also on the government's education policy and system. According to a reply given in the Parliament, during the last five years, more than 34,000 students left their studies midway in the country's renowned higher educational institutions. On the other hand, in the analysis of the board examinations of the year 2022 by the Union Ministry of Education, it has been said that lakhs of children drop out in the country at the level of tenth and twelfth. According to the analysis, last year 35 lakh students did not go to class 11th after class 10th.

Out of these twenty seven and a half lakh were not successful and seven and a half lakh students did not appear in the examination. Similarly, 2.34 lakh students dropped out after class XII last year. Seventy-seven percent of these were from eleven states. That is, about fifty eight lakh students leave studies in tenth and twelfth, so it should be a matter of

great concern for any government and it is a question mark on the ground level implementation of government welfare programs from the overall education system.

If we talk about higher education, then our educational institutions look far behind on global standards. This is when in the 76 years of independence; the governments made a lot of efforts towards the spread of education, gave shape to multidimensional schemes and made huge provisions in the budget as well. Among the more than 34,000 students who drop out midway, Dalit, tribal and backward class students are more.

These institutes are not any ordinary government colleges but of the level of IITs, NITs and IISERs, IIMs and Central Universities and the like. Is the standard of education and environment not proper in such institutions? The government and the educationists of the country will also have to worry about the fact that why 92 students who took admission in these higher educational institutions in the last five years committed suicide in the middle of their studies? Similarly, Darshan Solanki, a first year student of IIT Bombay, committed suicide recently, after which the students there have been officially asked not to inquire with each other about JEE (advance) rank or GATE score. Nor ask any such question which exposes the caste of the student and its related aspects. Such a guideline is needed not only by IIT Bombay, but by all higher education institutions. But the question is whether such symbolic steps can solve serious problems like the increasing number of suicides.

The success of any country's education system lies in the fact that there is a continuum in the attainment of education from elementary to higher levels. If due to any reason a student is facing difficulties in further studies, then measures should be taken to remove them. But for the past many decades, this question has been persistent that a large number of students leave school-colleges midway and concrete measures

are not taken by the government to complete their further studies. This concern has been underlined many times in the study reports of organizations working on this issue from the government to education, but till now no meaningful solution has been found.

Due to all government efforts and schemes, education is becoming expensive, competition is increasing, and it is becoming a compulsion to teach children in private schools and colleges due to the impossibility of admission in high level schools and colleges. Even if some families take courage and get admission in private schools and colleges, then due to financial compulsion, they are forced to withdraw their children from the school in between. Amidst the big schemes of the government, the situations of students leaving schools and colleges will have to be taken seriously. Instead of making education complicated, it has to be made easy, carefree, less expensive and interesting. It is also necessary to make education interesting so that some children do not find school-college boring, by the time they reach 9th and 10th standard; many children find school-college boring. For this reason, they want to go to school-college late, bunk the class and sit in the lunch break. Due to lack of attachment to studies, students often leave school and college. Students wanting to drop out for any reason are a major problem for parents, but it also points to a major lack of education.

The purpose of sending children to school is not only to become a good citizen by getting education; education also plays a major role in earning and advancing nation-building. But at present, most of the school-college managements have started seeing it as a business, governments are also running away from the responsibility of education, after the implementation of the Right to Education Act in India, many things have changed at the ground level. For example, enrolment of children in schools has increased. Every year the figures of the number of children passing the eighth standard have

increased rapidly. But along with this the question of quality in education and retention of children in school remains the same. Dropout of students, especially in higher educational institutions, is becoming a serious problem.

In all other fields, the world recognizes our talents as iron. It is also true that admissions in these prestigious higher educational institutions of ours are also fiercely competitive. Despite this, the governments will have to think deeply about why students are turning away from such institutions as well. Otherwise, the process of dropping out from such institutions is not going to stop.

Amidst the efforts being made to improve the level of education in the country, one cannot lose sight of the fact that there is not a single name from India in the top 100 higher educational institutions of the world. Even today, foreign educational institutions remain the first choice for higher education of capable families. Lack of resources and lack of better teachers could be the reason for this. But it is also true that due to the attitude of the bureaucracy, even in our so-called better educational institutions, an environment of learning is not created.

Education seems to be given high priority in government schemes and at the policy level, yet the trend of dropping out among students is an indicator of failure or indifference at the policy level. It is difficult to understand that this concern has persisted for so long, and then why not reach a solution on this issue is a question on which extensive thinking is necessary. It is well known that on the one hand, the standards set in the education system in school-college are not easily acceptable to many students, on the other hand, due to non-continuity in studies, from the form of education to poverty, family, social and many other factors. It is related to and its solution will need to be seen only by keeping all the points in one formula.

Entertainment



Mrunal Thakur to be honoured at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

Actor Mrunal Thakur will be felicitated with a special award at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2023 (IFFM). The Diversity in Cinema Award is set to be conferred upon Mrunal Thakur during the festival's highly anticipated annual gala award night scheduled for August 11, as per a statement.

Elated about it, Mrunal said, "I am truly honoured and humbled to receive the Diversity in Cinema Award at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. This recognition reaffirms my belief in the power of storytelling that transcends languages and cultures. As an artist, I've always aimed to explore a wide spectrum of characters, and this award motivates me to continue pushing boundaries and taking up roles that challenge and inspire me. I am grateful for the opportunities I've had and excited for what the future holds in this incredible journey of cinema."

'Koi... Mil Gaya' @20: Rakesh Roshan says film's idea came from granddaughter

Filmmaker Rakesh Roshan says the idea of making "Koi... Mil Gaya", a sci-fi movie for children and family audiences, came to him from his granddaughter who used to be the fan of an animation show featuring an alien. "Koi... Mil Gaya" revolved around a developmentally disabled young man Rohit Mehra (Hrithik Roshan) and his chance encounter with an alien called Jaadoo, who gives him new powers. The movie released on August 8, 2003 and became a box office success. "The idea of making 'Koi... Mil Gaya' struck me one day when I was observing my granddaughter Suranika (Sunaina Roshan's daughter) watching a cartoon that featured an alien. I was instantly intrigued and asked her out of curiosity if she understood the concept and she explained the story to me. I was surprised that a kid her age not only understood what an alien was but also seemed entertained by the sci-fi concept," the director told PTI. PTI



Ben Wheatley on taking 'Meg' franchise forward: Had to make sure I didn't smash the gift given to me

Filmmaker Ben Wheatley says he wasn't too worried about taking up the mantle for "Meg 2: The Trench" but felt a sense of responsibility towards the franchise that brings back lead star Jason Statham fighting the titular shark. The 2018 original was directed by Jon Turteltaub. Wheatley is glad that he got a "head start" owing to Turteltaub's work in the first film. "In some ways, it is a bit scary because you are taking a successful film and trying to make another chapter in it. And you have a lot of fans to make sure you get that right with them. PTI

