



Maratha Reservation: Shinde government appeals for calm,

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# Afternoon

VOICE

Volume: 16, Issue: 73

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 06, 2023 MUMBAI

08 PAGES, ₹ 2/-

RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332

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## Caste Survey of Muslims and Yadavs: Dy CM Tejashwi Yadav slams Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement, says "Why not of the whole country"



On Sunday Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav said, "I have heard minister Amit Shah's statement where he mentioned that they have done state's caste survey which shows population of muslim and yadav's have increased but why not done for other communities. If BJP is in the ruling, then why they did not do the caste survey for OBC and the whole country. Yeh sab Bakwaas boltein hai".

Earlier union home minister Amit Shah accused Bihar's Nitish Kumar

government of deliberately showing inflated numbers of Muslims and Yadavs in the state's caste survey as part of its "appeasement politics" while giving a "raw deal" to backward classes as a whole.

Addressing a rally at Patahi in Muzaffarpur district, Shah also charged the Nitish Kumar government with "Muslim appeasement (tushtikaran)" and warned that this could lead to "big trouble" in areas bordering Nepal and Bangladesh (seemant kshetra). Widely

regarded as the BJP's principal strategist, Shah pointed out that his party was sharing power with Nitish Kumar when the government in the state had ordered the caste survey.

Widely regarded as the BJP's principal strategist, Shah pointed out that his party was sharing power with Nitish Kumar when the government in the state had ordered the caste survey. "But we had no inkling what Nitish Kumar would do under pressure from (RJD president)

Lalu Prasad. The population of Yadavs and Muslims has been inflated (abaadi badhaa kar dikha diya). And injustice (anyay) has been done to OBCs (pichhda) and EBCs (ati pichhda)," said Shah.

The former BJP president also alleged that the Congress, which has likened the survey to an "x-ray of society" and vowed to hold a nationwide caste census if it was voted to power, "has always been hostile towards OBCs". PTI

### Cooperative Bank frauds can never stop in India?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

In a City Cooperative Bank fraud case along with the former CEO of City Cooperative Bank Ramesh Shirgaonkar (79), and a businessman Rajan Sawant (41) who allegedly connived with him were arrested by police. The former chief executive officer (CEO) of City Cooperative Bank for allegedly causing a loss of around Rs 96 crore to the bank by sanctioning credit to ineligible people and companies. Police suspect Shirgaonkar to have fraudulently disbursed loans to 56 people without having followed due procedure in allotting these.

In the case of Sawant, Shirgaonkar allegedly did not conduct a proper inspection of his outstanding loans before providing the credit facility. Apart from this, the loan file submitted by Sawant did not in-

clude several necessary documents like the share certificates of the cooperative society, no-objection certificate (NOC) for mortgage and sanctioned building plans among other things. During an investigation it came to light that Shirgaonkar approved loans of Sawant and 55 others without proper documents.

The number of frauds in urban and state cooperative banks dropped in FY21 from a year ago with tighter oversight by the central bank. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the urban cooperative banks reported 323 frauds in FY21 as against 568 in the previous year and 1,193 in FY19.

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# Editoritis

# Cooperative Bank frauds can never stop in India?

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*state cooperative banks witnessed 482 frauds in FY21, down from 508 in the previous fiscal but much higher than the FY19 level of 290*

*Maharashtra, home to the highest number of cooperatives, accounted for 67% of the fraud cases in urban cooperative banks in FY21, Kerala made up for 44% of the frauds in state cooperative banks*

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Similarly, state cooperative banks witnessed 482 frauds in FY21, down from 508 in the previous fiscal but much higher than the FY19 level of 290, she said in a written reply to a question. While Maharashtra, home to the highest number of cooperatives, accounted for 67% of the fraud cases in urban cooperative banks in FY21, Kerala made up for 44% of the frauds in state cooperative banks.

The finances of cooperative banks came under heightened scrutiny recently after the government carved out the department of cooperation from the agriculture ministry to make it a full-fledged ministry under Amit Shah. Before that, affairs of the cooperative sector came under focus following the crisis at the Punjab Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank in 2019. This had prompted the government to amend the Banking Regulation Act to empower the RBI for more effective regulation of cooperative banks. The idea was to better protect the interests of depositors and avoid a PMC Bank-like crisis in future.

The amendment was also aimed to ensure that the affairs of the cooperative banks are conducted in a manner that protects the interest of depositors by increasing professionalism, enabling access to capital, improving governance and ensuring sound banking through RBI. Sitharaman also told the Rajya Sabha that gross bad loans of district central cooperative banks (DCCBs) were among the highest in the banking system, at 12.6% (Rs 35,298 crore) of their advances as of March 2020.

The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of urban cooperative banks (UCBs), too, remained elevated at 11.3% (Rs 35,528 crore) at the end of March 2021. However, the gross NPAs of state cooperative banks were 6.7% (Rs 13,477 crore) as of March 2020, Sitharaman had said in a statement in the Upper House.

In contrast, the bad loan ratio of scheduled commercial banks stood at 7.5% as of March 2021, having eased from

8.4% a year before, the RBI said in its latest report in July. There are 34 state cooperative banks, 351 DCCBs and 1,534 UCBs in the country. Many of the cooperatives, thanks to their opaque structure and severe governance issues, have been allegedly used to funnel black money for long.

Last year Kerala police's economic offences wing arrested four functionaries of a CPI(M)-controlled co-operative bank in Thrissur district, where a loan scam of at least Rs 104 crore was detected last week. The arrested include the secretary, manager, chief accountant and a commission agent of Karuvannur Co-operative Bank. The police also conducted searches at the premises of those arrested as well as at properties of two absconding staff of the Karuvannur-based bank, and seized documents pertaining to the illegal loans. All the accused are CPI (M) members, who were sacked from the party after the scam was unearthed on July 19. The opposition Congress and BJP, which have targeted the ruling party in the state over the issue, have alleged that the loan scam is to the tune of Rs 300 crore. State Cooperation Minister V N Vasavan, however, said that an internal inquiry has revealed financial fraud of Rs 104.37 crore. But since then, there is no follow up on this issue and now another cooperative bank scam has made news. In the recent past there have been several scams but investors have no relief or life.



Volume No. 16 | Issue No. 73

Afternoon VOICE  
RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332  
VIEWS & VISION OF CITY

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## Do not rote, study with heart



- Vijay Garg

In today's time, there will be a rare child, who will be interested in studies wholeheartedly, otherwise, 80 percent of children out of 100 find an excuse to drop out of studies. Any work is impossible without passion and interest. If a person does any work with passion and interest, then conquering any field is not difficult.

In the same way a child has a mind. Without interest and hobby, studies will become a burden to the child. Of course, the child will learn from the body but will not be able to learn anything from the mind. From rote learning ignored in today's technological age, even today, students are restricted to just parroting and making pages black, while instead emphasis should be placed on practical work.

While living in the society, we think practically and the education that a child can acquire from practical method, he cannot acquire by rote learning and black pages. It is impossible to acquire anything without interest and under pressure. If the student does the same task practically, then he will remember it for the rest of his life.

Teach creatively try not to nowadays every child steals life from education. Children are interested in sports but not in studies. The reason for moving away from studies is that they are fed up with just parroting and blackening the pages and they do not find this process which has been going on for many years interesting. If an effort is made to teach the child through creative process in the school, then he will gradually start showing interest in studies.

During the age of technology, students have become creative. Modern masters. They learn new interesting things with creativity like efforts should be made to sharpen the interest only skilled and hardworking teachers try to stimulate the interest of the students. In the school, work should be done

according to the interest of the student. If efforts are made to develop the child's interest from an early age, then in the future he will surely emerge as an artistic personality.

A child cannot learn in fear. In the child's mind, there is a fear of the punishment given by the teacher when the number is low, due to which the child can use the rote learning method instead of understanding the subject. He forcibly tries to dissolve in his mind. There is a fear in the child's mind that my parents and teachers will scold me for getting low marks. So the child tries to learn by mistake, whereas in a state of fear we cannot learn anything by force. Therefore, it is the moral duty of teachers that education is not just a game of numbers but a treasure of knowledge and moral values, which teaches us how to live life. If the student gets low marks then the teacher tries to find out the reason instead of punishing him after all, for what reason the child is unable to read. Be made environment lovers. Be it a child or an elderly person, taking care of the environment is everyone's precious responsibility.

Parents and teachers can motivate the child to connect with the environment. To make students aware of the environment, teachers can assign tasks related to the environment to the child. Teachers can challenge the students that the student who plants the most plants in a year will be awarded with a prize.

Due to such activities, the environment inside the child's mind. There is also a sense of moral responsibility and a sense of competition. During the changing era, there is a need to cut down unnecessary syllabus and introduce practical method of education system. If an effort is made to teach the child through sports in the education system, then the child's interest in studies will increase and he will happily go to school and will not consider studies as a burden.

## Letters to the Editor

### Lack of public urinals!

About two decades ago there used to be public urinals at some distance along the road. Now such urinals are no more. Multi-storied buildings came up in the suburbs of cities, so these urinals are demolished. Due to this, there left no facility for senior citizens to urinate while travelling. However, Municipal Corporations should reserve some places for urinals at the roadside and public urinals should be built at those places. So that, inconvenience to citizens will be removed.

Sudhir Kangutkar

### AI Safety Summit: A Pivotal Step Towards Global Collaboration

The commencement of the world's inaugural AI Safety Summit in the UK marks a significant milestone in addressing the critical intersection of artificial intelligence and global

safety. With delegates from countries such as India, the US, France, Singapore, and various others in attendance, this gathering signifies a concerted effort towards fostering international cooperation in ensuring the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies. In an era where artificial intelligence continues to rapidly evolve and influence various facets of our lives, the imperative of ensuring its ethical and safe utilization cannot be overstated.

The presence of multiple nations at this summit underscores the recognition of the importance of collective action in managing the ethical and safety implications of AI. The collaborative efforts among diverse nations, with distinct cultural, political, and technological landscapes, present an unprecedented opportunity to forge common ground and establish frameworks that prioritize the ethical application of AI.

This summit signifies a crucial step in the journey towards establishing

guidelines, ethical frameworks, and regulatory measures to ensure that AI development aligns with global safety standards. As the world stands on the precipice of an AI-infused future, the outcomes of this summit hold the potential to shape the trajectory of technological advancement for generations to come. It is our collective responsibility to harness the power of AI for the betterment of humanity while safeguarding against potential risks and ethical concerns.

Maimul Safui

### Crowdfunding vs Electoral Bonds

During the debate in the Supreme Court, the data made it clear that electoral bonds benefit only the ruling parties, whether they are in the central government or in the states. It was also revealed that the main buyers of the bonds worth thousands of crores are corporate houses. Congress has found a solution to this under which an appeal will be made to the

public by preparing a digital platform for donation. Party workers will go door to door to collect donations from people.

This process started in western countries is called 'Crowd Funding'. When the dominance of corporate houses in European countries and US politics began to increase, some left-wing parties started looking for a solution through 'crowdfunding'. On the other hand, CPM is the only political party which refused to accept corporate donations even while in government in Kerala. Now the Congress has also planned to adopt the same method in view of the general elections. However, it remains to be seen what strategy BJP follows.

N. Ashraf

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)

# NIA files chargesheet against 7 ISIS members accused for involvement in Pune-based ISIS module

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge-sheet against seven ISIS members accused of being involved in a conspiracy to carry out terror attacks in different parts of the country, an official said on Sunday. They were charge-sheeted before the NIA Special Court here under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Explosive Substances Act, the Arms Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the Pune-based ISIS module case, the spokesperson of the federal agency said.

The official identified the charge-sheeted accused as "Mohammad Imran-Mohammad Yusuf Khan alias 'Matka' alias 'Aamir Abdul Hameed Khan' and Mohammad Yunus-Mohammad Yakub Saki alias 'Adil' alias 'Adil Saleem Khan'" of Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh; "Kadeer Dastagir Pathan alias 'Abdul Kadeer' and Seemab Nasiruddin Kazi" of Kondwa in Maharashtra's Pune; and "Zulfikar Ali Barodawa-



la alias 'Lalabhai' alias 'Saif, Shamil Saquib Nachan and Aakif Ateeque Nachan" of Padgha in Maharashtra's Thane.

The accused were involved in collecting and raising funds for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) with the intention to further its activities related to terror and violence, the spokesperson said.

The official said it was found that the accused organised ter-

rorist training camps, harboured known and wanted terrorists, and committed acts preparatory to the fabrication of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). "In addition, they were also found in possession of IEDs, firearms, and ammunition," the spokesperson said, adding that they had hatched a conspiracy to further the terrorist activities of the ISIS, with the intention to strike terror amongst the people and threaten

the security, integrity and sovereignty of India. "Investigations uncovered a larger conspiracy with international connections and the involvement of foreign-based ISIS handlers in the ongoing case. The investigation has unveiled a complex network of individuals committed to propagating the extremist ideology of the ISIS within India," the official said.

The official said the accused,

as part of this network, also took an oath of allegiance to the self-styled Khalifa (leader) of the ISIS. "Their intentions were to carry out acts of terrorism on Indian soil. The accused conducted extensive reconnaissance missions across multiple states, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Telangana and others. Their aim was to identify potential targets for planting and detonating the fabricated IEDs, posing a significant threat to national security," the spokesperson said.

The official said they had meticulous plans for evading arrest following the potential blasts and added that "as part of their escape plan, these individuals identified remote and deep forests as possible hideouts and used drones for reconnaissance to locate suitable camping locations while on the run". "The accused were also found to be collecting funds from various sources, both within India and abroad, to finance their terror designs and plans," the spokesperson said. **PTI**

## Raigad firm's fire incident: Eight bodies recovered, NDRF continues its search operation



Eight bodies have been recovered till Saturday afternoon following the fire that broke out at a pharmaceutical company in Maharashtra's Raigad district a day ago, while search for three missing persons continued, an NDRF official said. However, Raigad police, in a release late in the evening, put the death toll at seven, adding that samples had been obtained from the kin of the 11 persons, who were declared missing immediately after the blaze, for identification purposes through DNA testing.

The blaze at Blue Jet Healthcare in MIDC Mahad in Raigad

district, some 170 kilometres from here, started at 11am on Friday, the National Disaster Response Force official added. "While four bodies were found till 7am, another four were recovered till 5pm. These are part of the 11 persons who had gone missing following the fire. Search operations with personnel from local agencies as well as NDRF for the remaining three continue," he said. As per initial probe, the fire may have started due to a short circuit, leading to barrels filled with chemicals at the site exploding, which further intensified the blaze, the official said. **PTI**

## Minor found dead after falling into bucket of water in Navi Mumbai

A 10-year-old boy died after falling into a bucket filled with water at his house in Navi Mumbai township here, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Saturday

evening when the boy was playing near the water-filled bucket in the house located at Palaspave village in Panvel area. He accidentally fell into the bucket and started choking, an official from Panvel town police station said quoting the information given by

the boy's parents. The boy was then rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the official said. The police sent the body to a government hospital for postmortem and registered a case of accidental death, he said. **PTI**

## Woman was allegedly repeatedly raped by a man met at matrimonial site

A 33-year-old woman from Navi Mumbai was allegedly repeatedly raped by a man she got acquainted with on a matrimonial site, police said on Sunday. Based on a complaint, the police have registered an offence under section 376(2)(n) (repeated rape on the same woman) of the Indian Penal Code against the accused who is based in Singapore, an official said. The woman, in her complaint, has alleged that she was raped by the accused on multiple occasions between December 2020 and March 2023 at lodges and hotels in Navi Mumbai, Mumbai and Singapore, he said. **PTI**



Gurukul students in Mumbai were seen offering prayers through their painting in Nepal as it is western part of it affected with earthquake, nearly 150 killed and several injured. - Pic Credits: Sagar Kamblji

## Nation

### Chhattisgarh: Congress comes with a promise of caste census and loan waiver schemes at assembly polls



The Congress on Sunday released its manifesto for the Chhattisgarh assembly polls, promising caste census, loan waiver to farmers, Rs 3,200 per quintal for paddy procurement and subsidised cooking gas cylinders to women under a new scheme.

The ruling party in Chhattisgarh unveiled its manifesto titled 'Bharose ka Ghoshna Patra 2023-28' at six different places - Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Jagda-

ipur, Bilaspur, Ambikapur and Kawardha - two days before the first phase of the state polls. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel released the manifesto in Rajnandgaon while party's state in-charge Kumari Selja unveiled it in state capital Raipur.

Promises including loan waiver to farmers, caste census, procurement of paddy at 20 quintal per acre, free education to students from KG (kindergarten) to PG (post-graduation) made

by Congress leaders during their poll campaign have been mentioned in the manifesto.

Speaking at the launch of the manifesto, CM Baghel said farmers will get Rs 3,200 per quintal for paddy, including input subsidy currently being given under the Rajiv Gandhi Nyay Yojna to paddy cultivators. Tenu leaf collection will be done at Rs 6,000 per standard sack in place of the existing Rs 4,000 and tenu leaf collectors will additionally get an annual bonus of Rs 4,000, he said.

Baghel said, "A Mahtari Nyay Yojana will be launched for mothers and sisters," under which a subsidy of Rs 500 per cooking gas cylinder will be given to women of all income groups. The subsidy will be directly deposited into the bank accounts of women, he said. ANI

### Delhi Pollution: Air Quality remains in 'severe' category



As the air quality in Delhi continues to remain in 'severe' category for the fourth consecutive day, Delhi Fire Services joined hands with the Delhi Government in curbing pollution. Visuals showed fire tenders spraying water in the hotspot areas of the national capital.

Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg said, "From this morning we have started spraying water. We have identified 13 hotspots, and our main focus will be on them. There are a lot of fire incidents during Diwali time. We are using the spare ve-

hicles available with us. Right now 11 vehicles are on duty." Atul Garg further said that after Diwali, more buses would be allocated for this activity. The air quality today saw a marginal dip in the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 410 against 504 on Saturday, as per System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR-India).

According to the data issued by SAFAR-India, the air quality in the Lodhi Road area was recorded at 385 (Very Poor) while at Delhi University area stands at 456 (Severe). ANI

### Bengaluru: Women murdered at her house

A 45-year-old woman, who was working as a senior geologist with the Department of Mines and Geology, was found dead with her throat slit in the Gokula Badavane area of Bengaluru on Sunday morning, officials said. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Prathima, a Deputy Director of the Mines and Geosciences Department. The murder came to light when the brother of the deceased called her and when he got no response he went to her house and found her dead with her throat slit.

Giving details, South Divi-

sion DCP Rahul Kumar Shahpurwad said that the deceased was first suffocated and then strangled to death. "Pratima came home at 8 p.m on Saturday. She was first suffocated and then strangled to death. She lived alone for the past five years. No trace of robbery has been found on the spot. Three teams of police have been constituted for the investigation," DCP Rahul said. "Pratima's body has been sent to Kempgowda Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) hospital, Bangalore for postmortem," he added. Further investigation into the matter is underway. ANI

### TMC MP Mahua Moitra alleges questions asked by BJP MP as 'cheap sordid irrelevant questions'

Mounting her attack against Lok Sabha Ethics Committee chief Vinod Sonkar, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra on Sunday claimed that the BJP MP had asked her 'cheap sordid irrelevant questions' when she appeared before the panel on November 2, in connection with the cash-for-query scandal. Taking to the social media platform, X, the TMC MP warned BJP saying that she has the 'exact' transcript of record in Ethics Committee verbatim.

"Shaking in my skin to know BJP planning criminal cases against me. Welcome them - only know that CBI and ED need to file FIR against Adani for Rs 13,0000 crore coal scam before they question how many pairs of shoes I have," she said in a post on X. "Also BJP - before you push out women MPs with fake narrative, remember I have EXACT transcript of record in Ethics Committee verbatim. Chair-



man's cheap sordid irrelevant questions, Opposition's protests, my protests - all there in official black and white. Besharam and Behuda," she added. Moitra and opposition members of the panel "walked out" of the meeting on Thursday afternoon. Opposition members raised questions over the line of questioning and alleged that "personal questions" were posed to the Trinamool Congress MP. Among those who walked out were BSP MP Danish Ali, Janata Dal (United) MP Giridhari Yadav and Congress

MP Uttam Kumar Reddy. Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra alleged that she was subjected to humiliating personal questions from the panel. She further described the episode as "proverbial vastraharan (stripping)" referring to the chapter in Mahabharat, where Kauravas humiliated Padavas' queen Draupadi in darbar. In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Mahua stated that "unethical, sordid, prejudiced behaviour was meted out" to her during the meeting. ANI

### Chhattisgarh: Encounter broke out between DRG, BSF and Naxals

An encounter broke out between security forces and Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday, the officials said. According to the officials, the police have demolished the Naxal camps in the Antagarh area, where the encounter broke out between teams of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Border Security Force (BSF) and the Naxals. A search operation is underway in the area, the police added. ANI

World

## Nepal Earthquake: Authorities scrambled to rush aid to those affected by the disaster



Nepal's authorities on Sunday scrambled to rush aid to those affected by Friday's earthquake that has killed at least 157 people and left a trail of destruction in the Himalayan nation's remote mountainous region. The earthquake with an epicentre in Jajarkot district, about 500km west of Kathmandu, was recorded just before midnight on Friday.

As the earthquake destroyed hundreds of houses in the mountainous region, several people had to spend Saturday night un-

der the open sky.

Out of a total of 157 people who died in the tragedy, the bodies of 120 have so far been handed over to the family members. About 253 people were injured in the quake, the most devastating in the country since 2015. The relatives of victims were now preparing for their cremations.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday held a Cabinet meeting during which he decided to provide Rs. 2 lakh cash each to the family of those killed in the Jajarkot

earthquake as immediate relief, according to officials. The Nepal government also decided to provide free medical treatment to those injured in the earthquake. "All the injured individuals will receive treatment free of cost, whatever may the cost be," Minister for Health and Population Mohan Bahadur Basnet said after the Cabinet meeting.

According to the minister, the rescue efforts for earthquake victims have been completed. But rescuers are still looking for people who could be trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings. "The distribution of food, tarps, and tents has already begun in some affected areas, with plans for further deliveries in progress. The government is committed to ensuring that all necessary assistance is provided to the survivors," he said. This time, the government will rectify the weaknesses that occurred during the 2015 earthquake response, he pointed out. **PTI**

## Afghanistan: Kabul residents complains about high fuel prices, lack of jobs



As winter approaches in Afghanistan, a number of Kabul residents have complained about the high price of fuel, particularly coal and wood, Afghanistan-based TOLO News reported. People said that they are unable to purchase fuel due to economic challenges and a lack of work. Najibullah, a Kabul resident, said, "There is no work, there are no foreigners, people live in poverty, now a bag of coal costs 1,500, 1,700 or 2,000," TOLO News reported.

Mohammad Dawood, a seller, said, "Our challenges are too many, people don't have money to buy fuel." He said, "People use coal and wood more because it is economical, but [currently] wood is 8,500 afghanis and 5 bags of coal is 5,000 Afghans," according to TOLO News report. Meanwhile, Taliban-led Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Economy,

Abdul Latif Nazari said that the problems of people of Afghanistan will be resolved by importing cheap and quality fuel, TOLO News reported.

He said, "The Islamic Emirate intends to solve the problem of importing high-quality fuel." Earlier, some of the people in Afghanistan criticised the high price of fuel and food as winter approaches. Earlier this month, the World Bank noted that half of all Afghans are living in poverty. The World Bank has revealed the figures in its latest monthly report known as the "Afghanistan Economic Monitor," TOLO News reported. **ANI**

## Amid ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, former US President Barack Obama says, conflict is the "century-old stuff"



In a strong condemnation of the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, former US President Barack Obama has said that the conflict is the "century-old stuff" that has now come to the fore and blamed social media for amplifying the divisions, according to the New York Times. Not only did he condemn the October 7 assault on Israel that killed many innocent Israelis but he also underlined the sufferings of the civilians in Palestine.

In an interview conducted by his former staffers for their

podcast, Pod Save America, the former US President said, "I look at this, and I think back, 'What could I have done during my presidency to move this forward, as hard as I tried?'" "But there's a part of me that's still saying, 'Well, was there something else I could have done?'" the New York Times reported. Barack Obama provided a detailed analysis of the Israel-Gaza war, telling thousands of his former aides that everyone was "complicit to some extent" in the ongoing carnage. **ANI**

## US: Over 10,000 protestors were on the streets, demanded ceasefire and end to the siege in Gaza

Tens of thousands of demonstrators on Saturday (local time) crowded the streets of American cities to criticise Israel's military campaign in Gaza in response to the Hamas attack last month, The New York Times reported. The protests in New York, Nashville, Cincinnati, Las Vegas and even Orono, Maine, demanded a cease-fire and an end to the siege in Gaza.

The demonstrations came a week after vast protests in Asian and European capitals and a day after the Israeli government appeared to reject the United States' call for "humanitarian pauses" in the bombardment. The protests were filled with messages like "Mourn the dead; fight like hell for the living" and "Let Gaza live!" They also sought a shutdown of American aid to Israel, blending policy demands with anguish and ambition.

Some of the chants, most especially "From the river to the sea!" have been condemned as an antisemitic call for Israel's de-



struction, though many protesters have defended the slogan as a cry for freedom, as per The New York Times. The protests in the capital and elsewhere unfolded as public opinion surveys showed support for Israel in its military campaign against Hamas, which the United States government considers a terrorist organisation, but raised concern for Palestinian civilians.

Roughly 1,400 Israelis were killed in the attack by Hamas, and more than 9,000 Gazans have been killed in Israel's bombing campaign. Saturday's demonstrations also reflected the constellation of causes and groups that have long connected

themselves to the Palestinian cause, including black activists, student organisations, labour unions and antiwar and environmental groups. Palestinian support stormed Cincinnati with several hundred marchers clogging roads, shutting down intersections and chanting pro-Palestinian slogans under the watchful eye of a heavy police presence.

The rally and march brought together a disparate group of people. The event was organised by the Cincinnati Socialists, but it was heavily attended by Muslims, Black activists, college students and peace advocates. **ANI**

## Expression

# The Paradox of Ignorance and the Quest for Knowledge



Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun

Columnist

Ignorance, often deemed bliss, is a sentiment we've all encountered in our lives. The idea that being unaware of certain truths can provide a sense of contentment and happiness is intriguing. However, as the veil of ignorance lifts and reality dawns, we may grapple with profound regret for the pleasures derived from ignorance.

### The Pleasures of Ignorance:

In the embrace of ignorance, we often find comfort. It shields us from the harshness of reality, the weight of responsibility, and the burden of knowledge. Ignorance becomes a sanctuary where we indulge in simple pleasures, free from the complexities of the world. This blissful state allows us to live in the moment, without dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

### The Painful Awakening:

However, reality cannot be ignored forever. The awakening can be triggered by various life events – the stark truth about a relationship, a profound realization about one's health, or a sudden understanding of societal injustices. This awakening can be a rude shock, shattering the comforting cocoon of ignorance.

### The Regret of Lost Bliss:

As reality dawns, the initial pleasure of ignorance can turn into deep regret. Regret for not having acted sooner, for not making better choices, and for squandering precious time in blissful ignorance. It's a regret that can linger, casting a shadow over our lives.

### The Power of Knowledge:

Yet, it's important to acknowledge that ignorance is not a sustainable or healthy way to live. Knowledge, even when painful, empowers us to make informed decisions and inspires change. While awakening may bring regret, it also brings the opportunity for growth, meaning, and purpose in our lives.

### Islam and the Pursuit of Knowledge:

In Islamic thought, the pursuit of

knowledge is highly valued. The first word revealed to the Holy Prophet as a revelation of the Holy Qur'an was "Iqra," which translates to "read in the name of the Lord." This was a call to the believers, the Muslims, to seek knowledge and remove darkness from their lives and the lives of others. Yet, as history has shown, not all Muslims responded positively to this call.

*Hairat hain ki taileem wa tarakee mai hain peechay, jis kaum ka agaaz he iqra se huwa tha "Alama Iqbal"*

"Allama Iqbal, the famous revolutionary poet, used his poetry to inspire Muslims towards education. In one of his poems, he expressed surprise at the lack of progress in education and civilization among the Muslim community, despite the fact that their journey towards knowledge and enlightenment began with the word 'Iqra' (Read!). He was trying to encourage Muslims to rediscover their love for learning and to strive towards greater educational and cultural achievements."

Instead, some chose to ignore the message and remain in the dark, listening to the "Kathas" and "Dastans" of others, including anti-Islam non-Muslim propagandists, ignorant Muslim preachers, politicians, writers, and culturalists.

### The Role of Knowledge in Islam:

Islamic tradition emphasizes that understanding the implications of rulings, like those found in the Qur'an and hadith, requires deep knowledge. Scholars dedicate years to studying the Qur'an and hadith to establish principles for understanding the shari'ah (Islamic law).

### The Responsibility of Laypersons:

For those who are not scholars, seeking knowledge is encouraged. When faced with complex questions related to Islam, it's essential to consult reputable scholars. The Quran instructs believers to "ask the people of knowledge if you do not know" (Surah Al-Anbiya: vs. 7). Some research is required to ensure the credibility of the scholar you consult.

### Tailpiece:

The paradox of ignorance and knowledge is a complex facet of the human experience. It underscores the value of knowledge and the importance of living intentionally, even



if it means confronting uncomfortable truths. While the transition from blissful ignorance to the reality of life can be painful, it can also be transformative and ultimately lead to a more fulfilling existence. In the end, wisdom often outweighs the fleeting pleasures of ignorance.

**Embracing Knowledge: A Path to Enlightenment and Empowerment**  
Embracing knowledge is a fundamental aspect of personal growth, intellectual development, and our ability to navigate the complexities of the world. Here are some key points to consider:

**Empowerment:** Knowledge empowers individuals to make informed decisions and take control of their lives.

**Critical Thinking:** Knowledge fosters critical thinking, enabling the evaluation of information and the avoidance of bias.

**Personal Growth:** Learning leads to personal growth and a sense of accomplishment.

**Adaptation:** Knowledge allows for adaptability in a rapidly changing world.

**Problem Solving:** Knowledge equips individuals with problem-

solving skills.

### Informed Decision-Making:

Informed choices are crucial in health, finances, and relationships.

### Building Relationships:

Knowledge enhances the ability to connect with others and fosters empathy.

**Inspiration:** Learning from the achievements of others can spark creativity and motivation.

**Lifelong Learning:** Commitment to lifelong learning keeps individuals engaged and curious.

**Social Responsibility:** Informed individuals are more likely to engage in civic life and contribute to society's betterment.

In summary, embracing knowledge is not just about accumulating facts and information but adopting a mindset that values learning, curiosity, and the pursuit of wisdom. It leads to personal fulfillment, improved decision-making, and a more enriched, purposeful life. So, the next time someone asks a challenging question related to Islam, strive to consult reputable scholars, or if you don't know, don't hesitate to say, "I don't know."

## Entertainment

### Director Rohit Shetty drops first look of thriller film 'Singham Again'



On the 2nd anniversary of the action thriller film 'Sooryavanshi' director Rohit Shetty shared the first look of actor Akshay Kumar from the film 'Singham Again'. Taking to Instagram, Rohit shared a post which he captioned, "In Singham Again, we are just doing what our fans want us to do! So here it is..Akshay Kumar and a helicopter! As we complete 2 years of Sooryavanshi, VEER SOORYAVANSHI joins the battle with Singham. #SinghamAgain." In the first look, Akshay could be seen jumping off a helicopter while holding guns. The 'Sooryavanshi' actor could be seen donning all black outfits.

Helmed by Rohit Shetty 'Singham Again' also stars Ajay Devgn, Deepika Padukone, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Tiger Shroff, and Ranveer Singh in the lead roles. 'Singham Again' is the third installment of the super-hit franchise and the film is all set to hit theatres on the occasion of Independence Day 2024. ANI

### Actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram are believed to tie knots



Actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram are expected to seal their relationship by taking the wedding vows soon. If a source is to be believed, Randeep and Lin will tie the knot this month. However, the official announcement from the actors' end is awaited. Even though Randeep and Lin never confirmed their relationship in public, the two often post pictures of each other on social media.

In October 2022, Randeep seemingly made his relationship Instagram official with Lin. On Diwali, Randeep took to Instagram and shared photos with Lin and his parents. In one of the images, Randeep and Lin are seen holding diyas in their hands. Sharing the photos, Randeep wrote, "Love and light to all around the world#happydiwali #diwali2022". ANI

### Actress Anushka Sharma pens sweet birthday wish for husband, says "EXCEPTIONAL.."

Actress Anushka Sharma on Sunday penned down an adorable birthday wish for her husband and cricketer Virat Kohli. Taking to Instagram, Anushka shared a string of pictures which she captioned, "He is literally EXCEPTIONAL in every role in his life! But somehow continues to add more feathers to his glorious hat I love YOUUUU through this life and beyond and endlessly so, in every shape, form, through it all, whatever it may be so @virat.kohli"

In one of the pictures, Virat could be seen doing funny actions on the field. Anushka also dropped a cute selfie with Virat. In the selfie, the 'Pari' actor is seen making a pouty face while Virat is seen flaunting his smile. Soon after Anushka shared the post, fans swamped the comment section and dropped red hearts and fire emoticons. Virat dropped a red heart and a dancing emoticon. A user wrote, "The man, the myth, the legend." A fan wrote, "So elegant so beautiful just looking like a woow." ANI



### Action film 'Leo' organised success meet for fans

Makers of the recently released action film 'Leo' organised a special success meet event for the fans in Chennai. The star cast of the film, including director Lokesh Kangraj, actors Thalapathy Vijay, Trisha, Myskkin, Sany Master, and Arjun Sarja among others arrived at the fans' event. On Saturday night, Thalapathy Vijay took to Instagram and shared a string of pictures from the fan event.

In the pictures, Vijay could be seen donning a simple brown shirt paired with blue denims. In the first two pictures, he could be seen flaunting his smile and waving to the fans. He received a lot of positive responses for his film 'Leo'. Many places down South witnessed a sea of fans thronging cinema halls with full "band baaja". Fans can be seen celebrating the release of Leo outside the Sree Padmanabha Theatre in Thiruvananthapuram. ANI

