



Delhi: AIIMS report claims, "No link with China's respiratory

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Rabies fatalities on rise



Mumbai tops with 41,828 dog bite cases in 2023

AV Team

Dog Bite Cases are on rise In Maharashtra, Mumbai tops the list with 41,828 dog bite cases in 2023. According to the civic body, it is important for people to avoid provoking dogs. If bitten, they should immediately seek medical assistance at civic dispensaries where anti-rabies vaccines are available. The doctor will assess the severity of the injury and determine the appropriate vaccine dosage. It is crucial not to overlook or disregard the need for vaccination.

The actual figure of dog bite cases could be higher as private hospitals, which treat a large number of such patients, often don't report them to the BMC. viral disease that impacts the central nervous system, causing severe neurological symptoms and, ultimately, death. It spreads through the saliva of infected mammals, with transmission commonly occurring through bites. In 2017, a total of 75 people died due to rabies, decreasing to 66 in 2018. The numbers surged to 78 in 2019. During the Covid-19 pandemic, with limited outside movement, fatalities dropped

to 35. In 2021, following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, the numbers rose to 56. In 2022, fatalities stood at 51.

Insufficient resources for stray dog sterilization and vaccination, coupled with citizens limited first-aid training and delayed care after dog bites, contribute to the increasing rabies cases. Rabies is a Among these, dog bites are the most common mode of spread. Survival is rare once clinical symptoms of rabies appear, despite the availability of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Emphasizing the critical need for prompt vaccination after potential ex-

posure, rabies is nearly universally fatal. However, in rural areas, obtaining post-exposure vaccine after a bite can be challenging, leaving many without this crucial treatment.

From January till June, Maharashtra officially reported 3,89,065 dog bite cases. At 41,828, Mumbai has the highest share followed by Thane (36,060), Palghar (13,301) and Raigad (13,598) districts. The state tallied 17 fatalities in the same period. However, the actual figure of dog bite cases could be higher as private hospitals, which treat a large number of such patients.

No credit card recovery agents can harass you or your distant relative

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

A 43-year-old woman has lodged a case with Chitalsar Manpada police in Thane, stating that she was being harassed by loan recovery agents for the loans taken by a distant relative of her husband. The accused morphed her photograph obscenely and threatened to make it viral if her relative did not pay the money. In most cases, the person who takes the loan lodges a police complaint, but this is the first time some third party took action.

According to the police, on July 08, the victim received a message from an unknown number, mentioning the name of a person (a distant relative of the victim's husband) and stating that he had taken an online loan and asked the victim to inform the said person to repay the loan. The

victim immediately called the said relative and the latter informed her that on June 25 he had totally taken Rs 40000 loan from eight different mobile loan apps and had even repaid Rs 1 lakh including interest, but still he was being harassed by recovery agents for more money along with the threats that if he would not pay more money, then his relatives and friends in his contact list would be harassed too.

After having known the entire episode, the victim had blocked the number from which she had received the message. Later, the victim received a similar message from another unknown number, but this time, in the message, the sender had used abusive language for the victim as well.

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Editoritis

No credit card recovery agents can harass you or your distant relative

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The police have registered an offence on charges of computer related offences and publishing or transmitting of material containing sexually explicit act, etc., in electronic form as per the sections of the Information Technology Act

If creditors prove to the court his/her inability to pay the amount, they ask for a minimum amount to be paid for long years that can be hundred rupees per month.

But the recovery agents harass through continuous abusive phone calls, the agents also drag the debtors' family members, friends, and even their colleagues if they have to recover the debts.

Next day, the victim received a message from one more unknown number and the said message contained her morphed obscene photograph, along with a message that if the loan would not be paid, then they would make her photograph viral on the social media. The victim then informed her family about the harassment and then lodged a complaint with the police.

The police have registered an offence on charges of computer related offences and publishing or transmitting of material containing sexually explicit act, etc., in electronic form as per the sections of the Information Technology Act. Foremost, no bank harassed anyone under any circumstances. If a borrower defaults the bank has a legal right and recourse to the borrower for demanding repayment. In such cases, the lengthy judicial procedure actually gives life to the loan or credit card seeker. Meanwhile, if creditors prove to the court his/her inability to pay the amount, they ask for a minimum amount to be paid for long years that can be hundred rupees per month. Banks cannot afford such deals, so they outsource such jobs to recovery agencies. The survival of the agency is a percentage out of the collected amount. That is the reason they built pressure tactics.

In this process the bank will call the borrower to the bank, visit the borrower at his home or office, issue letters of demand, issue legal notice, start court procedures, publish default news in newspapers, and even take possession of security offered (movable and immovable assets) - amongst many more steps if its personal loan. In case of a credit card, a bank can take legal action but cannot go beyond that.

But the recovery agents harass through continuous abusive phone calls, the agents also drag the debtors' family members, friends, and even their colleagues if they have to recover the debts. They can be very ruthless while handling the debtor, as these recovery agents are paid on the incentive model, they aim at maximum debt recovery so that they could be rewarded more. To sum it up, recovery agents can go to any extent for every penny to be extracted from the debt holder, which includes continuous chasing through phone calls, heading to your doorsteps, they make sure you realize that taking the loans was one of the worst mistakes of your life.

No Bank will ever even contact any other family member or friends. There's a lot you can do to stop them from harassing you. Recovery agents have every right to speak to you about the repayment of

debt. However, they cannot threaten you or embarrass you in front of others or play with your reputation. They also cannot call you at odd hours. They can SIMPLY ask you to repay the loan and NOTHING else. Unless you have a court order, they can't remove anything from your house. If you think you are being harassed mentally by the recovery agents and they are also making threats to you, then please get in touch with a lawyer (not necessarily an expensive one) who deals with banks and financial institutions. The lawyer will send a notice to the bank, RBI and the police that you are being criminally harassed by the bank's recovery agents. The moment the lawyer's notice arrives at the bank's step, you will stop receiving calls from recovery agents! You don't even have to file a court case against them. But pay up if you have the means, otherwise it will hurt your credit score badly.

When the State Bank of India could not recover crores of money from the education loan borrowers, they sold it to Reliance for a discount. Before that notice was sent to all the borrowers. Nobody responded. This is the first time. After three months, people started coming and complaining about their loans being sold to Reliance. The reason was Reliance, with the help of private agents, found out all the borrowers. People, who told banks they were unemployed, now began closing the loans. Reliance could find out their employment addresses and regularly tracked them.

Big business owners took lakhs are crores of amount from banks and left India, no bank could really nab them. Forget their attitude towards people who have borrowed. Even senior citizens who have deposits with banks, they make them wait indefinitely for issuing a deposit receipt. Banks have gone most insensitive and just don't care for the customers. Similarly, recovery agencies are unleashed to harass people in the name of recovery by all means.



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Voices



Paving for pet Penguins



- C.K. Subramaniam

Penguins are sadly one of the most threatened groups of sea-birds, with half of the 18 species listed by Birdlife as either vulnerable or endangered. A penguin is not suitable to keep as a pet but if necessary. Research would have to be done on the species of penguin it is. Penguins are wild animals. They look like cute little butlers, but appearances can be deceiving. They are noisy and smelly and constantly sexually assaulting each other. A vet that specializes in those types of animals could offer advice too. Penguin care is best asked from a penguin expert. Penguin guano is a pinkish red color and looks practically nothing else in the Antarctic.

Just two penguin species live only in Antarctica- Adelie and Emperor penguins. Emperors reach nearly four feet tall and can weigh up to 50 pounds. Adelies only stand up to 2 feet tall and weigh about 2 pounds. With the Antarctic sunlight beaming almost 24 hours a day from October through February, Adelies can focus on their jobs of fishing whenever they want, but no matter what time of day they go to work, they are likely to face busy commutes. Like humans, the birds sometimes have to take detours to avoid getting stuck in traffic for long periods of time. Like a busy city, the noise here never stops. But in Adelie colonies, the sound mostly comes from penguins. An Adelie penguin croaks to let its partner know it has returned from the sea.

These medium-sized penguins breed in only two locations on the Antipodes and Bounty Islands of New Zealand and are showing a population decline. Like other crested penguins, the erect-crested penguins lay two eggs, where the second egg is usually 85% heavier than the first and thus has greater chances of survival. Their habitat is part of the designated World Heritage Site. The IUCN recommends frequent surveys of the islands every five years, monitoring the effects of climate change, and commercial fisheries to better understand the decrease in numbers.

Penguin birds do not belong to this climate and hence let us wait and see how the birds survive in sub-continental conditions. The hyper price of Rs.24 cr for penguins in Mumbai is not a feasible one for a country like ours. That is like spending money to move a fish into a

concrete bowl without water. A glance at the Byculla Zoo's mortality record is not encouraging. Number of mammals and reptiles at the zoo have remained the same and around 61 birds have died in the first six months itself. And the numbers are increasing every year due to lack of water and other infrastructure facilities.

Bringing Arctic Creatures is not a wise one in the warm and humid conditions in Mumbai. We need to have a congenial environment to make sure that these penguins survive the hot conditions during April-May period and the ensuing October heat. It is unlikely that our new monochromatic friends will have even had the opportunity to experience a single aroma, never mind a mix, seeing as how they were carted off into a specially designed 1,700 square foot air-conditioning chamber.

The main glass exhibit, which will have a special temperature control system, is still under experimentation. It has a large pool and the exhibit will need 60,000 liters of water every day. To cater to the needs of the Penguins a 2.5 lakh liter underground tank has already been built to make sure that the birds survive long and safe. Re-invention to create an atmosphere for their survival is only artificial and it is time to have proper planning to save them in the best way possible.

The most common myth surrounding penguins is that they are birds living in cold, frozen landscapes, although many species live in warm, tropical regions of the world as well. The incredible Galapagos penguins are the only species living north of the equator. Worldwide, 18 species of penguins span the coastal forests of South America to the island groups of New Zealand and the subantarctic regions. This beautiful species, while maintaining its characteristic tuxedo-like appearance, has distinct features that distinguish one from the other. There are the world's rarest yellow-eyed penguins and the regal emperor penguins; the macaroni penguins with their crested feathers; the blue penguins with a coat of blue tinge and the honor of being the smallest species. National Geographic TV channel air the rare species in their monthly programmes and we can enjoy the pet penguins in HD and enjoy the colorful birds in the best way possible.

Letters to the Editor

Buoyancy in stock prices looks too good to last in the short run!

Buoyancy in stock prices was expected after BJP victory in the State elections but the one way rally seems too good to last in the small run. Modi returning to power in 2024 Parliamentary elections is almost confirmed but stock prices too have risen to what they should have been in the second half of next year. Long term outlook looks extremely healthy but corrections in short term is a certainty once the euphoria gets over.

While traders can ride the good times, fresh entry is not advisable at crazy valuations. Good time to churn one's portfolio by selling small & midcap stocks which has gone up several times & buy large cap companies who are market leaders in their segment. Big money in stock markets is always made by 'silent investors' who are 'idle' and do nothing and let their stocks rise consistently over a period of time!

S. N. Kabra

Increasing Crime Numbers

More than 1 lakh kidnapping and abduction cases were registered across India in 2022, an average of over 294 daily or more than 12 every hour, with the maximum FIRs being lodged in Uttar Pradesh, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. The increase or decrease in crime numbers, however, does call for a professional investigation of underlying factors pertaining to the local communities to suitably address the pertinent issues.

TKR.Noori

Task of INDIA Bloc

It is high time the Opposition leaders looked at the continuously unexpected surprise victories of the BJP, particularly in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections, with concern, and found out the real reason for the same and took appropriate action to seal the major loopholes. If they fail to do it right now, they will be destined to face the same fate, in the 2024 general elections also. Moreover, all the opposition parties should join hands burying their ego fathoms deep, be prepared for sacrifices wherever required and stand as one and fight the BJP in unison.

Particularly, the Congress party should shed its big brother attitude and work in tandem with the other partners of the INDIA Bloc.

Karan Singh

Cybercrime and Child Safety

The most glaring area of concern with child safety and protection is the fact that children are gradually becoming more vulnerable to cybercrimes and allied threats to online security of the younger generations, the NCRB Report 2022 reveals. The fear that the Covid pandemic may have left children far more exposed to various online education and other entertainment platforms which in effect tended to increase risks for children manifested at multiple levels has been vindicated by the current NCRB data. While keeping children away from the online platforms is certainly not an option, we must have more stringent mechanisms to track down the offenders and sanitise the space for the younger generations.

Tauqueer Rahmani

Concern for the Earth

This year at COP 28 in the Central Asian country of the United Arab Emirates, leaders from around the world came together and ex-

pressed their commitment to clean up our Vasundara. If seen in the context of tackling climate change, it is a very successful effort. But we all know that paperwork won't change today's environment.

Our Earth experiences various climate changes from time to time, including famine on land, melting ice in the polar regions, rising sea levels, and imbalances in the composition of the atmosphere. In addition, all signatory countries of the Paris Agreement promised to control rising temperatures. This was rarely seen. We are talking about zero emissions, which means that greenhouse gas emissions must be so low that the trees, plants and oceans in our atmosphere can absorb them, so that humanity does not have a problem. But all of this will not be done by simply talking or holding conferences. It is hoped that strict and comprehensive steps will be taken to prevent climate change and deal with the challenges it poses.

A Nawas

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

Ambani cheated, MMRDA kept its word

Home Guard Administrative Building and Training Center completed

RTI activist Anil Galgali has been informed by MMRDA administration that the work of administrative building and training center has been completed on the plot at Cross Maidan for Home Guard and Civil Security Force through MMRDA. In this case, Anil Ambani's Mumbai Metro One Pvt Ltd had cheated the Home Guard and MMRDA administration, but MMRDA kept its word and completed the construction at its own expense.

RTI activist Anil Galgali had asked the MMRDA administration about the training center on the premises owned by the Home Guard. MMRDA administration informed Anil Galgali that an administrative building and training center is being constructed on a plot at Cross Maidan for Home Guard and Civil Security Force through MMRDA. An amount



of Rs.24.24 Crores has been approved and the work orders have been given to the contractor Asha Enterprises in Delhi on 1st January 2020. The work is to be completed by November 16, 2023 and there is an incremental amount of Rs 1.24 crore.

What is the matter?

In a meeting held by the Chief Minister on 10 December 2007 to discuss the hurdles in the Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar Corridor MRTS project, the project managers of Mumbai Metro One Pvt Ltd requested MMRDA and Home Guard to provide 2.4 hectares of land owned by Home

Guard at Versova for a temporary casting yard. At that time, the central government transferred Rs. 1.99 crore to the state government and approved the construction of the training center. But considering the work of Metro, it was decided to hand over the said site to the project

management of Mumbai Metro One Pvt Ltd for a temporary period of 2 years and in return the training center of Home Guard will be completely constructed by Mumbai Metro One Pvt Ltd. But nothing was done or rent was paid by Currently more than 40 crores is outstanding. The training center is being constructed at Cross Maidan instead of Versova as MMRDA administration is responsible for fulfilling the promise made to Home Guard due to the gross fraud committed by Mumbai Metro One Pvt Ltd.

A case should be filed

Mumbai Metro One Private Limited Company has not paid the rent nor is paying the amount to the MMRDA administration. Anil Galgali has expressed the opinion that MMRDA Commissioner should file a case against Anil Ambani's Mumbai Metro One Private Limited Company.

Will have to put in extra hours to hear disqualification pleas: Maharashtra speaker Narwekar



Maharashtra assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar said that he would need to put in extra hours to conduct hearings on disqualification petitions while

ensuring smooth functioning of the House.

Narwekar said, "I need to ensure the smooth functioning of the legislative assembly as well as complete the disqualification

hearings pending before me. It looks like I will be working from 9 am to 10 pm in this period to give justice to both responsibilities." Rahul Narwekar is hearing cross-petitions filed by the rival Shiv Sena factions seeking disqualification of each other's MLAs following a split in the party last year.

Narwekar said he would hear the petitions on Thursday for two and a half hours at the Vidhan Bhavan in Nagpur. The speaker said it would be a challenging task for him to pay attention to both – hearings as well as smooth functioning of the House.

Maharashtra govt not keen to face questions concerning farmers: Patole

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Thursday alleged that the government was not keen to face questions concerning farmers after an adjournment motion by his party colleague and leader of opposition in assembly Vijay Wadettiwar was rejected. An adjournment motion is moved to

discuss a "definite matter of urgent public importance".

Speaking to journalists at Vidhan Bhavan here after the adjournment of the House on the first day of the Winter Session, Patole said that had the government been serious about issues tied to farmers, then it would have allowed the adjournment

motion moved by Wadettiwar. The Congress leader said that the Eknath Shinde government is ready to discuss issues related to Vidarbha but has no time to look into matters about farmers in the region. The Winter Session, which started on Thursday, is scheduled to end on December 20. PTI

Maharashtra govt tables supplementary demands worth Rs 55,520 crore in state assembly

The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government tabled supplementary demands worth Rs 55,520.77 crore in the state assembly on the first day of the winter session of the legislature here.

The supplementary demands, which are additional funds sought by the government over the budgetary allocation, were tabled in the House by Finance Minister Ajit Pawar.

Of the total, supplementary demands worth Rs 19,244.34 crore were described as mandatory expenditure, while demands worth Rs 32,792.81 crore are required for various ongoing programmes and schemes of the state government, a note issued by the finance department said. Besides that, supplementary demands worth Rs 3,483.62 crore are towards the state's contribution to the ongoing schemes of the Union government, it said.

Action will be taken if Marathi films are denied theatres: Fadnavis tells legislative council

Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday stated in the legislative council here that legal action will be taken if theatres in the state refused to screen Marathi films.

The BJP's Pravin Darekar raised the issue, stating that

Marathi actor Prasad Khandekar's newly released film 'Ekda Yeun Tar Bagha' was not getting cinema halls.

Fadnavis said if a Marathi film was not getting theatres for screening in Maharashtra, legal action will be taken wherever necessary. PTI

Nation

Delhi: AIIMS report claims, "No link with China's respiratory infection" over surge in Pneumonia cases



Pneumonia cases in AIIMS Delhi have no link to the recent surge in respiratory infections in children in China, an official statement issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said on Thursday. Rejecting the media reports claiming the link between the two, the Health Ministry said that the news report is ill-informed and provides misleading information.

"It is clarified that these seven cases have no link whatsoever to the recent surge in respiratory infections in children reported from some parts of the world, including China. The seven cases have been detected as a part of an ongoing study at AIIMS Delhi in the six-month period (April to September 2023) and are no cause for worry," the ministry said.

Ministry further informed that since January 2023 till date, no Mycoplasma pneumonia was detected in the 611 samples tested at the Department of Microbiology, AIIMS Delhi as a part of ICMR's multiple respiratory pathogen surveillance, which included mainly severe acute respiratory illness (SARI, which comprised about 95% of these cases) by real-time PCR. "Mycoplasma pneumonia is the commonest bacterial cause of community-acquired pneumonia. It is the reason for nearly 15-30 per cent of all such infections. Such a surge has not been reported from any part of India," the Health Ministry informed. Union Health Ministry said that it is in touch with state health authorities and is keeping a close watch on the situation on an everyday basis. ANI

Kerala suicide case: Postgraduate student has been taken into custody for death of Shahana



A postgraduate student of Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram Medical College was reportedly taken into custody from Karunagapally in the State on Thursday in connection with the death of Shahana, the 26-year-old doctor who died allegedly by suicide. Shahana's relatives have alleged that the accused, identified as Ruvaiz and his family had asked for huge amount of dowry including gold, land and a BMW car for marrying Shahana.

The male doctor has been charged with abetment to suicide and under sections of the Dowry Prohibition Act. Shahana, also PG student in the surgery department

of the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College was reportedly in a relationship with Ruvaiz and the two had decided to marry. The male doctor allegedly backed out of the marriage proposal after Shahana's family couldn't fulfil his dowry demands due to financial constraints. Shahana's relatives alleged that Ruvaiz and his family stepped back from the proposal after they were refused to meet the dowry demands. Ruvaiz has been suspended from the college by the principal. Police said Shahana was found dead at her rented apartment near the medical college on Tuesday morning. ANI

Cyclone Michaung: Over 700 people were shifted to safer locations by Indian Navy in Tamil Nadu



Amid flood-like situation in Tamil Nadu's Chennai due to heavy rainfall caused due to Cyclone Michaung, more than 700 people were shifted to safer locations by the flood relief teams of the Indian Navy. "With more than 700 people shifted to safer locations, the Flood Relief Teams have continued to render assistance to the stranded people in submerged

colonies of Pallikaranai, Thoraipakkam, Perumbakkam and Velachery in Chennai", the Navy said on Thursday.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) continued to provide relief materials in the affected areas across Chennai on Thursday morning. IAF's helicopter was seen dropping relief packages in different areas on Thursday morning. ANI

MP Cong MLA Phool Singh Baraiya had staged anti-EVM protest march, Applied a symbolic black 'tika'

Madhya Pradesh Congress MLA Phool Singh Baraiya, who had pledged to blacken his own face if the BJP won 50 seats in the state assembly polls, on Thursday led an anti-EVM protest march here, during which his senior party colleague applied a symbolic black 'tika' on

his face. Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh applied the symbolic black tika on the forehead and face of the newly-elected legislator Baraiya. Ahead of the November 17 Madhya Pradesh assembly polls, Baraiya had told reporters, "If BJP wins even 50 seats in 2023 elections, then

Phool Singh Baraiya will blacken his face with his own hands in front of the Raj Bhavan, this is my pledge." However, the saffron party registered a resounding victory by clinching 163 of the 230 assembly seats, while the Congress won 66 seats and the Bharat Adivasi Party secured one seat. PTI

Gujarat: Government says, "397 lions died between 2019 and 2021"

The government on Thursday said 397 lions died in Gujarat between 2019 and 2021, around 10 per cent of them due to unnatural reasons. Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey said in a written re-

ply in Rajya Sabha, "397 lions including 182 cubs of 0-1 year have died in Gujarat from 2019-2021." Giving the break-up, he said 66 lions and 60 cubs died in 2019, 73 lions and 76 died the next year, while 76 lions and 46 cubs died in 2021,

the minister informed the Rajya Sabha. "As reported by the State, 10.53 per cent lions including 3.82 per cent cubs have died due to unnatural reasons out of total deaths of lions in the last five years in Gujarat State," the MoS said. PTI

Karnataka: State Contractors' Association president submits evidences of over '40 per cent commission' charge

Karnataka State Contractors' Association president D Kempanna on Thursday submitted a set of 'evidences' to the panel headed by retired High Court judge H N Nagamohan Das which is prob-

ing the '40 per cent commission' charge against the previous BJP government. After coming to power in May, the Congress government in Karnataka led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had set up the panel. Kempanna said

he would furnish more details to the panel by the end of the month. "I have sought time till December 31 when more contractors will come forward to submit their documents," Kempanna told PTI. PTI

World

UN chief has invoked a rarely-used article in UN to appeal to the Security Council for a humanitarian ceasefire amid ongoing conflict



UN chief Antonio Guterres has invoked a rarely-used article in the United Nations Charter to appeal to the Security Council for a humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict and to avert a "humanitarian catastrophe", which he said has "potentially irreversible implications" for Palestinians and peace in the region. Secretary-General Guterres issued a letter on Wednesday to the President of the Security Council for the month of December, Ambassador Jose Javier De La Gasca Lopez Dominguez, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the UN, writing under Article

99 of the UN Charter. Article 99 was last specifically mentioned in a report on December 3, 1971 by then Secretary-General U Thant on the situation in East Pakistan - now Bangladesh.

India had emerged victorious against Pakistan in the 1971 war, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. This is the first time that Guterres has invoked Article 99 of the Charter since he became UN Secretary-General in 2017. Article 99 states that the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the letter, Guterres said that more than eight weeks of hostilities in Gaza and Israel have created appalling human suffering, physical destruction and collective trauma across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Guterres urged members of the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and appealed for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared. We are facing a severe risk of collapse of the humanitarian system. The situation is fast deteriorating into a catastrophe with potentially irreversible implications for Palestinians as a whole and for peace and security in the region.

Such an outcome must be avoided at all costs, Guterres said. Underlining that the international community has a responsibility to use all its influence to prevent further escalation and end this crisis, Guterres urged members of the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. "I reiterate my appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared. This is urgent. The civilian population must be spared from greater harm," he said, voicing deep concern that nowhere is safe in Gaza. PTI

Afghanistan: Dy PM Abdul Salam Hanafi urges neighbouring countries to be politically neutral towards the country

Afghanistan's Taliban-appointed Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Abdul Salam Hanafi has urged neighbouring countries to be politically neutral towards Afghanistan. He said the Taliban never seeks to damage other countries, TOLO News reported. TOLO News is an Afghan news channel broadcasting from Kabul.

The Taliban-appointed Deputy PM while speaking at a gathering in the Academy of Science of Afghanistan said the Taliban wants to have good relations with all countries and that foreigners should also not interfere in the internal affairs of the country. "We never seek the construction of our [country] through the destruction of our neighbours. We want both Afghanistan and

its neighbours to be built up. We have the same hope from our neighbours," he said, as per TOLO News. Hanafi said that the Taliban does not want to be a member of any of the "coalitions," referring to Afghanistan's history and neutrality in World Wars I and II.

"All Afghans are respected in our country. For the Afghans who are abroad due to some concerns, the Taliban's message is to return to their country because there is no threat to them," he said, as per TOLO News. The Taliban-appointed acting Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Noor Mohammad Saqib, told the gathering that research should be continued in various sectors in a bid to pave the way for development in the country. ANI

Pakistan: Fire broke out at shopping mall, Death toll goes upto 5

The death toll from the fire incident at Arshi shopping mall and residential flats in Pakistan's Karachi rose to five on Thursday, Geo News reported. The report also stated that the blaze was finally extinguished, and the building's cooling process was completed.

The incident happened on Wednesday, when a six-storey commercial-cum-residential building, named Arshi Shopping Centre, caught fire on Shahrah-e-Pakistan near Ayesha Manzil in District Central's Federal B Area. According to eyewitnesses, the fire started when one of the shops caught fire during welding work on the ground floor. Unfortunately, the flames later spread to other

US-made weapons guidance system was used in two Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, Claims Report



An Amnesty International investigation alleged that a US-made weapons guidance system was used in two Israeli airstrikes in Gaza in October in which 43 civilians were killed, CNN reported. A report released by the human rights organisation revealed that fragments of the US-made Joint Direct Attack Munitions guidance system were found in the rubble of destroyed homes in the neighbourhood of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

A wide variety of American weapons and munitions are being used by Israel but Amnesty International's report is one of the first attempts to tie an American-made weapon to a specific attack that left a significant number of civilians dead,

as per CNN.

The Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) is a "guidance tail kit that converts existing unguided free-fall bombs into accurate, adverse weather 'smart' munitions," according to the US Air Force. CNN said it cannot independently verify Amnesty International's findings.

As per Amnesty International, its weapons experts and a "remote sensing analyst" examined satellite imagery and photos of the homes that show the "fragments of ordnance recovered from the rubble" and the destruction, the report explains. Amnesty's fieldworkers took the photos. As a result of these two attacks, 19 children, 14 women, and 10 men were killed, the report claims. ANI



shops that were part of the furniture market under the building, Geo News reported. The Ayesha Manzil furniture market has over 250 shops on the ground floor, while furniture, mattresses, and petroleum products are kept on the mezzanine floor. Additionally, there are 450 residential flats on the upper four floors. According to Geo News, there were concerns that the building had weakened due to the fire and could collapse

at any time. As a result of the fire, the death toll which previously stood at four, has now increased to five after rescue personnel recovered another body from the fire-affected residential building.

"The body found on the first floor of the shopping mall was taken to the hospital," rescue officials revealed. "The deceased died of suffocation and burns," Geo News quoted the officials as saying. ANI

Expression

How to improve employability while studying abroad



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In today's increasingly globalized world, companies focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I). As per a McKinsey report, more diverse companies are likely to outpace their less diverse peers in profitability. This highlights the burgeoning demand for graduates who can seamlessly adapt and thrive in a dynamic corporate ecosystem.

Studying abroad is known to enhance multiple 21st-century job skills. From boosting intrapersonal & interpersonal skills to developing critical thinking and adaptability, students feel equipped to forge global careers. This observation is also backed by the Institute of International Education's (IIE) study titled Gaining an Employment Edge: The Impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects.

As an international student, it is crucial to work towards improving your employability throughout your academic journey. According to the QS Global International Student Survey 2022, Indian students (62%) worry about getting a job abroad upon completing their graduation. To navigate this challenge, it's important to learn some of the best career cushioning strategies.

Enhance Employability While Studying Abroad

How Indian banks gave away an opportunity called UPI, and its control, to PhonePe, and Google Pay Business of biryani: how Biryani By Kilo is winning Indian palates with consistency and automation Varun Beverages outshines HUL, returns 100% in one year. Can it sustain the momentum ahead? Why top Bharat Pe executives are leaving the fintech unicorn to start their own ventures Are you buying high and selling low? Blame it on the behavioural gap Top Nifty 50 stocks analysts suggest buying this week

1. Internships/Co-Op Programs

Internships and co-ops (cooperative education) provide students the opportunity to gain



work experience and exhibit formally acquired skills in a business setting.

Opting for internships or co-ops will help you transform into a versatile professional and learn the best practices to juggle multiple tasks. As per the National Survey of College Internships (NSCI) 2023 Report, employers comprehend the value of internship and co-op programs as effective channels to both identify and connect with potential future employees.

2. Leverage University's Career Resources

From helping to draft an impressive resume and sharing interview tips to networking & shadowing opportunities and special access to job search portals, university career resources can act as a benison for you. That's not all; international universities have strong industrial connections. And fairs or events organized by these career centers throughout the academic year can help you connect with the industry bellwethers.

3. Meaningful Networking

Around 80% of jobs are not posted online (known as hidden jobs market). Individuals who are able to secure a job offer in this hidden market are the ones who have solidified their professional network.

As per the QS Global International Student Survey 2022, students

studying abroad (64%) highlighted networking as one of the most valuable aspects of their experience. Networking can be done by attending international conferences and seminars relevant to your study area. You will not only learn new things but will get access to influential personalities in the industry. A good online profile on sites like LinkedIn can also help you draw in the best jobs. Indubitably, networking online and offline can lead to internships, job opportunities, and valuable insights into the job market.

You can also inquire with your academic department and relevant clubs & societies to see if anyone can help you with your career. In addition, contacting university alumni can also help you find significant opportunities.

4. Develop Transferable Skills

According to the Future of Jobs Report 2023, analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation, and empathy would be among the top sought-after skills in the job market.

As the economy continues to migrate towards having social and service skills, acquiring soft skills will be indispensable to one's professional success.

These skills can be developed by Indian students while studying abroad. This further reinforces that

aspirants with successful study abroad experience have a high chance of flourishing in a diverse corporate setting. They gain insights into and are exposed to a slew of linguistic, cultural, and nationalistic diversities.

5. Craft Compelling CV & Portfolio

Determining the type of work you want to do and how it connects to the course(s) or career(s) you want to pursue is essential. Your CV or portfolio can make or break your chances of landing an interview.

Do not miss out on creating your CV in sync with the country's acceptable format. Along with this, the most fundamental element would be updating your CV with pertinent projects completed during the training.

6. Cross-Cultural Competence

Employers highly value candidates who can navigate diverse cultural contexts. A study by the British Council and Ipsos Public Affairs (the Social Research and Corporate Reputation Specialists) found that employers believe that international experience is a valuable asset in candidates, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural competence. Moreover, knowledge of a foreign language can offer you an edge. These competencies show prospective employers your cultural awareness.

Entertainment

Actors Mohit Raina and Anupam Kher are all set for collaboration for their upcoming project, says, "It's an important series"



Actors Mohit Raina and Anupam Kher will be coming up with the concluding chapters of 'The Freelancer' series. The series is based on the book-- A Ticket to Syria by Shirish Thorat. Directed by Bhav Dhulia, 'The Freelancer: The Conclusion' also stars Kashmiri Pardeshi and Sushant Singh. Neeraj Pandey has created it.

The show revolves around the extraction of a young girl who reaches Syria, presuming it to be her honeymoon, after tying the knot with a suspicious man. Opening up about the concluding chapters, Anupam Kher told ANI, "We have done the shooting for it in continuity which means that the preparations of direction and production department were of such a level that all the emotions were reflecting. When the preparations are already done on the part of the production and direction department, it becomes easy for the actors to put across that emotional graph...It's an important series."

Mohit shared how he prepared for the role. "This story is based on a book, a ticket to Syria...As an actor, you follow the vision of the director as their approach is different...I realized that on the way that the points of view of Neeraj and Bhav were different so I adapted that with flexibility..." he shared. ANI

Genelia Deshmukh pens a sweet birthday wish for her mother

Actor Genelia Deshmukh on Thursday penned a sweet note for her mother Jeanette D'Souza on her birthday. Taking to Instagram, Genelia shared a cute family picture featuring herself, her mother and sons Riaan and Rahyl.

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The note stated, "When I was a little girl, all I wanted to grow up to be was MY Mum - her grace, her ability to be a homemaker and yet a professional, her immense sensitivity, her strength to conquer every obstacle that came her way, the joy she brought to everyone around her and her child-like persona that made people smile whenever they were in her company." She added, "I don't think I could manage to be a patch on my mum but what I do know is, I am her daughter and that for me is the biggest honour I could ever have.. Happy Birthday Mumma - You are my whole world .. Can't go a day without you ". ANI



American film producer Jennifer Aniston pays tribute to Norman Lear after his demise

Actor Jennifer Aniston paid a touching tribute to Norman Lear, writer-producer-developer following his demise. Taking to Instagram, Jennifer shared a string of images with a TV writer along with a note.

The note read, "Norman Lear. His shows shaped my childhood and getting to know him was one of my greatest honors. He made such a difference. A huge impact on television and humanity. He was able to tackle and discuss heated political conversations during difficult and charged times and we were able to laugh and learn. I yearn for those days. When creativity was a learning tool and could inspire people to maybe think just a little bit differently. And of course to laugh. Our greatest source of healing."

She remembered Lear as "the kindest and gentlest man," recalling how he used to make people feel like they were "the only one in the room." "He was the kindest and gentlest man. When you were in his presence, you were the only one in the room. He made everyone feel this. Even when someone believed differently than him. That's what made life and people interesting to him. To have discussions and really take in how people felt and hear their point of view. He knew how to give voice to all sides and somehow in the process bring people closer together. May we take a page from Norman's playbook as a way of honoring his life. An extraordinary life. Rest in peace Norman. It was a gift to stand in your light," 'Friends' actor added. ANI



Wedding Bells: Aamir Khan's daughter Ira will be tying knot with Nupur Shikhare, Finds new way to send invite

Actor Aamir Khan's daughter, Ira Khan, is all set to tie the knot with her long-time boyfriend, Nupur Shikhare, on January 3, 2024. For her wedding, she discovered a new way to invite her friends, which turned out to be a little tough.

On Thursday, Ira took to her Instagram and shared a video of how her friends reacted after discovering her "puzzle invite" asking them to be her bridesmaids. Ira sent her friends boxes with custom-made pieces of puzzles, designed differently for each one of them. The video showcased her friends' reactions to the wedding invitation. She captioned the video, "Popeye: Edit it bit by bit. Me: Does it in one night. This has been on the to-do since April. BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. Also, now MISHTY! WE ARE GETTING MARRIED WITHIN A MONTH! I love you guys so much."

Ira also announced her wedding date in the video, which is January 3, 2024. "Do you see the variety and range of the people in my life? Don't miss the contrast between Zayn and Danielle's reaction to puzzles, Danielle's montage of "it's so cute!" Which had to be interspersed with Nihal's attempt to not cry (first I thought the sighs were because of the puzzle, then I realised he was feeling emotional), the contrast between Kshitej and everyone else's reactions, the following and not following of instructions (clearly they were not clear enough), all the various camera men and their running commentary. Just watch the whole video. Don't miss anything," the caption further reads. She also requested that her friends make her bachelorette video. "I've watched all this footage lots of times. And it still fills my heart every time. AAAAAAAHHHHH ITS HAPPENING!! Now someone else, please make the bachelorette video. My quota for editing for the wedding is over," the caption concluded.

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